

Clip #1 - Blackboard use (2:11) Garvin

PROFESSOR GARVIN: My own sense is that we as teachers overuse blackboards. I use blackboards really for three reasons. One, I teach, at the moment, in our advanced management program, which is 60 to 70 percent non-U.S. So one reason I use it is so that the foreign students, the non-English speakers, can have a check on what they just heard. I think that's very important for them to be able to follow along.

The second reason is I want to leave a paper trail, because some members of the group will take down what's up on the blackboards almost verbatim.

But there's a third reason for using a blackboard. It's one of the things that most instructors don't spend enough time doing. Does everybody see the lower blackboard? At the moment, it's not particularly useful. Watch. What just happened? If you want to focus attention, highlight. I could have highlighted anything on that blackboard. I could have highlighted political. I could have highlighted team. I could have highlighted the word that Jeff used, affront, and said, "Let's talk about this." And all of a sudden, we have a focal point.

So that's the third reason for using a blackboard. If the discussion gets too diffuse, a quick way to focus it is to go to the board and highlight almost any piece that would be useful to the discussion.

Clip #2 - Leveraging Boards to Summarize and Synthesize (1:03) Garvin

Let me talk a little bit about how you use a blackboard to pull pieces together. Now, I should say, one of the reasons you use a blackboard is to acknowledge to students that their comments have been heard. So much of what you're doing is simply capturing what they say, and putting it up for all to see.

The difficulty with that is that, unless you figure out a mechanism for linking the pieces together, it seems like a laundry list. It doesn't seem like a coherent set of categories. So periodically, I'll go to a blackboard and frequently circle, highlight, or literally draw arrows between various words to either show, boy, these are talking about exactly the same thing, or there seems to be a difference here. How can we reconcile it? It's part of the highlighting process. But even more, it's part of the process of beginning to summarize, midway through the class, so that all is not left to the very end.