

## Susan Casler's Part 2 – Chinese Culture Club

### Rationale for project

This is one part of my project. Many middle schools and high schools have an advisory session as part of their regular curricular school days. (The nationally acclaimed T. C. Williams High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, is one of them). Students have to attend advisory, but have a choice to explore an area not covered in the regular curriculum. Other schools have gifted and talented programs infused into the curriculum, and my club objectives and activities could be part of such programs.

There is a sea change occurring in education today, at the end of 2007, as a rip tide against the strong current of No Child Left Behind implementation. The change in education is the emphasis to address the needs of students who have performed well on state mandated tests, but need additional stimulation. While it is absolutely necessary for struggling learners of any ethnic or economic background to acquire reading and math skills, it is also my mission to spark a love of learning and to open the wealth of our world to all students. All American children must understand and fully participate in all aspects of our global culture. What better way to begin than to invite all students to have hands on learning about China, soon to be the most globally influential country?

While designing my club objectives and activities, I tried to make them flexible enough to serve either curricular or extra-curricular settings. My hope is that parts could be used across the curriculum so I have included writing, social studies, music, language study, reading, and physical education activities. Our county school system will be changing the advisory period next year, and the plans I wrote for my culture club can be used as an advisory elective.

## Chinese Culture Club in a Middle School

### Also adaptable for elementary or high schools, or as a summer camp

During my Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar, elementary school colleagues from Florida, Virginia, and I, a middle school teacher, discussed starting clubs at our schools featuring Chinese culture as well as forming connections with the Dandelion School for children of migrant workers in Beijing, a site we visited. We felt strongly that we should share the importance of the good education at that school and make connections between our students and their students. My students are exactly the same age range as students at the Dandelion School. Knowing the importance of peers for middle school students, I knew that they would relish the opportunity to learn about students in China and possibly communicate with them. On our trip we also learned of cross-cultural student opportunities from *China Daily*.

Here is how I was able to get my club started:

With a limited amount of school funds available for clubs, I requested and received permission to start a Chinese Culture Club as a recognized club activity for my middle school in place of my previous club. The purpose of the club was to: increase students' awareness and interest in Chinese culture, communicate with students in China, involve the community with our club activities, and oversee my previous club's responsibility, the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee local competition. For other teachers wanting to form a similar club, the fourth purpose probably will not be one that you would choose to include. I needed to include it to get funding and permission to run my club.

The club could also be adapted as a summer camp for elementary or middle school students.

Here is my plan to meet the objectives for the club.

Objective	Activity	Materials	Timeline	Notes
Increase students' knowledge about Chinese culture	Student interest survey	Survey form  Storage box for forms, snacks, materials, student folders, etc.  Language handout of basic Chinese terms , used weekly.	1 <sup>st</sup> meeting, September 13, 2007	Learned that students had been members of a similar club in one of the three feeder elementary schools.
Above	Sharing Chinese traditional stories or artifacts and connecting them to books available in our media center or the community's public library.	Stories and artifacts gathered from my trip.	Every other meeting	Students had some familiarity with some of the stories from their previous club. Need to do a knowledge survey.
Above	Analyze student interest forms; develop previous knowledge form	Create new form to assess previous knowledge; develop activities based on student interest	Between first and second meeting	High interest in art activities
Above	Sharing folktale's background information	Website Information about the creatures that compose a dragon; downloaded info and pictures	2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting, Sept. 20	Students investigated this on their own by accessing websites recommended
Above	Identifying how shadow puppets are a part of Chinese culture, and how shadow puppets work	Film clip from "To Live" that shows shadow puppetry.		Students shared attending shadow puppet shows with their own families.
Above	Demonstration of how a real shadow puppet works.	Display and use my own dragon shadow puppet.		Students enjoyed handling the dragon shadow puppet.
Above	Construction of individual	Permanent	2 <sup>nd</sup> through	Students began to bring

	shadow puppets	markers  Clear plastic, the weight of report covers in colors  Brads, unpainted steel snaps, scissors, dragon patterns, warrior patterns, folders to keep students' work in progress	6 <sup>th</sup> meetings: 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18	in newspaper articles featuring China; the school newspaper interviewed and photographed students for an article; I used students' work in progress for 9/29/07 presentation for Maryland Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) with my Virginia Fulbright colleague, Linda White.
Involve the community with club activities	Write a play based on Chinese folklore using students' shadow puppets.  <b>See Lesson Plans Part 1 of project for play.</b>	Model after folktale; use plot outline and other Language Arts knowledge	Sessions between 11/18 and Performance: 1/31	Wrote several drafts of play that could be for shadow puppets or actors. Play fits county curriculum for novel <i>Dragonwings</i> by Laurence Yep.
Involve the community with club activities	Explain about the Gaokao and compare it to the Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. Have students choose roles for running the spelling bee.	Website information; information from students met during the summer seminar	11/8	Contacted school newspaper for coverage of our 'Gaokao' with respect to pressure and difficulty.
Involve the community with club activities	Disseminate information to students about participating in the school's spelling bee	Hand out for Language Arts teachers	11/26	Sent in newsletter articles for Dec. and Jan. to publicize spelling bee.
	Begin group work on the play.	Draft of script based on Chinese folklore. Students will do a read through and give their input. Students will take the play home and give additional comments.	11/29	
Help students	Inform students about the	Show the film I made of the	11/29	

communicate with Chinese students	Dandelion School in Beijing.	Dandelion School. Give background of migrant status of children living in a province other than where they were born.		
Involve the community with club activities	Hold student spelling bee practice session.	Practice lists; pronouncer's list; timer; sign-up sheets. Report sheet for school announcements. Certificates.	12/6	
Involve the community with club activities	Plan for Chinese New Year celebration with play, food, and community guests.	Play; get permission for play, date from school for play, and reserve location. Send for rice growing materials.	12/13	
Help students make global connections	Begin writing either a group letter or individual letters to the Dandelion School.	Name of principal and address of Dandelion School.	12/20	
Involve the community with club activities	Write invitations to the play for school newsletter, and possibly school newspaper.	Play practice.	12/20	
	Play practice.	Make props.	1/4/08	
Help students make global connections	Hold student spelling bee.		1/04/08 or 1/11/08	
Help students make global connections	Play practice. Write invitations to the Chinese New Year celebration.	Finalize props; food lists; responsibilities. \$25 club money	1/11/08	

nections		for food.		
Above.	Chinese New Year celebration.		1/31/08	
Increase students' knowledge about Chinese culture.	Evaluation of event. Chinese calligraphy.	Reflection questions from participants. Read through of attendees' evaluation sheets.  Brushes, paper, ink, water, sidewalk.	2/7/08	
Help students communicate with Chinese students	Chinese calligraphy. Writing second letter to Dandelion School.	Brushes, paper, ink, water, sidewalk.  Excerpt of film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" showing girl and boy riding on the open plain, falling in love (Valentine's Day connection)	2/14/08	
Increase students' knowledge about Chinese culture	Growing sunflowers, corn, and rice. Music: traditional and contemporary.	Seed growing set. History of agriculture. Personal pictures of Chinese farms. Display board.  CDs and websites of music.	2/21/08	
Involve students with community service – increase students' knowledge of Chinese culture	School garden clean up.	Garden tools. Confucian sayings about gardens. Pictures of World Heritage gardens in Suzhou.  Playing of Chinese music: choice of group.	2/28/08	

Above	Garden clean up.	Garden tools. Confucian sayings about gardens. Playing of Chinese music: choice of group.	3/07/08	
Help students make connections globally and see historical patterns of xenophobia	Prep for commemoration of "tea parties." Two attacks on tea merchant ships in Boston and Annapolis.	History of Boston Tea Party and the Annapolis burning of the Peggy Stewart merchant ship. See references below.	3/14/08	
	Connecting both the Boston Tea Party and the Annapolis Tea Revolt (the burning of the Peggy Stewart loaded with tea in Annapolis Harbor.) Tea ceremony. Dramatic reading by club members of the event – script/story, and xenophobic poem.	Primary document about burning of ship. Info on how to serve tea in China and how it differs in the U.S. Letter sent home re: martial arts demonstration.  Reserve gym for demo on 4/18/08.	3/21/08	
			Break and no clubs during state testing	
		Guest demonstrator from local martial arts school and William, former student who studies martial arts.	4/18/08	
Involve students with	Planting in the garden.	Seedlings raised.	4/25/08	

community service.				
Increase students' knowledge of Chinese culture.	Painting in the garden. Outdoor calligraphy.	Sketch paper, calligraphy brushes, ink.	5/02/08	
Above.	Painting in the garden.	Above.	5/09/08	
Involve the community with club activities	Set up painting displays of calligraphy and garden. Contact local library for display set up.	Picture mats; explanatory text; arrange display space.	5/16/08	
	End of club celebration.	Evaluation form of club activities. Tea and food.	5/23/08	

Other possible activities: Cultural event – going to a museum or live performance related to Chinese culture.

### **Additional information for 9/13/07 (inaugural) session**

Reference for learning Chinese:

S. Casler note: Absolutely easy for anyone to acquire simple phrases and correct inflection. Great travel size, weight, and cost (<\$10 US in 2007)

Peters, Clyde. *Say It Right in Chinese*. McGraw-Hill, 2006. ISBN# 0-07-146010-2

Reference for many aspects of China:

S. Casler note: Pocket-sized quick reference perfect for use in a survey course or club. Categories include: relics, folk art, architecture, calligraphy, everyday articles, entertainment, lucky things, medicine, clothing, and food.

Du Feibao and Du Bai. *Things Chinese*. China Travel & Tourism Press. Beijing. 2001. ISBN# 7-5032-1856-8

S. Casler note: Just as Chinese music requires understanding of Chinese use of musical elements, so do these Chinese stories of wisdom require understanding of Chinese use of story elements. Depending on the objective and the audience, these stories can be effective for any age group. Stories give insight into current Chinese political moves.

*Stories of Chinese Wisdom*. Foreign Language Press, Beijing. 2007. ISBN# 978-7-119-03404-1

Example of Student Interest survey originally formatted on one page:



# Chinese Culture Club

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom teacher \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in: (Check as many as you'd like. Put a star next to your top three.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese food

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese tea

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese martial arts

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese music

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese language

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese schools

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese farms and gardens

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese art

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese customs

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese holidays

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese folktales

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese dragons

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese films

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese government

\_\_\_\_\_ Chinese children your age

\_\_\_\_\_ The Olympics 2008 in Beijing, China

\_\_\_\_\_ Travel in China

\_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Something special I would like to do or learn

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Something I can share about China or Chinese culture

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## **Additional information for 9/20/07 session**

### **Constructing Shadow Puppets:**

#### **Materials:**

sample shadow puppet

film clip of use of shadow puppets, ex. From film *To Live* (no longer in print—check film rental company or I would welcome anyone’s suggestions for more current shadow puppet films – we did film our own play’s performance as a reference for future students’ performances.)

sample dragon pictures

report cover translucent plastic sheets or overhead transparency sheets

permanent markers – variety of tip widths and variety of colors

newprint to cover drawing area (esp. with permanent markers!)

scissors

small UNPAINTED sewing snaps, plain stainless steel, silver-colored. Any painted ones, even black, do not work.

clear nylon thread or heavy weight cotton/polyester thread

thin sticks of wood or metal, ex. shish kabob sticks or straight parts of metal hangers ( must file sharp edges if using this)

#### **Steps for Constructing a Shadow Puppet**

1. Take one shadow puppet and photocopy its parts. Ex. My dragon has two joints connecting three parts: The head and one front leg, the body and two legs, and the tail and one leg. Thin control sticks connect to the extreme front of the head and the end of the tail.
2. Make each part about 6-8". If necessary, use the copier to enlarge the parts for ease of assembly for students. Note: If using the overhead as the performance area, make SMALLER shadow puppets. Then shrink the puppet pieces to 2-4" each.
3. Cut the parts into separate pieces so borders of each piece are clear to students.
4. Photocopy sets of the three pieces, each on a separate sheet.
5. Trace each part of the dragon onto a separate plastic sheet. Use a fine tipped marker for tracing. (Some students may choose to draw their own dragons or other figures. Just be sure they have two areas to hinge for movement.)
6. Color the part before cutting it out.
7. Cut out parts.
8. Line up parts where hinge will be.

9. Mark hinge spots.
10. Place each piece on a flexible item like a pad of paper. Poke a very small hole through each hinge spot. (I did this part for my middle school students.)
11. Use two snaps for the two hinge spots. Separate each snap. Put one piece of the snap through each of the matching pieces' small holes. Make sure pieces are facing the correct way. Snap together. Unpainted snaps allow for movement. Painted snaps do not.
12. Choose a stick type. I chose wood. Notch end slightly.
13. Sew a separate piece of thread to each end of the puppet. Thread should be about 24" long.
14. Measure the sewn piece of thread to about 12".
15. Knot thread to notch.
16. Test to make sure the thread length is correct.
17. Cut excess thread. Use overhead or backlit fabric for stage.

### **See Play *Brother to Brother***

Text of play is part of project part 1. Full text is there.

### **Additional information for calligraphy sessions beginning on 2/07/08**

S. Casler note: This is an excellent reference book for teaching calligraphy.

Peng, Tan Huay. *What's In a Chinese Character?* (The bilingual edition) Published by New World Press. No publication date is given but the previous edition was 1998. ISBN #7-80005-515-9/G

### **Additional information for 2/21/08 lesson on music**

#### **[Chinese Traditional: National Geographic World Music](#)**

S. Casler note: Many lessons could be constructed about Chinese opera alone from the story lines, singing styles, music, and instruments.

Explore **Chinese Traditional music** at National Geographic World Music. Discover key Chinese Traditional artists and albums at the online home of world music.  
[worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/chinese\\_traditional\\_709-39k](http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/chinese_traditional_709-39k) - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Luna Eclipse's Asian Sky - Tang Dynasty or Tang Chao](#) The website spelling is taken as it appears on the site.

S. Casler note: Traditional influences including opera on the heavy metal band are noted by a band member. The second song shows many clips of young Chinese.

Tang Dynasty or Tang Chao : Chinese rock band, brief information and sample.  
[www.geocities.com/le\\_asiansky/band/la-td.html](http://www.geocities.com/le_asiansky/band/la-td.html) - 13k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [Tang Dynasty \(band\) - China-related Topics TA-TD - China-Related ...](#)

Tang Dynasty (zh-cp|c=唐朝|p=T&aacute;ngch&aacute;o) is a Chinese music|**Chinese heavy metal music**|heavy metal band that is often credited as the first heavy ...  
[www.famouschinese.com/virtual/Tang\\_Dynasty\\_\(band\)](http://www.famouschinese.com/virtual/Tang_Dynasty_(band)) - 19k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

## **Additional information for 3/14/08 lesson on tea parties**

### [Teaching American History in Maryland - Documents for the Burning of the brig, Peggy Stewart...](#)

Note from S. Casler: This contains the original newspaper article about the attempted importing of tea and subsequent burning of the Peggy Stewart in Annapolis, Oct. 19, 1774. Note that the Boston dumping of tea occurred without destruction of anything except the tea. Marylanders were not as selective in their actions protesting the tea tax. The next website provide a different point of view of the event.

Burning of **the Peggy Stewart** The brig Peggy Stewart, Captain Jackson, .... Who Burned **the Peggy Stewart**? From UMBC Center for History Education, ...  
[teachingamericanhistorymd.net/000001/000000/000030/html/t30.html](http://teachingamericanhistorymd.net/000001/000000/000030/html/t30.html) - 18k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [The Burning of the Peggy Stewart, Maryland State House](#)

Note from S. Casler: This website claims that more force was exerted on Stewart than the newspaper report stated. This site contains an eight line poem blasting Chinese tea when the British economy was the driving force for taxation. It is important to show the use of persuasion based on emotion (fear). This can be used to connect to the xenophobia in the young readers' novel *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep, taught in some school systems.

When the owner of **the Peggy Stewart**, Anthony Stewart, paid the "tea tax," he violated the non-importation resolution implemented by the colonists in protest ...  
[www.msa.md.gov/msa/speccol/sc1500/sc1545/001100/001111/text/label.html](http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/speccol/sc1500/sc1545/001100/001111/text/label.html) - 3k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

### [UK Tea Council : Tea 4 You : The Boston Tea Party](#)

Note from S. Casler: Summary of Dec. 16, 1773 Boston Tea Party and causes, with world economic background and explanation of British needs influencing taxation of American colonists. This site could be useful to connect to global trading causes and effects today. This site helps connect Chinese tea to the American Revolution.

... was vastly reducing the **amount of tea** being bought from the Company. .... Anonymous ('A citizen of New York') A Retrospect of **the Boston Tea-Party** with ...  
[www.tea.co.uk/index.php?pgId=38](http://www.tea.co.uk/index.php?pgId=38) - 25k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)