



Dear Educator,

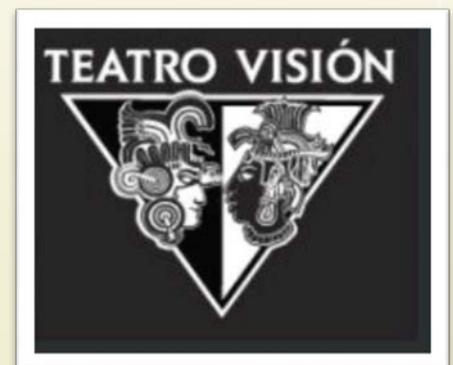
Meet Gabriel Jason Dean an award winning playwright and screenwriter. He grew up near the Appalachian Mountains in North Georgia in a poor neighborhood as the child of young teenagers who were still struggling to find themselves. This challenging upbringing inspires much of his work where he likes to reflect on his “stretching beyond their circumstances, stretching toward understanding, stretching to survive.” He received his M.F.A from the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas- Austin. His work has been recognized with numerous awards. *The Transition of Doodle Pequeño* written in 2012 is his first play written specifically for a youth audience. This play was recognized with the American Alliance for Theater & Education Distinguished Play Award, Kennedy Center TYA Award and the New England Theater Conference Aurand Harris Award. He currently lives in Brooklyn, New York where he continues to work on multiple projects.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare your students for the play. Here you will find activities that focus on the play, closure activities and extension activities for after the play. The suggested activities allow students to explore major social themes such as family separation, bullying, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and the power of language. It is an opportunity to create a positive community in your classrooms through this beautiful story about overcoming personal hardships. This educator’s guide is aligned to Visual and Performing Arts: Theater State Standards for 5th grade to 12th grade. You will also find that it aligns to other Common Core Standards for the same grade levels. This play is appropriate for all age groups and it can be adapted for lower grade levels.

Synopsis

The Transition of Doodle Pequeño takes us into a Halloween night in a Southern California neighborhood where Doodle is trying to get used to his new complex building but what he wants to do most of all is go out and trick-or-treat. The only one keeping him company is Valencia his imaginary and entertaining goat friend. The night turns into a life changing experience for Doodle who meets Reno, a boy who likes to wear dresses. He also meets Marjoram and Toph, two kids from the complex who bully Reno. That night Doodle learns the meaning of friendship and how to stand up to for what is right while celebrating the differences that make us unique.



Mónica Rivero M.A.
High School Teacher M.U.S.D
srarivero@gmail.com

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- See live theater as a form of creative expression
- Derive meaning from how a performance articulates current social contexts
- Explore vital social themes

Before the play

Main Characters

- Doodle..... a fifth-grade boy
- Mama..... Doodle's mom
- Valencia..... Doodle's imaginary goat
- Reno..... a fifth-grade neighbor
- Baumgartner... a mysterious older man
- Marjoram..... a sixth grader
- Toph..... Marjoram's little brother

Assign students a character prior to seeing the play and have them make observations of the character and how the actor represented that character.

Prior Knowledge

1. Write about a time you felt isolated or alone, what were the circumstances of the situation? What did you do to feel better?
2. Have you or someone you know ever been bullied? If you were the one being bullied what did you do to change the situation? If you were witnessing someone being bullied what did you do?
3. Discuss the meaning of being a bystander and how it contributes or can deter bullying.

Themes

- Immigration
 - Family separation due to parent deportation
 - Bullying
 - Use of hurtful language
 - Gender identity and gender expression
 - Sexual orientation
1. How are these themes present in the play? What characters are directly affected by these themes?
 2. What connections can you make with these themes and other works of literature, a movie or your own life?
 3. What connections can you make with these themes and American History?

CA Visual Arts Standards:

Grades 5-8th

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

Grades 9-12

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theater

4.3 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey meaning in his or her performances.

Connection to Social Studies Curriculum: This is an opportunity to discuss how LGBTQ communities have been erased from our history. It can be an invitation for teachers to connect their history curriculum to include it as required by The FAIR Education Act, SB 48 (Leno) 2011. See [Teaching Tolerance](#) for a comprehensive podcast on LGBTQ contribution in American history.

Connection to Language Arts: In an effort to create cultural awareness and increase representation examine your personal classroom library. Check out [First Book Marketplace](#), [GLBTRT](#) and [American Library Association](#) for recommendations.

After the play

Discussion Questions

General Questions

1. What stands out to you after seeing the play?
2. What do you think the main message of the play was?
3. How did it impact you personally?
4. As you saw the play did you have conflicting viewpoints?
5. What questions came up to you at the end?

Character Questions

1. Why does Doodle have Valencia? What does she help him cope with?
2. What word does Valencia make up and when does she use it?
3. Why do Toph and Marjoram bully Reno? What words hurt Reno's feelings?
4. Who is depicted as the scary troll?
5. At the end Toph hesitates to say something about Reno's dress. What do you think that means?
6. At the end of the play both Reno and Doodle say Valencia's made up word, what do you think is the significance of that?

Plot analysis

Prior to the play teachers can introduce the different elements of theater and after the play as a class or in groups have students identify the structural elements of the plot and diagram it - exposition, complication, crisis, climax, and resolution (5th grade). Students can also identify theatrical elements within the play such as foreshadowing, crisis, rising action, and catharsis (7th grade).

Symbols

In theater, a prop or a costume on stage can a symbol that represents something abstract, such as a concept, quality, or a wider idea.

1. What do the blood pumpkins represent? What do we learn they really are? What is the importance of this in the story?



CCSS ELA Grade 5
Speaking 1

CCSS ELA Grade 6-12
Speaking 1

CA Visual Arts Standards: Grades 5-12th
1.0 Artistic Perception – Comprehension and analysis of the elements of theater

Activities

Writing: In the play, people and objects are not what they appear to be. For instance, Baumgartner is thought to be a scary troll. The blood pumpkins are really oranges. Doodle changes his viewpoint of them as he learns more about them. Discuss a time in your life when you met someone who was different than your first impression. Describe how your first impression changed. Compare your experience to Doodle's.

Art: Doodle's imaginary friend is Valencia, a goat. If you were in a time of need what would your imaginary friend look like? What would be your word of many meanings? Create a mini poster of your imaginary friend and your word of many meanings.

CCSS ELA Grade 5

Writing 4

CCSS ELA Grade 6-12

Writing 3

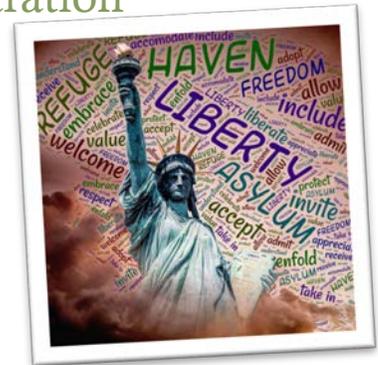
CA Visual Arts Standards: Grades 5-12th

2.0 Creative Expression - Communication and Expression through Original Works of Art

Extension Activities

Immigration and Family Separation

Select an article from [the UCLA Reimagining Migration site](#). Read it as a class and have students select a quote from the article that stands out to them. Students can reflect on the significance of that quote and use it for a discussion with a partner, in a small group, or with the entire class. The same can be done with the video selections in the site. These articles can also be used in a closed reading strategy. Additionally, students can also use them as sources for argument writing. For elementary or middle school teachers, see [Engage NY](#) for articles appropriate to that grade level.



Oral history

This play tells the story of Doodle and in some way it shows how important it is to tell our story to help us understand each other. Students can conduct oral interviews of a family member or a community member to learn and understand their story. See this resource for a list of [recommended questions](#) to conduct an oral interview.

CCSS ELA Grade 5

Reading 4

Writing 1-2

CCSS ELA Grade 6-12

Reading 1

Writing 1-2

Bullying & Class Pledge

Collect media images or videos both positive and negative that appeal to youth that can be used as a conversation starter about how media influences how we view gender roles and gender identity. Students can be asked to assess media for samples too. How does the media send the message of what is considered masculine or feminine? What descriptions are presented? Should we subscribe to these images? How do these messages affect our views of others and how we may treat them? How can these influences lead to bullying? Students can complete a graphic organizer prior to the discussion or to prepare for writing.



Prepare for a class pledge on taking a stand against bullying starting in the classroom that will hopefully empower students to take this pledge to their school community. In preparation, have an honest discussion in pairs/groups or as a class about the type of hurtful language students have witnessed or that someone else said to them. Have them think about the impact of that language on a person and possibly with what intent it was said. Students can then brainstorm strategies to challenge the use of hurtful language when it comes up. What can they say to speak up against bullying? A suggested strategy is the [Speak up at School](#) model. As a class you can create a pledge against bullying.

CCSS ELA Grade 5

Writing 1-2

Writing 8

Speaking 1, 3- 5

CCSS ELA Grade 6-12

Writing 3

Speaking 1, 4-5

Consider creating or joining a student club in your campus to celebrate the LGBTQ community. School campuses in the area are growing with names such as True Colors, GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) and Queer Student Union. Clubs have organized activities in October specifically for LGBTQ History month. Students on some campuses have events on October 11th for [National Coming Out Day](#). Others have joined in the Día de los Muertos celebration to create altars honoring prominent LGBTQ figures that have passed away.

LGBTQ



Useful Sites

www.teachingtolerance.org

www.thetrevorproject.org

www.safeschool.info

www.reimaginingmigration.org

www.engageny.org

www.firstmarketplace.org

Local Resources

[Santa Clara County Office of LGBTQ Affairs](#)

[The LGBTQ Youth Space](#)

[Outlet](#)

[Billy DeFrank LGBTQ Community Center](#)

[PFLAG San Jose](#)

[Colectivo Acción Latina de Ambiente \(ALA\)](#)