



Learning versus “No Chalk and No Talk” in modern classroom

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Abstract

The "no chalk and no talk" discussion is just one part in a shift away from the traditional teacher-centred "chalk and talk" teaching towards learner-centred education. This paper reviews the advantages and weaknesses of both methods and concludes that the issue of using or not using any particular method of instruction is of secondary importance and that the main goal of education should be meaningful learning. Traditional classroom teaching has the advantages of systematic explanation, clear teaching, inexpensive teaching and systematic use of methods. It is particularly suitable for subjects that involve logical inference, calculation, drawing and demonstration. But it can overwhelm learners to a point where they become recipients of information and limit questioning, creativity, collaboration and problem-solving. Active learning, on the other hand, encourages questions, discussion, experimentation, projects, peer teaching, reflecting on learning, and the strategic use of digital tools. However, a complete lack of teacher explanation and board instruction could mean that students, especially novices, have no guidance, no scaffolding, and little conceptual understanding. The paper therefore proposes a balanced and blended pedagogical approach where teachers use clear pedagogy and meaningful participation of the students. In this context, the teacher acts as a facilitator and mentor, learning designer, evaluator and professional clarifier and feedback provider. Technology should be used for instruction, not as an instructional tool. Assessment needs to also go beyond a memorization test and assess understanding, application, creativity, cooperation and reflection. The diversity of Indian classrooms, with respect to the size of classes, infrastructure, language, socioeconomic status, and technology access, should be taken into account while considering the teaching practices to be inclusive and resource sensitive. It is not necessary to abandon chalk, teachers' speech or technology for a successful modern education, but it is necessary to use them thoughtfully, actively stimulating the intellectual activity and genuine learning of students.

Keywords: Chalk and Talk, Active learning, Learner-centred education, Blended learning, Teaching methods, Teacher education

Introduction

The transfer of knowledge from a teacher to a student is only one aspect of education. Thru this process, students gain knowledge, build understanding, form values, solve problems, and develop the skills necessary to engage meaningfully in society. The conventional "Chalk and Talk" approach dominated classroom instruction for a very long time. The teacher faced students and explained the content, wrote important ideas on the board, and asked students to listen, take notes and repeat the content on tests. Although this has many benefits, it has come under greater criticism because it can make students passive receivers of information.

The term “No Chalk and No Talk” can be read as an overreaction to the traditional lecture curriculum. It emphasizes learning that goes beyond the textbook, the blackboard or frequent teacher speech. But doing away with chalk and teacher explanations completely shouldn't be the true goal of modern education. Rather, the teacher-centred teaching should be replaced by the learner-centred learning. Similar to this, research on active learning makes the case for increased student involvement as opposed to merely switching out instructional technologies.

Uses of chalk and talk is not a question that needs to be answered, but what actually leads to meaningful learning is. A successful classroom could use chalk, discussion, technology, activities, projects, experiments, peer learning or independent study depending on the needs of the students.

Meaning of Chalk and Talk

The "Chalk and Talk" approach is a teaching method that traditionally involves the teacher delivering information of a lesson verbally and writing key information on a chalkboard or blackboard. Students generally hear, take notes and then repeat. It is particularly useful for subjects in which it is necessary to explain a sequence of logical steps, mathematical calculations, diagrams, definitions or written explanations.

The approach has some handy advantages. A teacher can teach many students simultaneously, organise the material in a systematic manner and complete a substantial course of study in a relatively short period. Additionally, it is reasonably priced and independent of computers, electricity, and internet access. Even modern literature acknowledges that, with the right design, board-based instruction can be interactive.

The difficulty begins when “chalk and talk” becomes only chalk and talk. If the teacher speaks continuously while students merely copy notes, opportunities for questioning, exploration, discussion and problem-solving may become limited. A literature review of economics teaching, for example, found that lecture-based instruction remained dominant while recommending multiple teaching methods rather than dependence on a single method.

Meaning of “No Chalk and No Talk”

“No Chalk and No Talk” is a classroom where learning is not dependent on the lengthy lecture from the teacher or the

traditional chalk-board writing. Pupils' activities, enquiry, working groups, projects, experiments, the use of digital materials, discussion, peer teaching and learning without external assistance are increasingly significant.

This does not mean that boards are never to be used or the educators should remain silent. An interpretation like that would be deceptive. The teacher's explanation is still very important, as students often need direction, clarification, feedback, and structured instruction.

There has been a radical change in the role of the teacher. Today, teachers' role shifts to that of a mentor, a facilitator, a designer of learning experiences and a feedback giver instead of being the only source of knowledge. It is expected of students to communicate ideas, look into issues, ask questions, and create meaning.

In *Beyond Chalk and Talk*, Evans's book focuses on techniques that will encourage active student involvement in learning, such as journal, portfolio, student presentation, writing, and technology.

Learning: The Real Objective

The most important distinction between teaching and learning is that teaching is an activity performed by the teacher, whereas learning is a change that takes place in the learner. A teacher may deliver an excellent lecture, but that does not automatically guarantee learning.

Learning becomes meaningful when students:

- Understand rather than merely memorize;
- Connect new knowledge with previous knowledge;
- Ask questions;
- Apply concepts to real situations;
- Analyse and evaluate information;
- Solve problems;
- Communicate their ideas;
- Work collaboratively; and
- Reflect upon their own learning.

Thus, modern pedagogy increasingly emphasizes active participation. Students should not be seen as "blank slates" onto which information is poured. Rather they should be seen as learners who participate in the learning process.

From Teaching to Learning

A question asked in traditional education is, "What should the teacher teach?"

Learner centered education asks learners, "What should you learn, understand, and be able to do?"

It's a radical change. The quality and quantity of material taught should not be the only measure of a teacher's effectiveness. Also, it should be assessed in terms of success of the students in understanding the content, learning the skills and developing the ability to use knowledge in an independent manner.

For example, in a science class, a teacher might take 20 minutes to teach about the process of germination. Students can instead watch their seeds grow, record observations, share ideas and make inferences about their observations, all under guidance of their teacher. The second may be more experiential and take a bit longer, but it can be more in-depth.

Similarly, in social science, students can study a social issue through group discussion, interviews, newspaper reports and presentations rather than simply memorizing definitions from a textbook.

Advantages of Moving Beyond Chalk and Talk

1. Increased engagement of students

Active learning involves students in the learning process rather than providing a passive listener. Students are offered an opportunity to express their understanding through questions, discussions, demonstration and group activities.

2. Critical thinking development

Students don't just 'memorise' when analysing issues and comparing different perspectives. They learn to evaluate the evidence and identify any presumptions, then draw sound conclusions.

3. Improved ability to solve problems

Seldom are the solutions to real-world problems easy to copy from a board. Students are encouraged to recognize issues, weigh their options, and come up with solutions thru project-based and inquiry-based learning.

4. Better interaction

Students are required to share ideas in presentation, discussion, peer instruction and group projects. These skills are essential for not only academic success, but for social and professional relationships.

5. Cooperation

In today's work environments, people need to work with others. Students have the opportunity to enhance their leadership, cooperation, listening and negotiating skills in thru group activities.

6. Increased technology use

Videos, simulations, online libraries, interactive exercises, and communication platforms can all be accessed thru digital tools. Evans noted that technology can also "augment the students' own technological skill and enable better communication for students and teacher.

7. Customized education

Technology and flexible learning activities will enable students to learn at their own pace. Advanced pupils can go deeper into subjects, basic pupils can catch up.

Limitations of the "No Chalk and No Talk" Approach

Being unconventional in teaching may prove to be problematic in itself. There isn't a single teaching strategy that works for everyone.

First, sometimes students need explanations. When a knowledgeable instructor explains a complicated idea in a methodical manner, it may become more understandable. Second, learning is not a byproduct of technology. If students only watch presentations, a classroom equipped with computers, projectors, or digital content can still be teacher-centered.

Third, a lot of time and resources may be needed for activity-based learning. Extensive project work may be challenging due to large class sizes, inadequate facilities, and exam pressure.

Fourth, students require a suitable framework. Students, especially novices, may become confused by entirely unstructured discovery. As a result, teachers need to offer scaffolding, direction, and feedback.

Fifth, there is still value in traditional board work. Seeing a teacher work thru a problem step-by-step is often beneficial for students studying physics, chemistry, mathematics, and other subjects. When used interactively, chalk-based instruction has the potential to engage students, according to research on the subject.

Thus, "Less Passive Learning and More Active Learning" should be the goal instead of "No Chalk and No Talk."

The Role of the Teacher in Modern Learning

Although they are still essential to education, teachers' roles are evolving. A contemporary educator can serve as:

- A learning facilitator;
- A person who creates educational experiences;
- A guide;
- An inquirer;
- A source of professional clarification;
- A source of feedback;
- An assessor; and
- An inspiration.

When to explain, when to show, when to ask questions, when to let students explore, and when to clear up misunderstandings are all things that a teacher should be aware of. Thus, a good teacher blends interaction and instruction.

Blended learning: A balanced approach

A combination of education and learning may be the best alternative to the traditional classroom. Teachers have a choice in the way they approach the task, not whether or not to use chalk and talk.

For example, a half-hour class could be:

- Ten minutes of teacher clarification;
- Ten minutes of interrogation;
- A group activity lasting ten minutes;
- Ten minutes to solve problems; and
- Ten minutes for introspection and conversation.

After demonstrating a concept on the board, a math teacher may assign students to solve related problems on their own. In science, a principle may be introduced to the students and an experiment may be performed. In language instruction, there can be a brief explanation followed by peer review, writing and discussion.

This approach recognizes that the methods used to teach a subject and students vary from one to another.

Technology and the Future Classroom

The possibilities for teaching and learning have been altered by the digital revolution. Artificial intelligence, learning management systems, education films, virtual labs, digital libraries, and online courses are some of the technologies that can be used to complement classroom teaching.

But rather than being an end in and of itself, technology should be viewed as a means. Digital tool is always for educational purposes. It does not necessarily follow that technology rich classrooms are better classrooms.

As the COVID-19 experience has demonstrated, educational institutions faced several difficulties when implementing regular teaching methods, and alternative approaches to teaching could be implemented. Recent research also shows that the absence of "chalk and talk" has led teachers to reconsider their courses and explore active learning methods.

As a result, the classroom of the future is probably going to be more adaptable, linked, and interactive, but the teacher's pedagogical judgment will still be crucial.

Assessment and Learning

Assessment is another crucial issue. It is easy to become absorbed in memorization when exams are only designed to test memorization.

It is important, therefore, that more activities are assessed, including:

- Initiatives
- Presentations;
- Portfolios
- Useful work;
- Involvement in class;
- Solving problems;
- Writing that is reflective; and
- Formative evaluations.

These methods are not about replication of information, but also the understanding and application of it is possible.

Implications for Teacher Education

Programs for teacher education should equip educators to employ a range of pedagogical strategies. In addition to teaching, student-teachers should learn how to create engaging lessons.

They should be trained in:

- Active learning;
- Cooperative learning;
- Inquiry-based learning;
- Project-based learning;
- Digital pedagogy;
- Classroom discussion;
- Formative assessment;
- Inclusive teaching; and
- Reflective practice.

The teacher should understand that technology cannot replace pedagogy. Similarly, eliminating the blackboard cannot automatically create active learning.

Indian educational context

Class size, infrastructure, language, socioeconomic status, and technology access are all very different in Indian classrooms. As a result, one model cannot be used everywhere. A well-equipped urban school could have digital platforms and smart classrooms readily available. The teacher might rely primarily on a blackboard, resources that are available locally, and student interaction as sources of support in a remote or resource-poor school.

Pedagogy should thus be resource-sensitive. Expensive technology is not always necessary for active learning. With few resources, a teacher can lead a debate, group discussion, role-play, peer teaching, or problem-solving exercise.

Thus, "no talk" should never equate to "no teacher guidance," and "no chalk" should never be confused with "no resources."

Conclusion

The debate of chalk and talk versus no chalk and no talk is a part of a larger debate about the aim of education. One of the key benefits of the traditional approach is that it can provide structure, clarity, cost-effective teaching and simple explanations. But too much copying and lecture-based learning can inhibit student engagement and passive learning.

So, it's not about getting rid of chalk, whiteboards and teacher talk. Instead, the goal should be to create classrooms that will regularly provide students with opportunities to research, discuss, practice, collaborate, create and reflect, and that will afford them opportunities to utilize them when they support learning.

The ideal classroom is neither one where the instructor speaks nonstop nor one where the instructor doesn't speak at all. Student activities and teacher explanations are successful in this classroom.

From "What did the teacher say?" should develop to "What did the learner understand, experience, and learn to do. Thus, the move from chalk-and-talk to active, learner-centered education does not necessarily mean that teachers are being thrown out of the way or traditional approaches are being dismissed. Their goal has been redefined. Genuine learning happens when the learner becomes intellectually and meaningfully engaged; chalk is helpful when it clarifies; talk is helpful when it explains; and technology is helpful when it enriches.

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