

It's All a Matter of Perspective



Nancy in a market in Guangzhou, China.

Until I went to China last January, I had not given much thought to China as a traditional destination—it seemed impossibly remote for this claustrophobic flyer, and my travels, up to this point, focused on Mexico and Europe. Of course, all that changed when the opportunity to go came about, and my attentions turned to China. It's all a matter of perspective.

I tried to leave behind any preconceived notions about China and to be open to the experience. Before I left, I talked to people I knew who

had been to China and they shared their positive experiences with me. My group was fortunate in that we did not go as tourists but as fellow educators. We taught art in an elementary school, gave presentations to administrators and teachers, and felt very honored and welcomed.

My perspectives of China and my view of the world have changed as a result of this experience. People everywhere share the same human hopes and dreams and are proud and happy to share their culture. Children don't care where you come from or how you look, as long as you

really pay attention to them and their accomplishments.

Since returning, it seems like China is always in the news, but maybe that was always true and I just wasn't paying attention. My China experience made me wonder what else I have missed because I wasn't paying enough attention. It also showed me that, if I can go to China, then I can go anywhere (maybe even all the way to Australia!).

Now I realize not everyone can travel to the ends of the earth (for various reasons), but we can all be aware of multiple perspectives of viewing and experiencing other people, other cultures, other places, and other ways of thinking. Our articles this month share perspectives both art specific (points of view, different kinds of perspective) and worldly (representation of a variety of cultures, articles written by teachers

from China and India, one of the lessons we taught in China). ☺

I invite you to share your perspectives with your fellow art teachers through *SchoolArts*. You can find our writer's guidelines on our Web site at www.schoolartsonline.com.

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