

**Abstract**

**The use of blackboards in waldorf schools**

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This abstract is about the use of the “old school” blackboards in Waldorf education today. How is the Blackboard used by teachers in Waldorf school classrooms? What experiences and reflections do teachers have in using the blackboard? Pupils perspectives and experiences are included only indirectly through observation and interviews with teachers. To an outsider, much of the blackboard teaching that takes place in Waldorf education might seem to be based on a didactic tradition. This abstract is an attempt to investigate whether a blackboard is still a relevant teaching aid in Waldorf education and other educational institutions.

In this paper I will present three ideas in order to answer the questions.

The first idea is based on the teacher's blackboard activity as a form of performance. The teacher is here understood as a performer who performs chalkboard activity in front of pupils. The chalkboard activity is here categorized under the term performance (Benschnitt, 2007). Performance means that there is an interaction between the artwork, the person performing, as an act of dancing, singing, painting etc. and an audience. In this way, the borders between artworks, performers and spectators can be diminished. If this border is reduced, the audience can partake more actively in the artwork. What characterizes a performance is that a unique one-time event occurs in the presence of people.

The second idea, the blackboard is understood as a surface where the teacher makes site-specific images and texts. Here is the term unique (Benjamin, 2013) used. Benjamin's concept is here applied in relation to when teachers draw pictures by hand with chalk on the blackboard. The concept highlights the uniqueness of the created images and text representations in a specific educational context.

The third category is based on the materiality of the blackboard and its significance for the human relations to the blackboard in an educational context. Aspects that the blackboard has in itself as a blackboard and the materials related to this, such as sponge and chalk are taken into account. Here is the concept focusing feature (Sørensen, 2009) is central. The blackboard is in this context regarded as a focal point in the classroom, with its own voice. Blackboard features, materials, and the relationships between blackboard, teacher and pupils are therefore central in this context. Teaching materials like blackboards are in this sense viewed as invisible partners in educational activities.

I find the topic relevant, because it is also connecting Steiner Waldorf education to research, practices, and concepts on education in general and also making clear the connection between art and pedagogy. Waldorf pedagogy could in this sense be seen as an artpedagogy.

References

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