

CHALKBOARD

Based on excerpts from *The Expert Educator* (Jones, et al. , 1994

Description

Historically, instructors could have any color of chalkboard they wanted as long as it was black. Today the chalkboard comes in all colors, shapes, sizes and degrees of portability. Some have special surfaces that require a particular type of felt-tip pen rather than chalk. Most times, however, this medium includes a large writing area, a writing substance (usually chalk), and an eraser.

The chalkboard is so common that not much attention is paid to maximizing the use of this fantastic sub-strategy, but by following the guidelines below, the potential of even the trusty old "blackboard" can be greatly increased.

Advantages or Special Purposestr

1. Availability. Most areas assigned for instruction are equipped with chalkboards. Also, if more board space is needed, portable boards of various types and styles are handy.
2. The chalkboard is inexpensive, especially when the usable life of the board is considered.
3. It is flexible in use in the sense that instructors may use it, learners may use it and changes can be easily made through erasure.
4. Space. Lots of writing space is usually provided.
5. The chalkboard can be used to present more formally prepared lessons, or for informal, spontaneous sessions.
6. Ideas can be dealt with at all levels from facts to concepts, from cognitive to affective learning.
7. Various colored chalk or pens can be used to develop the topic, show parts or build associations.
8. A point-by-point outline of a presentation can be made on the spot with diagrams, charts, and other accentuation drawn at the appropriate moment.
9. The visual communication of the chalkboard directs attention of the class to the purposes of the lecture or discussion.
10. Ideas or topics suggested in discussion can be listed on the board, reorganized, deleted, added to, and put in final form.
11. Test or discussion questions can be put on the board and covered up before the class assembles, then revealed at the appropriate time. This can save on time and cost of duplication materials.
12. A number of learners can do practice or drill work on the board at one time, allowing the instructor to give feedback immediately.

Disadvantages or Limitations

1. The chalkboard carries with it a "temporariness." Material put on the board cannot be saved or made permanent.
2. Chalkboards are often fixed in such a way that they are not always at a comfortable height for all potential users.
3. Being fixed, chalkboards can put restrictions on the use of classroom space and classroom activities as learners need to be placed where they can see the boards.
4. Problems can arise for learners who have vision impairments.
5. With age, use of certain types of chalk, and/or improper cleaning practices, boards can become "cloudy" as they retain chalk dust.
6. Some instructors are psyched-out of using the board because they feel a lack of artistic ability.
7. Motion cannot be easily shown.
8. A teacher's handwriting or spelling deficiencies are most obvious when using the chalkboard.
9. Chalkboard work can be messy.
11. Writing on the board can be "down time" and may break the class' s train of thought and/or discussion.

Application

1. Be prepared. See that the chalkboard and erasers are properly cleaned and maintained. Ensure that chalk is available in sufficient quantity; learners get very tired of watching instructors search constantly during class for a piece of chalk (or eraser).
2. Plan what you are going to write on the board:
 - a) keep writing to a minimum by using key words or conceptual diagrams; and
 - b) develop topics by using the board from left to right and top to bottom.
4. Keep writing
 - a) neat;
 - b) large, heavy and high enough to be visible by all;
 - c) brief; and
 - d) specific.
4. Practice writing and/or printing in a straight line.
5. Use yellow chalk on a green board, white on a black board, etc.
6. If your chalk squeaks, simply break the piece in half.
7. Learn to stand and/or move around so you do not block the view of learners as you use the board.

8. Avoid writing and "talking into" the board at the same time.
9. Put the chalk down when you are through writing. This reduces the chances for distraction caused by playing with the chalk.
10. Use the eraser to remove errors or make changes. Using your hands only smears the chalk and may deposit oil on the board, which can serve as a dust collector.
11. In erasing the board, use a down-sweep erasing motion. Erasing the board with a side-to-side motion only enables the learners to observe (from a most unflattering angle) the instructor doing something resembling the "Twist." It also causes chalk- dust particles to fly into the air instead of into the collector tray.
12. When you are through with the material, erase it completely so that it will not serve as a distraction while the next topic is being considered.
13. Intersperse writing on the board with questions or verbal emphasis. Keep the class aware of what is being put on the board and why.
14. If important drawings or maps are needed on the board, a instructor is wise to save time by:
 - a) doing them before class, and
 - b) copying a projection on the board (from a filmstrip, slide, or opaque projector) rather than "free-handing" it.
15. Chalkboard etiquette: **if** someone will be using the board after you, please don't leave it for him/her to erase. It's nice to clean the eraser against the board as well.