

## Using Bulletin Boards

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1982). Illustrations of proverbs from *Poor Richard's Almanac* also make interesting bulletin board displays. One famous example is: "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

### Riddles

These perplexing questions, which provide insight into the world of English humor by showing how puns work, are always popular with ESL/EFL students. The old familiar riddle "What has four eyes but cannot see?" (Mississippi) never fails to delight; even beginners are able to grasp the wit involved in this word puzzle and sometimes enthusiastically generate an assortment of riddles from their own linguistic traditions.

### Information about English-Speaking Nations

Giving students an understanding of the various cultures that use English as a first or as an official language can broaden their vision of the world. Because a great many textbooks have a heavy bias toward the culture of the United States or the United Kingdom, a project exploring other English-speaking nations can provide a more balanced cultural approach by enlarging the scope of the students' learning experience. Furthermore, this type of project supplies a strong rationale for learning English—a language representing a multitude of populations around the world.

Posters, maps, brochures, and other information about English-speaking na-

tions can be obtained readily by writing to embassies or cultural affairs offices in the capital city of the nation where your school is located. Obvious embassies to contact are the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. Do not, however, overlook other nations which use English as an official or semi-official language: Singapore, India, Jamaica, Kenya, the Philippines, and so forth.

### Seasonal Boards

Holidays and seasonal events serve as natural themes for bulletin board displays. Pictures showing activities and costumes associated with these kinds of celebrations can generate interest in the culture of the target language and provide motivation for further learning.

Some popular holidays during the year in the United States are New Year's Day, Washington's Birthday, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, April Fool's Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Halloween, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

### Information about the Learners' Country

Because comprehensible input plays an important role during the language acquisition process, "known material" presented in English is a proper strategy for cultivating language growth. Teachers should also promote cultural ideas familiar to their students' lives—local celebrations, historical events, or nearby places which attract tourists—and this can easily be accomplished using bulletin board spaces.

### Literature Lesson Supplements

Bulletin boards with biographical displays of the novelists or poets whose works are being studied in literature classes stimulate student interest. Photographs of these writers, their families, and their homes, as well as pictures of people and places described within the stories and poems can effectively introduce the world of distant times and places.

### Student-Produced Materials

Public displays of student projects are always popular. Writing that has traditionally been limited to the scrutiny of one teacher can be shared with a much wider audience using bulletin boards. Students' confidence is boosted when their works are posted; furthermore, these model documents guide others in developing their composition skills. An additional benefit to showing student writing is that it allows other members of the faculty to appreciate work being done by their colleagues.

### Newspaper Clippings

A bulletin board devoted to short articles and captioned photographs from newspapers allows students to interact with journalistic conventions without being overwhelmed by large quantities of print. Human curiosity about sports statistics, cartoons, and advertising copy can lure students into the newspaper reading process. This initiates them into

the world of journalism and helps to prepare them for the challenges of understanding a daily newspaper.

### English Across the Curriculum

Language acquisition can be supported with bulletin boards which integrate learning that is occurring in other discipline areas—history, social science, geography, and so forth. Bulletin board exhibits which exploit these themes help to develop the relationship between linguistic and communicative skills; they tap layers of student interest that may otherwise go unnoticed in traditional language classrooms. A useful resource volume relevant to this area is *What's What: A Visual Glossary of the Physical World* by R. Bragonier Jr. and D. Fisher (New York: Ballantine, 1981).

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## Using Bulletin Boards in Language Classrooms

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Bulletin boards are found in virtually all schools, but language teachers frequently overlook these potentially useful tools for stimulating and reinforcing learning within institutional settings. Too often these display spaces serve only as catchalls for notices, schedules, and general announcements—cluttered jumbles of paper that attract merely cursory attention from passersby. While the need to designate one bulletin board on the school premises for administrative purposes may be necessary, other bulletin boards throughout the school, particularly those in classrooms and in areas where students tend to assemble during their free time, ought to have their pedagogical potential exploited much better than is normally the case. This article suggests some effective ways language teachers can

utilize bulletin boards as learning instruments in their schools.

### Idioms and Proverbs

Bulletin boards which graphically illustrate idioms or proverbs help to fix this type of information in the memory of students. "Hot under the collar," "blow one's top," "straight from the horse's mouth," or "beat around the bush" are examples of idioms that offer opportunities for visual interpretations. Collections of idioms are available from a number of publishers. Two examples are *A Dictionary of American Idioms* by M.T. Boatner and J.E. Gates (New York: Barron's, 1975) and *Illustrated American Idioms* by D. Curry (Washington, D.C.: USIS,

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