Breaking Through

Adapted from the Francisco Jiménez’s novel by Leo Cortez

Educational Guide
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Note to Teachers

Our actors will present a brief outline of theatre etiquette as part of their introduction; however, it would make a stronger impression on your students if you covered the same information prior to the performance. Here are a few suggestions for student etiquette:

- Before entering the performance area, get a drink of water or visit the restroom if you need to.
- Once you are seated, you should remain seated. Because the actors are directed to move around the room during the performance, it’s important for everybody’s safety that the walkways and stage areas remain clear.
- You share the performance with everyone in the audience. Distracting activity such as talking or moving not only disturbs the actors onstage but the audience around you as well.
- Your comments and ideas about the play are important, but save them for after the play to discuss them. If you’d like, you can even write a letter to the performers.
- An invisible bond is formed between actors and a good audience, and it enables the actors to do their best for you. A good audience helps make a good performance.

PCPA Theaterfest is proud to present our Outreach Tour performance of *Breaking Though*, adapted from the Francisco Jiménez’s novel by Leo Cortez. We hope that our visit will be followed by many more. Thank you for hosting a PCPA Theaterfest’s Outreach Tour production.
Cast and Crew

Adapted from Francisco Jiménez’s novel by Leo Cortez

Director: Wendy-Marie Foerster

Scenic Designer: Ryan Grossheim

Costume Designer: Fred Deeben

Sound Designer: Elisabeth Rebel

Stage Manager: Vickie Franzen

Pancho – Rhett Guter

Roberto/Principal (El Camino)/Trampita/Majoria/Mrs. Dossen/Man/Mrs. Bell/Student #1
– Natasha Harris

Papa/ Friend (recap)/Immigration Officer/Robert Lindsey/Mr. Dossen/Mr. Kinkade/Student #2 – Adam Schroeder

Mamma/Mexically Woman/Teacher (recap)/Miss Ehlis/Peggy Dossen/Marvin Bell/Manuelita – Mara Lefler
Synopsis

*Breaking Through* begins with a re-cap of the play *The Circuit*. We are introduced to the Jiménez family, Pancho (Frankie), Mama, Papa, Roberto and Trampita. They are a family of migrant workers who have made their way to the Santa Maria Valley, travelling the California circuit.

For the next ten years the Jiménez family traveled from one migrant labor camp to another before settling in Santa Maria. Then, during Pancho’s eighth grade year an Immigration Officer interrupted classes pulling out both Pancho and Roberto. The family is put on a bus to make the long journey back to Mexico. After twenty hours the group arrives at the border in Nogales, Arizona. Knowing they do not want to stay in Mexico, the Jiménez family begins making arrangements for a legal return to the United States.

After filling out many forms and answering a slew of questions they are granted visas. However, Papa’s back has been hurting from so many long hours in the fields and it is the rainy season back in Santa Maria which means little work and therefore little money. Papa decides to move the family to his sister’s house in Guadalajara and wait out the rain. Realizing that they will still need income, Papa suggests sending Roberto back to Santa Maria where he can return to work as a janitor and save money. Pancho wants to return as well to keep up with his studies and work after school for Santa Maria Window Cleaners.
Roberto and Pancho return to Santa Maria where they are greeted by an empty house. When Pancho returns to school, he is warmly greeted by his friends who have taken notice of his advancement to the front row in their Math class. Talk turns to popular music and Peggy, a girl in Pancho’s class, asks if he’s going to the local dance hall the next weekend. Pancho says yes before realizing he can’t dance.

Later that night Pancho tells his brother about the dance and the two begin learning all the new dances in preparation for the big night. The next weekend Pancho and Peggy dance the night away. Peggy is so impressed that she asks Pancho to walk her home the next day.

When walking Peggy home the next day Pancho finds she lives in the upscale part of town. Her parents are out front waiting for her to arrive home and give Pancho a less than friendly greeting once they learn of his Mexican origins. The next day at school Peggy avoids him completely and she no longer shows up for any of the dances.

Then, one night Pancho and Roberto are trying out the Mashed Potato when the rest of the family walks in the door. Elated they warmly greet their parents and little brother who compliment them on the furnishing of the house. They all settle back into their normal routines until Papa returns with good news one night.

Papa tells the family that he is to be a partner in sharecropping six acres. While it will mean much more work, it should also bring in much needed income. With all the extra work helping Papa with the three acres, Pancho begins to fall behind in his school work. He informs his mother that he is failing English and Social Studies and falling behind in Math.
Work does not slow down for Pancho. The strawberries they planted begin to die and extra time has to be spent fumigating and weeding out dead plants from the fields. Even with all the work in the fields, Pancho tries to find time to keep up with his studies and makes plans to visit the High School Guidance Counselor, Mr. Kinkade.

Pancho meets with Mr. Kinkade who tells him about the farming and vocational programs offered at Santa Maria High. Pancho quickly informs him that he wants to be a teacher, not a farmer. Mr. Kinkade explains that he will need to go to college to pursue that dream and that there are many scholarships available to help him achieve it. To prepare Pancho for college, Mr. Kinkade places him in Mr. Bell’s literature class.

Mr. Bell’s class has a reputation for being hard and Pancho is nervous. His fears are quickly resolved however. Mr. Bell teaches in both English and Spanish and helps Pancho with his reading and writing. One day he gives him the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (John Steinbeck) and offers him extra credit for reading it and writing a book report. Reading the book takes time and effort. Pancho has to look up many of the words throughout the text, but finds he can completely relate to the characters and that he loves reading for more than just school assignments.

Later a friend of Pancho’s, Marvin, tells him about a talent show being held at school called Junior Rascals. He tells his family about the show and Papa helps him learn a Ciello Lindo by Pedro Infante. His performance is such a huge hit that a friend suggests singing it at his brother Roberto’s upcoming wedding.

The wedding news comes as a surprise to Pancho and it means even more work for the members of the family once Roberto leaves. With more work Pancho now has little time to study and prepare for the upcoming SATs. He speaks with his guidance counselor, Mr.
Kinkade about the problem. He in turn speaks to Mrs. Bell who decides to make a visit to the Jiménez family home.

Mrs. Bell talks to Papa and Mama in English and Spanish about Pancho’s future. She explains that he has a real chance of going to college and becoming a teacher. The visit opens their eyes and they decide to let him leave home and attend college. Pancho graduates from Santa Maria High School where he leads the students in the Pledge of Allegiance and *God Bless America*. Afterwards he leaves his family and travels up the 101 freeway, passing through farming towns he had once picked fruit in and makes his way up to the University of Santa Clara to start a new chapter in his life.
Costume Design

Designed by Fred Deeben
DAYDRESS
APRON
FLATS

Designed by Fred Deeben
ADD:
GREEN JACKET
GREEN CAP

IMMIGRATION OFFICER

Designed by Fred Deeben
ADD 2
KERCHIEF
SHAWL

MEXICALI WOMAN

Designed by Fred Deeben
Pancho, Roberto and the rest of the students at Santa Maria High School attend local dances at the Veterans Hall. Before MTV, teenagers watched American Bandstand and The Ed Sullivan Show to hear their favorite music and learn the latest dances. These shows were broadcast live and featured all the famous musicians of the day. Many of the songs had specific dances associated with them and below you’ll find instructions to the popular dances. See how many you can do!

**Loco-motion**

Written in 1962 by Gerry Goffin and Carole King this song made the American Top three times in three different decades. The first to record the song was Little Eva in 1962, followed by Grand Funk Railroad in 1974 and again by Kylie Minogue in 1988.

1. Begin with your weight on your left foot. It will stay in this place for the whole set of steps.
2. Put your right foot forward, putting your weight on it.
   Then, rock back, putting your weight back onto the left foot. Step back with your right foot in the same way, then rock back onto your left foot again. Repeat the first half of the step – step forward with your right foot,
rock back onto your left foot and then cha-cha (bring your feet together and stepping with your right, left, then right again).

3. Repeat these steps but this time leaving all the weight on your right foot leaving the left to move.

4. After repeating the above steps, move slightly forward and to the right with your right foot. Cross behind your right foot with the left. Then step to the right again with your right foot and touch your left toe at the side of your right foot. This is called the grapevine.

5. Go back the other way by stepping to your left with your left foot. Then cross your right foot behind your left. Then, as you step to the left with your left foot again, turn your foot so your toes face to the left. As you bring your right foot in to toe-touch, rotate 90 degrees.

6. Once facing the new direction perform the grapevine again.

7. After the second grapevine is finished, the dance is over and begins again from the beginning.

**Mashed Potato**

This dance was made popular in 1962 when Dee Dee Sharp’s “Mashed Potato Time” hit the air waves.

1. Stand so as that your legs are about shoulder length distance apart. Bend your right knee and pick your right foot off the floor, shifting your weight to the left leg. You should be leaning a bit to the left.
2. Pivot your left foot slightly clockwise and then pivot it back counter clockwise. Bring your right foot back close to your left foot and pivot it clockwise.

3. Bend your left knee and pick your left foot off the floor. Shift your weight to your right foot and at the same time pivot your right foot, counter clockwise. Then pivot your right foot clockwise and then again counter clockwise.

4. Shift your weight to your left leg by bringing your left foot back to the floor. Bend your right knee and pick up your right foot as your left foot picots counter clockwise.

5. Continue these steps over and over feeling free to add arm movements as you become more advanced.

**The Pony**

In the 1960s Chubby Checker released his hit song “Pony Time”. The dance is meant to be done with two people but they never touch.

1. Stand facing your partner

2. Jump to the right, landing on your right foot. Your left foot should be suspended above the floor, next to your right ankle.

3. Put your left foot down on the toes only. Lift your right foot off the floor to ankle height.

4. Step back down with your right foot and again lift your left foot to ankle height.
5. Jump to your left and put your left foot down while bringing your right foot above the ground to ankle height.

6. Put your right foot down on the toes only. Lift your left foot until it is ankle height above the floor.

7. Step back down with your left foot and again lift your right to ankle height above the floor.

8. Move your arms up with you are “ponying” to the right and move them down when you are “ponying” to the left.

9. Repeat.
Migrant Workers

The United States began to see a need for migrant workers beginning in 1850. Cattle ranches across the Southwest were expanding and California began producing more fruit than ever before. Originally farmers turned to Chinese workers who were legally contracted to work in California fields. However in 1882, President Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act which halted all Chinese immigration. The act meant less workers were able to be brought into the country and farmers went searching for new laborers.

By 1880 there were around 55,000 Mexican workers who had immigrated to the United States. The number of Mexican immigrants increased between 1880 and 1890 when the construction of the railroad between Mexico and the United States began. As much as 60 percent of the railway workers were Mexican.

Working conditions were poor and the salary low, but it was more than many would have received in Mexico.
Then, in 1924, the U.S. Border Patrol was established as well as a new law stating that undocumented workers were fugitives. This is when the term “illegal alien” was coined. During the Great Depression another control was put into place. Visas began to be denied to all Mexicans who failed to prove they had secure employment in the States. Those who were deported were warned not to reenter the country for if they did they would be labeled as fugitives.

Though the United States had tried to shut its doors to many Mexican immigrants during the Depression, they found themselves in need of labor again during World War 2. Many American men were sent away to fight in Europe leaving thousands of jobs with no one to fill them. In 1942 the United States signed the Bracero Treaty which allowed for the immigration of Mexican laborers. Between 1942 and 1964 more than four million Mexicans came to the United States to work temporarily.

Most braceros were farm workers coming from Coahuila and other agricultural areas of Mexico. Border towns began to take a new shape as they became gathering spots for the agricultural labor force. In order to come and work under the Bracero Program the worker had to sign a contract. These were put together by independent farmers and the “Farm Bureau.” Most often the contracts were written in English and the workers had no
way of understanding what they were signing. They were only allowed to leave the United States in an emergency and with written permission from their employer. Once their contracts expired they were required to hand over their permits and return to Mexico. The program was brought to an end in 1964 with the return of men from overseas and new mechanical means of harvesting.

There are still migrant workers who come up from Mexico to earn a living. Years of relying on poor migrants has created a wage structure that discouraged American citizens from seeking farm work. Though wages offered are too low to sustain a family in the U.S. they are up to ten times higher than what a Mexican peasant could earn back home. Migrants are among the poorest workers in all of the United Stated. The average worker is a twenty eight year old male, born in Mexico and earns about $5,000 a year for twenty five weeks of farm work and is expected to live to forty nine years of age. Though it is impossible to gauge since many workers are in the country illegally it is thought that there are between 800,000 and 900,000 migrant workers in the United States today.
College Scholarships

Pancho made his way to college through the help of scholarships. Talk to your school guidance counselor and visit the websites below to see how you too can afford college.

Migrant Farm Worker Baccalaureate Scholarship Committee:
• Gloria and Joseph Mattera National Scholarship Fund for Migrant Children
• Frank Kazmierczak Memorial Migrant Scholarship
• Migrant Farm Worker Baccalaureate Scholarship
• New York State Migrant Student Scholarship Award
• Berrien Fragos Thorn Arts Scholarships for Migrant Farmworkers

For on-line applications go to: [www.migrant.net](http://www.migrant.net) or you can contact them by mail at:
Geneseo Migrant Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 549
Geneseo, New York 14454
1-800-245-5681

Path to Scholarships® Fund has been established by June McBride with the Harvest of Hope Foundation [www.harvestofhope.net](http://www.harvestofhope.net) which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax exempt organization as defined under guidelines by the IRS. The Harvest of Hope Foundation supports education, healthcare, housing, legal services, and emergency aid for migrant farm workers and their families nationally. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each workbook, Path to Scholarships® will be donated to the Path to Scholarships® Fund of the Harvest of Hope Foundation. The Fund provides financial aid nationwide to international students and to children of migrant farm workers attending college or post secondary school.

Path To Scholarships Fund Application (Click on this link for the application)

For information call: (352-373-6770) or (1-888--922-4673) or visit the website at [www.harvestofhope.net](http://www.harvestofhope.net).

Financial Aid for Non-citizens
College-bound students who are not citizens or legal permanent residents of the United States are not eligible for State or federal financial assistance because of their immigration status. In addition, they are generally classified as international students and therefore are required to pay higher tuition and fees. However, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
(MALDEF), has compiled a list of scholarships that are open to undocumented students. The list is available on MALDEF’s website at www.maldef.org or by calling (213)629-2512

MIGRANT HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP

Provided by the National Center for Farm Worker Health, Inc., this scholarship is for student interns and employees of migrant health clinics. http://www.ncfh.org

Application due in March - Application is be available on-line by the end of January.

College Assistance Migrant Programs (CAMP) Information and Scholarships

Assistance Migrant Program Alumni Association
Cultivating Leadership
www.campaa.org

RCMA

Redlands Christian Migrant Association
Attention: Susan Vega
P.O. Box 728
Zellwood, Florida 32798
407-884-2040 FAX 407-884-2043

This scholarship has been established in the name of one of the organization's founding members, Wendell N. Rollason, for the continuing education of former or current high school graduates from migrant and seasonal farm working and rural poor families. This is the only criterion specified and anyone wishing to apply should have the opportunity to do so. A selection committee will review all applications and the number of recipients and the money raised during the year will determine the amount of the award(s). All the applicants must complete the application form as well as an essay on, "The Importance of Education to Me", a minimum of 500 words, two letters of recommendation, and a transcript. Deadline is in May Scholarship Application

For questions and clarifications please call or email:

June McBride (407) 877-9630 mcbridejune@msn.com

Valerie Peake (214) 202-4724 vpeake@sbcglobal.net
Classroom Activities

Three Word Play

Many people throughout time have traveled long distances for work or to find a new home. Share with the class several examples:

- Native Peoples such as the Serrano or the Plains Indians who migrated with the seasons
- Sailors who have manned ships throughout history
- Immigrants who came to America from Asia, Mexico or Europe
- Pioneers who traveled West in wagon trains
- Modern day truckers who transport goods across the world

Have each of the students pick an example from the list or come up with one of their own. Then, have the student create two or three characters. The character should have a name, age, job, gender and clear relationship to the other character(s). After the characters have been chosen pick a setting or location where the scene will take place. A helpful way to do this is to write down a list of six different places and then roll a die to choose one of the six. Next, decide what the conflict will be. The characters need to want something from each other. The most common form used is that one character wants something from another character, but the second character is unwilling to give it.

Set a timer for 10 minutes. This will be the amount of time each student has to write their script. Tell the students to keep writing using the first ideas that pop into their head. The only stipulation is that each character can only say three words per line. The end result will look something like this:

Bob: Come over here.
Nancy: No thank you.
Bob: I have something.
Nancy: It’s for me?
Bob: Of course, silly!
Nancy: Well, okay then.
Packing for Travel

Many families make their way across the border every year. In order to prepare for the journey they must make decisions as to what to bring. Using the form below, have the students “pack a box” which is around 12” x 18. As you plan, think about your basic needs for health, work and school. Make sure to pack those things first. This is a great time to discuss the economic concepts of scarcity and how people must provide for their needs before their wants. After completing the worksheet discuss them with the class allowing students to question each other about wants vs. needs.

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Why I Need It</th>
<th>Does It Fit?</th>
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Racism Free Society

Most of us have experienced some form of racism throughout our lives. Pancho experiences this in the play *Breaking Through* on several occasions. Follow the instructions below to create a racism free classroom/school.

1. Pretend that you are the leaders of your community and it is your goal to create a racism free community.
2. Devise a plan in order to achieve this goal.
3. What sort of things do you need to put in place to make this happen?
4. What changes should be made, if any, in your community – in schools, churches, government organizations, etc.?
5. If you believe you already live in a racism free society, think about other issues your community could focus on, such as sexism, classism and discrimination towards certain groups.
6. After you have drafted a plan, what can you do as a school to implement it?
7. Would you agree to do all that you can to create a racism and oppression free community?
8. If it is possible, have your students agree to follow the plan they’ve come up with and then have them sign a typed version of the agreement.
9. Post the agreement in your classroom or school.
Across
3. City where the Jimenez family lives
7. John Steinbeck novel about a family of poor sharecroppers
8. Popular dance move in the 1960s
9. To come to a country of which one is not a native, usually for permanent residence

Down
1. Pancho’s school mascot
2. Fruit grown by Mr. Jimenez
3. Sum of money or other aid granted to a student, because of merit or need
4. Farm laborer who harvests crops seasonally
5. Spanish word referring to the US Border Patrol
6. Tenant farmer who gives a portion of the crops grown to the landlord in lieu of rent
Breaking Through Crossword Solution

This guide has been compiled by Erin Berman