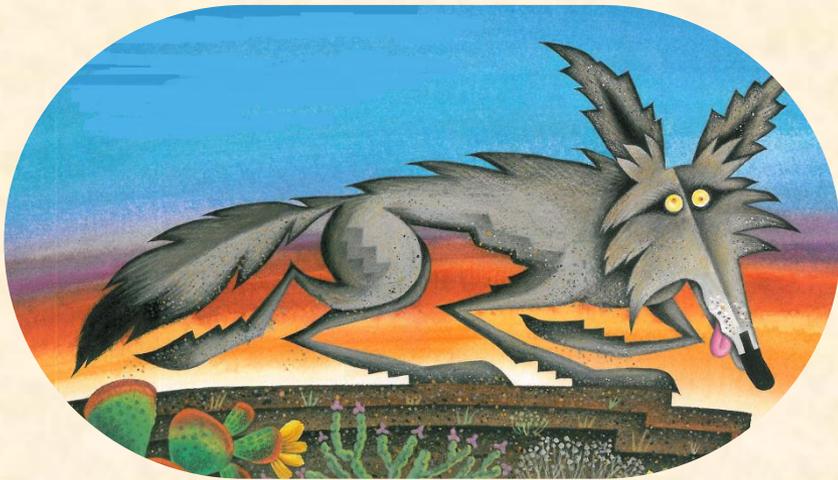


MYTHSCAPES INTERACTIVE PRODUCTIONS

PRESENTS:

A TALE OF TWO TRICKSTERS

**COMMUNICATING SCIENCE
THROUGH ART AND INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING**



&



NSF RESEARCH DAY, University of Florida, October 25, 2011.

By: Simone Ferreira de Athayde, PhD and Vivian Zeidemann, PhD candidate.

Collaboration: Patricia Delamonica Sampaio, Ms.

Tropical Conservation and Development Program (TCD) and Amazon Conservation Leadership Initiative (ACLI).

Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida. <http://www.tcd.ufl.edu/about.shtml>

Adapted from the books by *Gerald McDermott*.



Introduction

This mini-workshop was developed as an example of ways in which we might find creative and engaging ways to communicate science and complex scientific concepts to different audiences.

The stories of the two tricksters brought here adapting the outstanding work of author and illustrator Gerald McDermott can be used to teach diverse scientific concepts to various educational levels, from elementary to graduate school. In the end of this booklet you will find suggestions of concepts and disciplinary fields that may be explored through these myths.

The interactive storytelling approach used in our stories and in the “Mythscapes Interactive Productions” is based on the philosophy of learning by doing and experiential learning, in which the students and audience get engaged in the act of telling the story, as characters, players of instruments, tricksters or narrators.

Through their engagement in the process of storytelling, the participants feel motivated in learning the content brought in the myths and metaphors, and are able to memorize and make meaning of the concepts worked through an alternative, creative, and fun way.

Procedure

The procedure consists of purposely not revealing the method and the content to participants beforehand, so they can discover and make sense of things by the end of the mini-workshop. You will need a digital projector and a big room if you plan to have dramatization of the stories.

The target public can vary from elementary school kids to graduate students. It's up to you to adapt the method and the content for your audience.

This mini-workshop might be developed in a time frame of 30 to 45 minutes, followed by a deepening of concepts brought in the stories, that may be a reading discussion of texts or academic papers, text interpretation, mini-lectures or other formats.

Before you start developing the story, ask your participants to pay attention to the content and to the method used to tell the story. Then, you can ask four volunteers to participate, two to be narrators and two to be “tricksters”. The narrators intercalate between the Coyote and Jabuti stories. They will be using Coyote and Jabuti badges or labels. The “tricksters” will choose two musical instruments (you might bring some instruments used by indigenous peoples in the Western US and in the Brazilian Amazon).

You introduce the first slide explaining the geographical and cultural context of these characters and of the indigenous peoples that tell these stories until nowadays.

Then, the narrators start to read the stories intercalating between the Coyote and the Jabuti. Everytime that there is a “Trick Coyote” or “Trick Jabuti” call, the person with the musical instrument playing the other character should play the instrument and move his or her body representing what was told about the other character in that slide. Nobody knows exactly when they are supposed to trick the other, so they have to pay attention and be ready for improvisation.

In an elementary classroom, you can organize a dramatization of the stories dividing the class in two groups: one is the “Coyote tribe” and the other is the “Jabuti” tribe. They can be the different characters of the stories.

In the end, both Coyote and Jabuti “trick each other” with their instruments, they might try to touch each other or run after each other if they want.

After the stories are told, you can proceed to the interpretation and reflection questions in the end. They will introduce the themes you will develop in a further moment or class, such as ecology and geography, anthropology, chaos theory, complexity, conservation and other disciplinary fields as you wish (see last section for suggestions).

ENJOY OUR TRICKSTERS!

Geographic and Cultural Background

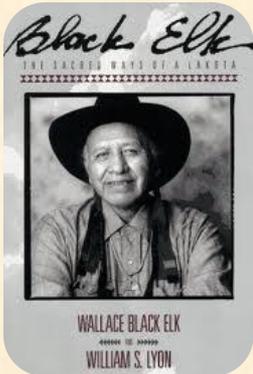
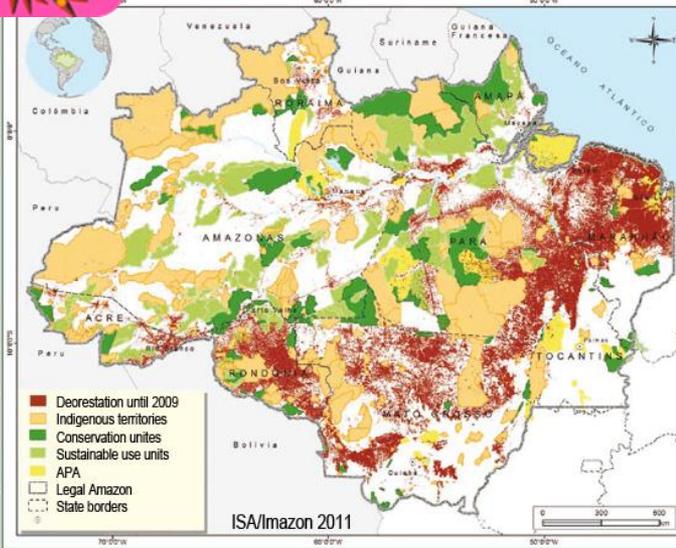


Coyote is from the Southwest Region of the US. His tales are told by North American Indigenous peoples, such as the Zuni, the Lakota and the Hopi, among many others.

North and South America



Jabuti is from the Amazonian region in Brazil. His tales are told by Amazonian Indigenous peoples.



Hopi students



Xingu Park students



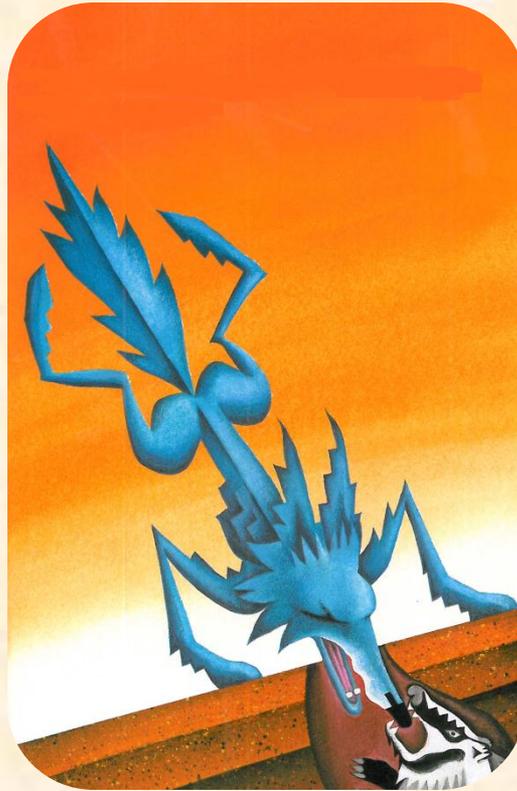
Matari Kaiabi

The Tricksters

Coyote.
Blue Coyote.
He was going along,
following his nose.

He had a nose for trouble.

Once, he stuck his nose
into Badger's hole and
got bitten.



Then, he wanted to look as
beautiful as the woodpecker,
with a flaming red head, but
his fur caught fire....

TRICK COYOTE!



Jabuti played a song on his flute. His
shell was smooth and shiny, and his
song was sweet.

All the creatures of the rain forest
listened to his song.

For some, Jabuti's song was sour.

Jaguar could remember when Jabuti
tricked him chasing his own tail.

Coyote came to a place where earth meets sky. He heard laughing and singing.

He saw a flock of crows. They were chanting and dancing.

He saw the crows flying through the canyon. He wanted to be like them:

Oh, if only I could fly...I would be the greatest coyote in the world!



The birds loved Jabuti's music, and they sang when he played.

All except vulture, who could not sing at all.

He was jealous of Jabuti and waited for the day when he could eat the little tortoise.



Coyote called the crows and asked permission to join them.

Old Man Crow said to his flock: Let's have some fun with him!

But Coyote not only wanted to dance, he wanted to fly too. He envied the crows.

TRICK JABUTI!

There came a time when all the birds were invited for a festival in heaven.

The King of Heaven called them together to sing, to rejoice, and to receive his blessing.

When he knew about the festival, Jabuti wanted to go too.



The crows plucked feathers from their left wings into Coyote's body

"You are ready to fly", said Old Man Crow.

Coyote joined the dance...he was very proud of himself...



"I want to play my flute for the King of Heaven", Jabuti said.

Vulture laughed at him. "I might not be able to make music like you", said Vulture, "but I can spread my wings and fly".

"Take me with you", Jabuti pleaded.

"Climb on my back little friend", he said to the tortoise.

The crows soared into the sky. Coyote followed. He tilted to one side, since his feathers were only from the left wing of each bird.

He fell to the ground. "Wait", he cried out. "Don't leave me behind!"

The crows said: "We must balance him", and started to pluck feathers from their right wings into Coyote's fur. He cringed.



TRICK COYOTE!

Jabuti held tight to Vulture's feathers and they flew high above the treetops.

They had almost reached heaven when Vulture swooped and turned upside down.

Jabuti slipped off his back, tumbling down through the sky.



He cried out:
*"Twigs and bushes,
Flowers and trees,
Move aside,
Make way for me!"*

TRICK JABUTI!

“Now I’m perfect!” said Coyote. “I can fly as well as the rest of you”.

Coyote has become rude and boastful. The crows were no longer having fun.



The birds flew into the sky.

Coyote hopped along, struggling to keep up.

“Carry me!”, he demanded.

All the plants and trees spread apart to make way for Jabuti, but he forgot to call to the rock.

Jabuti fell into the rock and his smooth, shiny shell broke into pieces.



At that moment, the festival in heaven stopped.

“Where is Jabuti”?, The King of Birds asked.

“How would I know?” Vulture answered.

Toucan, Macaw and Hummingbird found Jabuti. He was lying helplessly in the forest. His beautiful shell was broken.

The birds gathered the pieces and patched him together.



The crows circled Coyote but didn't carry him.

Instead, they took back their feathers, one by one.

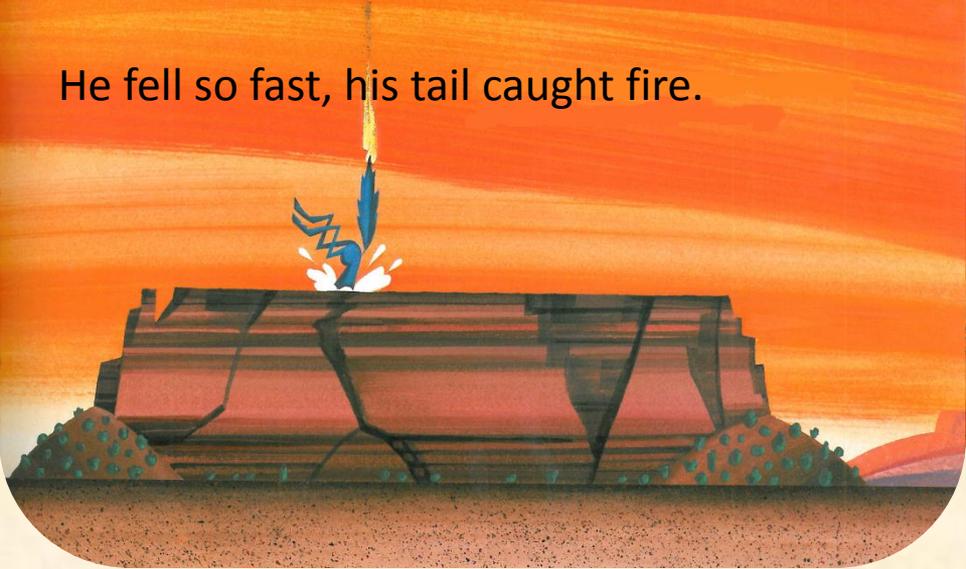


Coyote sank through the air...



Fell straight down...

He fell so fast, his tail caught fire.



To this day, he is the color of dust and his tail has a burnt, black tip.

Coyote has a nose for trouble...
He always finds it!

TRICK EACH OTHER!

Jabuti played a song of thanks for them.
And where the birds have touched Jabuti,
they each took on a new color.

To this day, tortoises have their shell
cracked and patched...

Vulture stayed the same dull color. He still
can't sing.





INTERPRETATION AND REFLECTION



Questions to instigate thinking and reflection:

- Are there similarities among these stories? Give 1 example.
- What can you learn from these stories?
- How did you feel participating in the storytelling process by playing instruments and moving your body?
- Why Coyote wasn't successful in his idea?
- What metaphor(s) can you learn from Jabuti and Coyote stories?
- How could you apply these stories to situations in your own life?
- What scientific concepts could be learned from these stories?
- Could you use this stories in your own research or teaching activities? How?



APPLICATIONS



Learning Method: Experiential learning, learning by doing, interactive storytelling. The students “participate” in the teaching/learning process through stories that carry concepts and metaphors, enhancing the learning experience.

Other methods: crafts, text interpretation, class projects, storytelling techniques (digital, puppets, theatre, drama, etc).

Content - suggestions of themes for:

Elementary/middle school level: ecology, geography, zoology, social studies, indigenous peoples studies, music and art.

College and graduate level:

Systems Theory – working the concepts of chaos and order, uncertainty and surprise (tricksters).

Anthropology - working the concepts of oral traditions, myths and metaphors, indigenous cosmology and cultural memory.

Art – drama, illustration, aesthetics, digital design, music and musical instruments.

Ecology – working the concepts of ecosystems, biogeography, animal species, and biodiversity.

Psychology – interpreting the metaphors about human behavior, archetypes and attitudes contained in the myths.



CREDITS

© **Mythsclapes Interactive Productions**. 2011. Simone Ferreira de Athayde, PhD and Vivian Zeidemann, PhD candidate, University of Florida. Contacts: simonea@ufl.edu, vivianz@ufl.edu.

Adapted from: *Gerald McDermott* books:

- Coyote – A trickster tale from the American Southwest. 1994, Voyager Books, Harcourt Brace & Company, San Diego/New York/London.

- Jabuti The Tortoise – A trickster tale from the Amazon. 2001, Harcourt Inc, San Diego/New York/London.

www.geraldmcdermott.com

References on Experiential Learning, Constructivism and Learning by doing:

David Kolb and the Experiential Learning Cycle: <http://weatherhead.case.edu/faculty/David-Kolb/>
http://www.ldu.leeds.ac.uk/ldu/sddu_multimedia/kolb/static_version.php

Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Freedom: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paulo_Freire

Constructivism (Learning Theory): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_\(learning_theory\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_(learning_theory))

Maps:

<http://www.americansouthwest.net/map.html>

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas.html>

http://news.mongabay.com/2011/0420-protected_amazon.html



THANK YOU!!