

Susan Casler's Part 3 -- Teaching through display boards

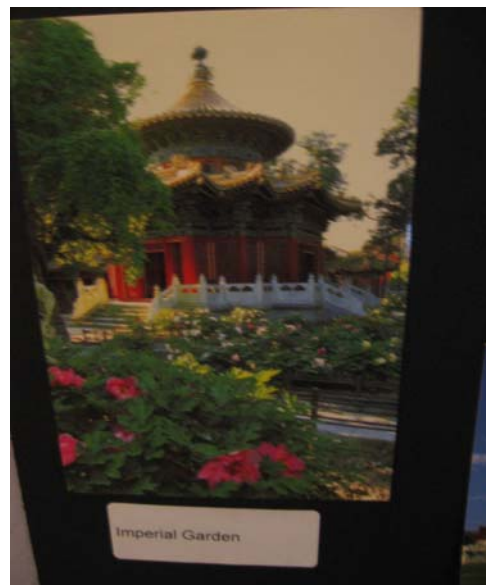
Display boards can be used to teach any group, from very young students through adults.

On September 29, 2007, Linda White, an experienced Fulbrighter from Virginia who was part of our China 2007 Summer Seminar, and I teamed up to present to the Maryland Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Leadership Conference with our presentation, *Opening the World to Students through Teachers' Fulbright-Hays Travel*. We had music, PowerPoint, three dimensional artifacts displayed, as well as an interactive presentation. The hooks to draw participants to our presentation were our display boards and music.

Just as adults viewing our materials were drawn to learn more, so too are students. I have used my display boards in my classroom and have three student presentations set for late November, 2007, at my school. In spring of 2008 I will present to four more groups. I also conducted a countywide presentation for middle school (potential to impact 17,000 middle school students) Language Arts leadership personnel in August, giving them a heads up for the lesson plans I developed from my Fulbright experience for a seventh grade novel read throughout the county. In September, I used my display boards with my Chinese Culture club.

Display boards are an engaging way to spark interest in Fulbright experiences. I used a variety of topics for my boards:

1. General view of China – using professional photography of postcards, I gave an overview of some of the most magnificent Chinese architectural wonders.



- 2.
3. Cultural artifacts – Viewers touched the fine silk dress on display. Using photographs of Chinese women from over 100 years ago coupled with postcards of slippers for three inch adult bound feet showed how women's feet truly fit into the tiniest of slippers. By taping a ruler to the floor by this display, the viewer can connect the length of his or her foot to the three inch feet fitting

into the slippers. I displayed the adolescent novel, *Bound*, by Donna Jo Napoli and read an excerpt aloud at my club.



4. Personal culture shock – displaying Chinese packaging of products of familiar items and advertisements was my gateway to explain how I found myself illiterate and virtually mute for 28 days, unable to read even street signs. The increase in empathy I immediately felt for foreigners to America from my inability to communicate in China was one I shared with this board.



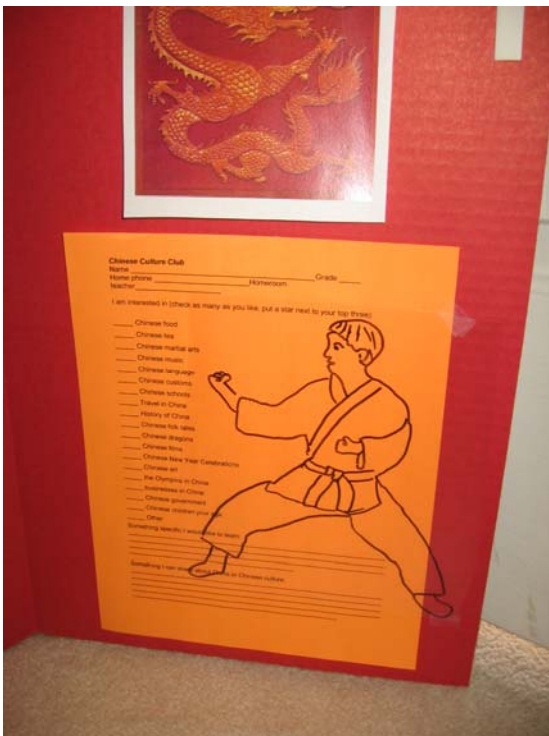


5. Travel as a people to people experience – one of the unique aspects of the Fulbright experience is meeting many wonderful Chinese people. I also gained immeasurably from the company of my fine fellow Fulbrighters.





6. Chinese Culture Club – as I used the knowledge gained from my Fulbright experience, I displayed student work and club information.



Some helpful ideas in assembling display boards:

Have one strong theme per board.

Keep text to a minimum.

Use professional and personal pictures.

Aim for high visual impact with color, texture, variety of shapes, effective use of negative space, etc.

Use good quality boards, matting, tape, etc. (acid free if attaching degradable items).