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Bringing Indigenous Stories to the Classroom through Art and Comics

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> My country, 'tis of thee,
>
> Sweet land of Liberty,
>
> Of thee I sing;
>
> Land where my Fathers died,
>
> Land of the Pilgrims' pride,
>
> From every mountain side,
>
> Let freedom ring.
>
> – Samuel Francis Smith.

Introduction

The California social studies standards emphasize students' ability to describe Native American tribes, their various traditions through folktales, and their interactions with the new settlers. This crosses over to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for the English Language Arts that emphasize recounting the stories (including folktales) from diverse cultures. That said, there still seems to be a gap while representing the history of this "land." The textbooks talk about the Native American culture groups, but they don't fully address their oral traditions and stories that make up such a valuable part of their culture. This makes me wonder whether my third graders realize the importance of the heritage of the indigenous people who lived here long before the Europeans arrived, and their wisdom that was passed down through generations: their voices seem to be disappearing from our classrooms and are often lost.

My goal through this unit is to bring folktales into my classroom, especially legends and myths from Native American origins, by using images and text to drive comprehension. This juxtaposition makes the stories more complex, but at the same time provides new ways to understand the plot thus enabling my English language learners both to gain understanding from the images and to deepen it through text. To achieve this goal, I propose to use Matt Dembicki's book, *Trickster*, which is a collection of twenty-one short stories formatted in a graphic-novel or a comic style. The book combines the text with the authentic Native American art and symbols that introduce the students to various tricksters. The focus of this unit is on the figure of Coyote.

Art plays an important role in Native American culture, because the stories emerge from a mostly oral tradition, passed down through songs, dances, and/or paintings, depending upon different culture groups. Therefore, art was an important assistant to storytelling. These folktales usually center on the popular characters of tricksters, such as Coyote or Raven, who personify human traits. They almost always teach a lesson or explain how the world came to be. The lessons from the stories instill a strong sense of moral character in the readers and can be made explicit by analyzing the choices made by the characters and their points of view. I believe through these stories, I will be able to introduce Native American culture and ways of life to my students.

Demographics

I teach third grade at Los Arboles Literacy and Technology Academy, one of the fourteen elementary schools in the Franklin McKinley School District. The demographics of my students represent the Seven Trees Community in the South Side of San Jose, California. The school serves around 500 students from kindergarten to third grade. Of our families, 95.7% are socioeconomically disadvantaged; 70.6% of our students are identified as English Language Learners; and 86% are of Hispanic/Latino descent. Within the Hispanic/Latino groups, there are two main differences categorizing their history: Mexican-Americans (born or long established in US), and Mexicans (recent immigrants). The subgroups of Mexican-Americans include: Chicanos, Californios, Ohlones, and Mexicans long established in the community. The different groups within Mexicans or recent immigrants can be distinguished more simply as rich or poor, Spanish or Indian, Northern, Central, or Southern.[1]

Rationale and Content

The purpose of a folktale is to entertain as well as to enlighten. Folktales present the version of traditional stories whose tellers express the richness of a heritage with their distinctive voices. For no single voice can communicate a cultural heritage as deep and broad as North America with its diverse regions, languages, and dialects.[2] Through this unit I intend to bring in this rich heritage into my classroom by including the art, history, and value, from the diverse culture groups, not just limited to the California tribes.

Native American culture is deeply rooted in their natural environment. Their stories harness the power of the nature to teach us meaningful life lessons. These values are depicted through their stories and art forms

portrayed through symbols or characters taken from nature, such as Coyote, Raven, Eagle, constellations and so on. The most popular characters portrayed in these folktales are the tricksters. Nature brings the animal characters portrayed as tricksters and their traits together. These characters through stories, art, and performances teach us morals through the choices they make and their points of view. These are the two Common Core Standards that the unit will focus on. In *Trickster,* students will be able to explore a variety of legends from diverse regions where characters present their unique wisdom and points of view. The points of view can be distinguished between the trickster (the protagonist) and the other characters.

The book beautifully combines image and text to bring about the lessons from nature depicted by the tricksters as they personify human traits. Because these stories were mainly a part of an oral tradition, Matt Dembicki, the editor of *Trickster* realized that there was a need for a book that was accessible to both children and adults in which Native American artists could bring together art and stories. He was struck by two things: how great the tales would be in a sequential art format, and how such a project will require Native American storytellers and artists to write their own stories based on their tribe's trickster tales to maintain authenticity."[3] Native American writers who initially were not keen on working with him for the fear of misrepresentation and stereotyping their culture joined hands with him when they realized his intentions were not to "westernize the stories," but to provide a resource to the readers to learn about "the original people of this land and to foster a greater appreciation and understanding among all inhabitants."[4]

The characters are used in different contexts in the different folktales. In the Native American context, these *animals* are not intended to portray animals at all. They personify First People, who lived before humans existed. They had powers as they created the world, they instituted human life and culture,[5] they made decisions, and their choices affected events such as the way the world was formed or the way a problem was solved. Many characters were portrayed as tricksters in the Native North American cultures—Raven and Bluejay in the Pacific Northwest, Spider in the northern Plains, and Hare in the Southeast—but Coyote is the trickster "par excellence for the largest number of American Indian cultures."[6] *Trickster* will introduce students to a variety of characters such as Raven, Bluejay, Owl, or even a human being, to name a few, but Coyote is the main inspiration for creating this unit.

"But, why Coyote?"[7] Coyote, the most popular trickster in the legends might personify a character that exhibits intellect, clever thinking and logic. The word *coyote* was borrowed by the Spanish-speaking Mexicans from the Aztec word *coyotl.* These animals, scientifically known as *canis latrans* were at one time only found in the prairies and the deserts in the western USA and Mexico,[8] and were called *prairie wolves,* [9]but today they can be found anywhere in North America. They easily adapt to their surroundings, as they can thrive on small animals like mice, voles, or even lizards, and if there is a lack of these, they can even eat garbage. Coyotes can kill calves or lambs on people's ranches or farms, and come across as wily and clever.[10] As the folktales are influenced by nature, these physical characteristics lend the Coyote with a rather notorious reputation as we can see in Warner Brothers character, Wile E. Coyote.

Coyote stories range over a wide geographical area, from Canada to Guatemala and from Pacific Ocean to the Great Plains, but the role of the coyote greatly varies through these regions. It can range from a mythical character and a creator, such as Old Man Coyote in the northwest and California, where he is regarded as one of the First People, which is evident in the Chumash culture, to a more modern trickster in the southwest.[11]

The word "trickster" might imply, negatively, that the character will always trick others. Sometimes he can be wise, and other times he can appear to be foolish;[12] but is always present creating the way the world works,

and/or teaching us lessons that he himself learns sometimes quite accidently. For example, in the story *Coyote and the Pebbles,* Coyote misunderstands the directions of the night people to draw a portrait for more light, and ends up making a mistake in his eagerness. In his frustration, he scatters the pebbles, resulting in the creation of stars.[13] Often tricksters learn lessons through their actions. For example, in the story *Horned Toad Lady and the Coyote,* Coyote was too impatient in his desire to learn the song from the Horned Toad, and ends up eating her, but as a result he realizes "that only if [he] had been nicer, she would have sung her song," which were his last words as the Horned Toad Lady used her "sharp horned body" to get out of Coyote's body. This teaches us the lesson that what is not ours cannot be taken by force and violence might end up hurting us in the process.[14]

These stories will enable my students to not only learn the complex plot structures of a story, but also infer the meaning through the use of voice, personification, and points of view of the characters who make their decisions, and suffer a consequence of their actions or inactions.

In this unit, students are not just working with a text; they are working with images as well, which play an important role in comprehending the plot. As the students read the stories, they will look at the images intently, the initial picture walk will help the students make better sense of the plot, the sequence of the events, the characters, and how their choices affect these events. In the story *Coyote and the Pebbles,* Coyote "runs to the left and then to the right," until he trips and falls, which is beautifully portrayed in the series of panels where readers can see the action almost in motion.

Point of view sets the tone of the story. It usually is a challenge for students to distinguish between different points of view, but *Trickster's* comic format acts as a visual tool for the students to comprehend the tricky plot of the stories and also to distinguish the different points of view. The image and text combination gives the images in the story a linear structure that provides a depth to the plot. Pictures can express what words alone cannot. Through these graphics students can visualize a character's point of view better than only through words. In *Coyote and the Pebbles* the night creatures are asked by the "Great Mystery" to gather pebbles and make a portrait out of them in the sky for light. Coyote is flummoxed by the decision made by the "night people." In his perspective, he is the better artist, apt for the job of creating a night portrait to bring light, and in his hurry to prove his expertise, he loses his balance and his pebbles. His emotion can be better understood by dramatizing the story. Students are able to experience a story from the perspective of the characters as they *speak* their parts. This also allows the students to have their own perspective on the situations in the stories. They are able to distinguish their points of view based on the evidence in the text about the point of view presented by the character or the narrator. Students might argue about whether they think that Coyote was right in thinking that others were selfish, whether he should have watched where he was going, and how the story would have changed if he had not made a mistake.

Ohlone

This unit is integrated through social studies and art. The social studies standards focus on the California Native American groups, especially the Ohlone, who are the coastal tribe indigenous to San Jose. Diverse indigenous culture groups in California were local to the four geographical regions of the state: mountain region, the central valley, coastal, and the desert region. The Ohlone told stories orally, mostly in the form of dance. These stories were about creation, the celebration of important events, and prayer to the Spirits. Other art forms from Ohlone culture include baskets and jewelry made of abalone shells.

Unfortunately, with the arrival of the Missionaries, they were forced to convert to Christianity. The Ohlone

people preferred to hide rather than be converted. In this process, the indigenous population suffered disease and cruel hardships, and their population drastically decreased.[15] The anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, in the 1970s, declared the group extinct. In the 1990s, however, the Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen nation from Monterey submitted a letter of intent to declare that they still existed.[16]

At present, people from the Ohlone culture are coming together to revive their heritage and to educate people about their history and culture. It's a process of healing as Charlene Sul mentions in her interview: people are survivors of their history and now they are helping one another heal.[17] To use the words of the *Great Mystery*, from the story *Coyote and the Pebbles,* "We cannot change what has happened, healing can happen. By looking at what happened yesterday and its consequences, one can change tomorrow."[18]

There aren't enough resources appropriate for third grade level from Ohlone culture that combines the texts and images to narrate their stories, as their stories were mostly narrated through dances. I would begin this unit by showing a variety of art and images including photographs that represent the Ohlone culture, but also storytelling, and history of various culture groups, such as the Coyote dances from the California Indian groups. In this way I hope to pique the interest of my students in the history as well as impart rigor in the curriculum as it integrates social studies. I want to expose my students to the stories of Native American culture. I want my students to be able to compare and contrast the character of Coyote as he appears in the stories as well as the art from these cultural groups.

Art

Art has been used as a form of expression for hundreds of years. Just like Native stories, Native art is rooted in culture and their environment. According to David W. Penny, Art can be considered a visual language that is "at once personal and cultural [that] can release the power of universe through symbol and metaphor."[19]

Native art, including clothing, jewelry, blankets, and rugs, masks, totem poles, baskets and bowls, is "painted, carved, sewn, woven, or built, and can incorporate such materials as feathers, porcupine quills, tree bark, animal skins, and hair, and wood." [20] Today some Native American artists produce mainstream contemporary art- paintings on canvas, photographs, and performance art.[21] Art can be considered the first language of people, from ancient rock painting to medieval manuscripts and tapestries to the modern comic strips. These all are genres that essentially narrate a story, taking the form of what Mitchell calls an image-text.[22]

Trickster serves as a vehicle for conserving these stories in a visual and written form. Stories are best comprehended when we can visualize and bring them alive in our mind's eye. The images set the characters and setting of a story in motion, while the words and dialogues aid the images and lend voice to the characters. Therefore, the graphic collection of the trickster stories provides a visual imagery to the characters' choices as they personify human traits. For example on page eight, the students "see" the trickster transform into its human form,[23] they can visualize that the trickster is showing human characteristics, it symbolizes the personality of an eager person. In the *Horned Toad Lady and the Coyote,* the characters are shown to wear clothes that symbolize human traits.

As an entry point for this unit, I will use a variety of photographs of art that represents different tricksters. Though this unit focuses only on the Coyote, I still want to introduce the students to other popular symbols from the different Native American culture groups, such as Bluejay, Hummingbird, Eagle, regalia of the dancers, and baskets and other art. They will view dances from several California regions, and images of Coyote from other Native American cultures. Then they will be able to compare them to the images in the

book, *Trickster*.

Students will analyze the illustrations in the graphic narratives to see how Coyote is represented in these stories. In the story *Coyote and the Pebbles,* Coyote scattered the "pebbles" and created the "stars," whereas in the story, *Horned Toad Lady and the Coyote,* he appears as the Old Man Coyote but learns a lesson himself.

Graphic Narrative

Medieval tapestries and ancient rock paintings told a story that flowed usually in a sequence, they can be argued to be the first comic strips as they had the characters that told the stories. The scenes on these art forms seem to move in time and space combining the images and sometimes captions to tell a story. My idea of using a comic book was inspired by the Medieval Bayeux Tapestry's comic version for children. The original tapestry visually narrates the story of the Norman Conquest. The comic version of the Tapestry has taken a "comic" form for children. *Trickster* is a collection of short stories written in a graphic or a comic format. Because they are short, they cannot be considered a graphic novel, so I will refer to them as "graphic narratives." This book is visual treat with the authentic Native American art in the form of symbols, colors, characterization, which when combined with the text is a store of information not just for the lessons but also the culture and history of the indigenous people.

My third graders are mostly English language learners and to them, "Everything's better with pictures" (this is a favorite line of my one of my students). They have a keen interest in reading *comics* or *graphic novels.* I have heard people exclaim, "But comics are not serious books!" My argument against that position is that images lend the text a graphic quality that can resemble a play. That is to say, when we read a comic book it seems like we are reading a play but at the same time, we could be "watching" it, because images and dialogues together lend characters an expression. This expression makes it easier for the students to visualize their points of view – through the characters' facial expressions and through their dialogues or interjections. Images play an important role in helping readers, especially English Learners, to comprehend complex text. These help young readers visualize the information and help foster their imagination. There is a reason graphic narrative or comics are becoming increasingly popular in the classroom, as they combine the image and the text, making the stories seem more vivid.

There has been a reticence to formally teach "comics" as a genre of literature. It is fair to mention that graphic narratives are newer phenomena in the classroom as many teachers have not taught this genre explicitly in primary grades or have seen it modeled. Also, people often assume that comics such as *Spiderman* or *Superman* have no serious content*,* but Spiegelman defied that idea with his comic, *Maus.* This comic proved to the readers that, "simple style doesn't necessitate simple story."[24]

The comic is gaining popularity with the readers of all age groups. The combination of image and text engages the audience, because the readers can identify with the characters.[25] They get involved with the characters' choices that allow them to form their own perspective. They feel happy or sad for the character. In the story *Coyote and the Horn Toad Lady,* the reader knows that the Coyote had it coming to him, that he learned a lesson, but the reader might feel sorry for the character: he might have had another chance to think about his folly.

Comics or graphic narratives have been enjoyed by young and old over the years, as the combination of the two media lends depth to a story, almost giving it a three-dimensional structure. As the images are spatial and the text is temporal,[26] "as each panel of a comic shows a single moment in time [in between] which our minds

fill the intervening moments creating an illusion of time and space."[27] Comics combine the images and texts in such a way that each image is matched to the words as well as set in time. This makes the plot seem to move through time and space, with almost a film-like motion. Students can visualize this sequence through the panels of *Trickster*, as if it were a movie or a play.

The image-text combination can show more emotion than when there are only images or text. The parts of the comic including the panels and the speech bubbles contribute to the story and the content, making it visual for the students to comprehend and infer the events. A long panel might mean a long pause, many consequent panels with the image moving its angle would show that the character is moving in time. The square comment box is what the narrator is saying in the story, while a speech bubble that has a starry shape might lend an urgent voice to the character. In the *Coyote and the Pebbles,* the starry speech bubble in the sky has an authoritative voice, "What is it that you need?" This bubble is not repeated for other characters. The speech bubbles and the lines lend an emotion to the character's voice making it more realistic to the reader.

The graphic narratives also simplify the concept of voice and point of view as the image and text are juxtaposed. The voice of the remorseful Coyote after he swallows the Horned Toad Lady is apologetic as compared to when he was impatiently asking her to teach him the song.

The sequence of the graphic narratives flows in a certain order, usually from left to right and/or from top to bottom. Thus this genre can serve both as a challenge and a tool. It can help the students make inferences about the plot lines without giving up because the text is too hard.

In the classroom I have observed that these stories offer an adequate challenge for stronger readers to be able to infer the meaning based upon both the image as well as the text and delve deeper into the "personality" of the character as portrayed. Additionally, they serve as a scaffold for English Learners as the images, dialogue bubbles, and a continuous flow makes the complex plot structure and a rigorous text accessible to the English Learners and struggling readers.

Together with the photographs of a real coyote and the art representation of Coyote from the Native American culture, this unit will provide students an intriguing opportunity to integrate art and literature by creating their own unique legends and representing their ideas on a storyboard. By exploring Native Art and the visual performances of storytelling, students will truly be enriched by the history and culture of the Native American groups and also learn the moral values that now would pass down to them. Some images that I am planning to use in my classroom would be the Coyote in the wild,[28] Navajo Creation Story,[29] Coyote as a Trickster,[30] and Coyote portrayed as First People.[31]

Strategies

We follow Sobrato Early Academic Language, SEAL, "a comprehensive model of intensive, enriched language and literacy education designed for English language learners, starting in preschool and continuing through third grade."[32] Dr. Laurie Olsen, "a national expert in English language learner education,"[33] pioneered this model with the goal of having students be English proficient by third grade. English language development is integrated in science and social studies units, and the focus is on the use of powerful and complex language

by the teachers while teaching these subjects. Our curriculum for English Language Arts is usually incorporated with science and/or social studies using the SEAL strategies. For this reason, this unit will also be integrated through social studies, with the California Native American and Local history.

I employ a number of cooperative and group learning strategies in my class, to promote social skills and communication among my students. According to researchers like Slavin, Cooperative learning has improved student achievement, race relations, and in turn students' self-esteem.[34]

Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share is a commonly used cooperative learning strategy developed by Frank Lyman.[35] This strategy is used across all grade levels and schools. It has three stages to develop higher-order thinking. In the first stage, Think – the teacher encourages students to think about a given prompt, a guiding question, or an inquiry question for a few seconds. At this time, the teacher can also model thinking aloud to show what a thought process involves. In the second stage, Pair – they pair up with a partner and talk about their thoughts with each other. This partner sharing is helpful to reduce anxiety for the students before sharing with the class, and it also provides an opportunity to them to formulate their ideas in sentences. In the third stage, Share – they share their ideas with the whole class. I will be using this strategy throughout this unit.

Collaborative Conversation

Collaborative Conversation is a SEAL strategy designed to help students communicate with each other in a safe environment. Students talk with partners or in a group in a meaningful way, one that is relevant to the topic and practice the use of academic language.

As they are guided into higher-level thinking, they learn to use respectful language such as "excuse me," "I agree with you," "I disagree with you, because…" or "in my opinion," as well as using respectful body language while interacting with others, such as maintaining eye contact while actively listening to a person and nodding your head to agree or disagree while listening.

Observation Pictures

This is another SEAL strategy, similar to the K-W-L strategy, in which the students record what they *know* (K), what they *want* to know (W) and after they are done with the unit, they write what do they want to *learn* (L). In *Observation Pictures* strategy, pictures related to the context are placed on a construction paper around the classroom. Students work with partners as they move from one picture to another recording their observations on a post-it note and pasting it on the picture. This serves as an inquiry before starting the unit.

For this unit, instead of pasting the pictures around the classroom, I will project the images and art including the performance art from the various Native American cultures. Students will work with partners or in their group as they see each image of visual and performance art, they will record their observations on the post-it provided to them.

Numbered Heads Together

In this cooperative learning strategy,[36] students work in groups. Each student is assigned a number from one to the highest number in the group. In my class, I have students in groups of four, and I assign each student a number from one to four. The idea is for the students to work together by putting their "heads together" to

come up with the solution to a guiding question.

Then I randomly select a Popsicle stick from four Popsicle sticks, which are numbered from one to four as well. The student who has the same number as that Popsicle stick is assigned the role of "spokesperson" for his or her team. The goal is for each member of the group to contribute his or her ideas, and the spokesperson records those ideas and presents them to the whole class, ensuring equity of voice.

Frontloading Vocabulary

To help my English Learners, I usually frontload the challenging vocabulary before starting a lesson. I usually bring pictures and/or real objects that match the vocabulary word in the context of the story. Students have an opportunity to use the new vocabulary words in various settings through different subject areas and centers throughout the day as they internalize the new words. This strategy can be used to either integrate English Language Development or in small groups during the designated English Language Development time. English Language Development or ELD is a structured program designed to develop English language proficiency among English Language learners. These strategies can be either integrated through a concept or can be taught separately at a designated time.

Sentence Frames

Sentence frames are provided to the students, especially the English Language Learners, to help them frame their sentences to help their conversations flow. These sentence frames are differentiated in three levels to support the students' learning such as: "Coyote wanted the song because _____;" "Coyote decides _____, because_____;" "The reason Coyote _____."

These sentence frames are used to guide students' thought process while they are working individually or in groups.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers reinforce the background knowledge of the students, and they also help them visualize the information and internalize it. They help the students brainstorm new ideas before writing. Our school uses the graphic organizers developed by the company called, Thinking Maps.[37] These graphic organizers follow a consistent pattern and a protocol for use and are color coded for ease of distinction of different ideas. Each Thinking Map serves a different purpose. There are eight Organizers, and the students will use them for sequencing story events, describing, comparing and contrasting, finding cause and effect of situations.

Freytag's Pyramid[38]

I use this model while teaching my students about the plot of a story. This model is useful because it visually shows them the beginning, middle, and end of a story. As the reader goes up the side of the pyramid, they can visually see the rising action in the plot and a need to solve a problem in the story.

Dramatization/Role play

Bringing a story to life resonates with every child in the form of pretend play and dress–up. Dramatization engages students in reading, providing them with a better understanding of "point of view" and "voice" as they take up the characters' expression. In an English learner class, it becomes most pertinent for the students to hear their voice and their language. These stories provide the students an opportunity to play with

the language. This also lends a play-like quality to reading the graphic narrative. Not only does the juxtaposition of images and text in a graphic novel gives it a character of play, as if the story is moving in both time and space; also these folktales were mostly performed orally. This play-like structure becomes a great tool for students, especially English Language learners to own the story as they act it out. The students are provided with props that they might need during the performance. This way, the students will be able to bring both the performance part of the folktale, as well as the graphic narrative concept of the stories together.

As they become a part of the dramatis personae, students get a glimpse into the characters' traits and their personalities, their perspectives and decisions through the use of intonation and inflection, students relate better with the character and enables a deeper understanding of the plot. This also helps the students infer events that might not be explicitly stated in the text. Student performances will be recorded to assess as well as showcase their learning to their parents when they visit for Open House or to see their child's work

Close Reading

Close reading is defined as "a focused rereading of a text in which you go beyond a basic understanding of the text. It may involve a passage or key quotation from a text."[39] I. A. Richards, an English poet, critic and teacher, invented this strategy as a new way of reading poetry, though currently schools and teachers use this strategy to comprehend any text, prose or poetry. This method also paved way for New Criticism. Close reading helps us make "mindful interactions with the text, [that allow us to] create new concepts or internalize new information."[40]

In this strategy the students read a text at least three times. The first reading is on-the-surface reading that sets the purpose of reading and develops background knowledge depending on explicit information. In the second reading students read a complex portion of the text, focusing on the author's craft and text structure. The third reading takes the students deeper, requiring them to analyze and synthesize information.

Graphic narrative, on the other hand, is a juxtaposition of image and text. Close reading a graphic text would include reading the images first, then reading the text, and finally reading the image and text together. This will help students make inferences. Inference is an important tool for problem solving and critical thinking. As Duffy has noted, "Inference is said to be the engine of comprehension."[41] Close reading strategy provides tools to readers, such as inference, to dig deeper into a text or an image.

Student Activities

This unit focuses on art and text. The students analyzed the characters' points of view and distinguished them from their own and from other characters by analyzing the choices made by the characters. Along with this goal, this unit is integrated into the social studies concept of the Native American culture groups of California. Art will be integrated throughout the activities, in the form of storyboard, illustrations, and art activities.

Point of View

Recess Stories

To be able to comprehend the concept of point of view, students will begin with their own recess stories.

Students will work in pairs for this activity. They will choose a friend they usually don't play with at recess. For this activity I will provide them ten-minute free recess time, so as to be able to monitor their activities. Using their collaborative skills, they will decide a recess activity or a game they want to play together.

They will write the account of their recess activity using a first-person and a third-person point of view. For instance, Partner A will write about their recess in first person's point of view, whereas Partner B will write about their recess in third person's point of view. They will be encouraged to add their feelings and their thoughts into their anecdotes as well.

They will compare and contrast their stories and analyze how different or alike their thinking process was, using a graphic organizer. This activity provides them a safe environment to practice the understanding of the concept of point of view and what it means to distinguish them from others.

Point of View Stories

After reading a story multiple times, students will rewrite that story in their own words. They will pick their favorite character from the story and rewrite the story from that character's point of view. For example, after reading the story *Coyote and the Pebbles*, students will rewrite the story from Coyote's point of view, Frog's, or from the Raven's point of view.

They will extend this activity by distinguishing their point of view from that of the characters. Students will create their own Trickster and write a story where their trickster solves a problem. They will draw their trickster and explain through their story either something that this character created or a problem that it solved. In this activity students will work in their table groups using the "Numbered Heads Together" strategy to come up with a their own trickster character. They will use a Thinking Map to describe what their character might look like and the powers or characteristics that it has and illustrate their trickster.

Habitats

The language-art component is integrated through subject areas like science and social studies through the SEAL model. Though science is not a primary focus of this unit, there can be cross-curricular activities. Students learn about Coyote's habitat and its adaptation to find more about its relevance as a character worth tricking of gaining a reputation of being wily. While the students create their own trickster, they will also create their habitats or adaptations to match their characteristics in a story.

Write your Own Trickster Tale

Students will write their own stories either with the tricksters they know about or with a trickster they created. They will create a comic or a storyboard first with the help of Kidspiration App on the iPad. These stories will be made into an eBook using the Book Creator application on the iPad. This application also has a voice feature that the students can use to dictate their story into or use it to narrate their story. This way they can reinforce reading skills when they write; they will be able to hear their own voice reading it. This gives the students ownership of their work and a sense of pride in their work.

I hope that with this unit I am able to bring in the values taught through these priceless and timeless folktales that make my students productive and responsible citizens. I hope with this unit, along with helping my students be respectful and responsible, I am able to provide a way for my students to enjoy stories of the indigenous people and explore a world of imagination as well as history.

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explains the symbol of Coyote and its diverse image in the different Native American groups.

Dalton, Bridget. "Engaging Children in Close Reading: Multimodal Commentaries and

Illustration Remix." *The Reading Teacher* 66, no. 8 (2013): 642-649. This article gives more information on close reading and explores some ideas on engaging students.

Dembicki, Matt. *Trickster: Native American tales, a graphic collection*. Fulcrum

Publishing, 2016. This is the book I plan to use for this unit.

“I.A. Richards", *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, accessed July 17, 2016. We use some

strategies so commonly that we seldom think about the person behind that strategy; encyclopedias usually have all the information that you want to find out. This is a great place to research on any other strategy in this unit as well.

Jacobs, Joanne. "Learning English." *Education Next* 16, no. 1 (2016): 38-45. This article

sums up the information about the intensive Sobrato Early Academic Language program in a very precise ad succinct way.

Kagan, Spencer. "The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning." *Educational*

Leadership 47, no. 4 (1989): 12-15. The cooperative learning strategies are shared at various professional development and teacher-training workshops. These strategies sometimes are also called Kagan strategies. In this article, Kagan talks about the value of cooperative learning and its importance in a classroom where students take ownership of their own learning.

Kroeber, Alfred Louis. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Vol. 78. Courier

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Long, Daniel, and David Carlson. "Mind the Map: How Thinking Maps Affect Student

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McCloud, Scott. "Understanding comics: The invisible art." *Northampton, Mass* (1993).

Written in a comic style, the author explains how to understand and analyze the elements of a comic.

McNeese, Tim. *Illustrated Myths of Native America: The Southwest, Western Range,*

Pacific Northwest, and California. Blandford, 1999. This book gives an account of the full cultural, geographic, and historical background of each Tribal region.

McTighe, Jay, and Frank T. Lyman. "Cueing Thinking in the Classroom: The Promise of

Theory-Embedded Tools." *Educational Leadership* 45, no. 7 (1988): 18-24. This article is about using thinking tools and strategies that promote communication in the classroom.

Mitchell, W.J.T. “Against comparison: teaching literature and the visual arts.” *Teaching*

literature and other arts. New York: Modern Language Association 1990). In his essay, Mitchell talks about the importance of images in text.

Paul, R., and L. Elder. "The Thinkers Guide to the Nature and Functions of Critical and

Creative Thought." *The Critical Thinking Community.* Dillon Beach, California, 2005. http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/CCThink_6.12.08.pdf. This is an article that talks about using close reading to develop critical thinking skills.

Peck, Catherine: *A treasury of North American folktales*. Book-of-the-Month Club, 1998.

This book illustrates the folktales from different Native American culture groups.

Penney, David W., and George C. Longfish. *Native American Art*. Hugh Lauter Levin

Assc, 1994. This book showcases the masterpieces from various Native American culture groups and explains the art from these groups.

Pitti, Stephen J. *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican*

Americans.Princeton University Press, 2003. The author relates California’s history by giving an account of the influence of ethnic Mexicans on the Silicon Valley.

Reese, Debbie. "Proceed with Caution: Using Native American Folktales in the

Classroom."*Language Arts*84, no. 3 (2007): 245-56. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41962189. The author cautions her readers against the misrepresentation of the Native culture in the popular media literature.

Russell, Marilyn, and Thomas E. Young. “Selected resources on Native American art.”

Art Libraries Journal 33, no. 2 (April 2008); 34-38. Library Literature and Information

Science Full Text (H.W. Wilson) EBSCOHost (accessed June 20, 2017). This article gives and account of the art used in Native American culture groups.

Slavin, Robert E, and Robert Cooper. "Improving Intergroup Relations: Lessons Learned

from Cooperative Learning Programs." *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 4 (winter99 1999): 647-663. *Academic Search Premier,* EBSCO*host*. This article talks about the importance of cooperative learning in diverse settings.

Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection" Kirkus Reviews 78, no. 14

(July 15, 2010): 4.MAS ultra School Edition, EBSCOhost (accessed July 11, 2017). This article is a review on the book *Trickster* compiled by Matt Dembicki.

Internet Resources

These are some websites and articles that are great resources in finding further information about content, research, and/or activities.

Common Core State Standards Initiative http://www.corestandards.org. This is an informational website with a lot of information available on Common Core.

The Sobrato Organization
http://www.sobrato.com/sobrato-philanthropies/sobrato-family-foundation/seal/program-model/ This website provides all the necessary information and resources including videos about the SEAL program that is employed by our school.

Center for Teaching: Bloom's Taxonomy https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/ This is a resource to find more information about bloom's taxonomy and ideas related to the model.

Thinking Maps http://thinkingmaps.com/why-thinking-maps-2/ For more information and samples on Thinking Maps.

An Online Resource Guide to Freytag's Pyramid
http://quickbase.intuit.com/articles/an-online-resource-guide-to-freytags-pyramid A valuable resource for background information about Freytag's model.

Recent Ohlone History in the Bay Area; Growing Up Ohlone; Ohlone Elders Project. Directed by EMAVoicesoftheEarth.2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb75oz2rTGs This is an seven part interview of Charlene Sul who is the founder of Confederation of Ohlone People.

Coyote." National Geographic kids. Accessed July 17, 2017.
http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/coyote/#coyote-howling-snow.jpg

This national geographic article is a valuable resource for both teacher and students for learning and research about coyote in its naturel habitat.

Ohlone Dances https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNt9bCz8p5g for Ohlone dance, which also describes the return of the Ohlone tribe.

Teacher Resources

A Note on the Usage of the Terms Legends and Myths

The Native American folktales were a part of an oral tradition that was passed down as songs, dances, art, legends, and myths. These traditions and cultures have often been misrepresented by the media and popular culture.[42] The phrase "myths and legends" conjoins two types of folktales that are often separated in European culture. In a discussion with Jeff Berglund, Professor of English and American Indian Literature in Northern Arizona University, I learned, "Legends and myths are frequently used by outsiders to cultures. [I tell my students that they] should only use such terms if they're comfortable using them about all faith traditions, including their own. Cultural accounts, traditional accounts, creation narratives or stories, tribal/Ohlone stories or narratives, all might serve as solid replacements. Myth and legend have an aura of fiction or fabrication."[43] To avoid the risk of implying these stories are fictions, I will use the word stories or folktales instead of legends or myths.

Student Reading List

Dembicki, Matt. *Trickster: Native American tales, a graphic collection*. Fulcrum Publishing, 2016 is the main text used for this unit. Teachers can teach all twenty-one stories or can focus on a few at a time. This unit focuses on two stories: *Coyote and the Pebbles* pages 5-18 and *Horned Toad Lady and Coyote* pages 55-62.

Students can be provided with individual copy of this book or the stories that are focused can be printed out in color.

Another way to use this book could be on iBooks or an electronic reader if there is access to an iPad or a tablet.

Appendix: Implementing Third Grade ELA Common Core State Standards, California Social Studies Standards, Art Standards

This unit will focus on the following Reading Literature standards: R.L3.3: Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events and R.L. 3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters. *Trickster* is based on the character of tricksters who changed events around them based on the choices they made. While analyzing this, students will also work with how the characters' points of view could differ from the narrator and from the other characters.

As students perform activities involving narratives and writing pieces they focus on these writing standards: W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics of texts, supporting a point of view with reasons; and W3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details; and clear event sequences. In this unit, students will be writing narratives based on their own trickster tales,

as well as opinion pieces describing their points of view.

Through various cooperative-learning strategies involving partner and group work, students develop social skills, respectful interactions, and collaboration with peers bringing in Speaking and Listening Standards: SL.3.1 Engaged effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on great three topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and SL.3.3 Ask and answer questions about information from the speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.

As this unit is integrated through social studies, the main History and Social Science standards that this unit focuses on are: 3.2.1. Describe national identities, religious beliefs, customs, and various folklore traditions. 3.2.2. Discuss the ways in which physical geography, including climate, influenced how the local Indian nations adapted to their natural environment (e.g., how they obtained food, clothing, tools). 3.1.1. Identify geographical features in their local region (e.g., deserts, mountains, valleys, hills, coastal areas, oceans, lakes). 3.1.2. Trace the ways in which people have used the resources of the local region. 3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past. As students read the folktales, not only they will learn about how Indigenous people lived in the past, but also how they depended on nature and environment for their resources.

This unit combines art and text together, therefore focusing on the following Art standards, 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context: students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists. 3.1 Compare and describe various works of art that have a similar theme and were created at different time periods. 3.4 Identify and describe objects of art from different parts of the world observed in visits to a museum or gallery (e.g., puppets, masks, containers).

Notes

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4. Dembicki, Matt. *Trickster: Native American tales, a graphic collection*. Fulcrum Publishing, 2016. p.225
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7. Bright, William. *A coyote reader*. University of California Press, 1993. p 2-5
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15. Recent Ohlone History in the Bay Area; Growing Up Ohlone; Ohlone Elders Project. Directed by EMAVoicesoftheEarth.2011 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb75oz2rTGs
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31. Ibid. 40-41
32. Joanne Jacobs, "Learning English." 40.
33. Ibid. 40
34. Robert Slavin, “Improving Intergroup Relations: Lessons Learned from Cooperative Learning Strategies,” Journal of Social Issues 648.
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