

# Bulletin Boards in School: A Tool for Facilitating Learning

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## Abstract

Visual representations provide learners the opportunity to access and assimilate abstract concepts and make connection with their own experiences (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad & Iqbal, 2015). Bulletin board is a means of visual representations used in the schools. The purpose of this study was to understand how bulletin boards are used in school, for what objectives they are used and how the uses of bulletin boards affect learner's learning and understanding. To fulfil this purpose, observations and unstructured interviews were carried out to gather the data. It was observed that bulletin boards were not used in school as a source of learning rather they were used to present information or display of learners' art work only. During this study when bulletin boards were used, it could be seen that learners' learning, engagement and self-confidence was enhanced. This study was carried out to help in understanding the uses of bulletin boards and their importance as a source for visual learning.

## INTRODUCTION:

Webster (2015) has rightly said that bulletin boards should not just be a job; they should do a job. Visuals are great asset of a facilitator in teaching-learning process. Visual remains with the learners for a longer duration and also gives ample time to the learner to process the information. Kimberley (2016), by going through literature, concluded that visual representation leads to better learning and understanding. Bulletin board gives space for the representation of artefacts and information. It is a type of visual representation that learners come across on daily basis and is one of the most powerful non-projective learning aids (Kanvaria, 2014). Bulletin boards have been perceived by different people in different ways. A bulletin board refers to the surface where public notices are placed (Wikipedia, n.d.), area on classroom or office wall, where information is put for everyone to see (Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary, 1828), to make study area visually appealing and stimulating to the learners (Teacher Vision, 2009).

Hence, it can be said that bulletin boards are places, where notices or information are put for display, so that it can be accessible to all and makes the area attractive. For the sake of current study, bulletin board is any area that can be used to display learner's work, information, subject matter and interactive manipulatives, etc.

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### **RATIONALE:**

The need of the current study is to explore about different types of bulletin boards and the purpose for which they are used in school; to explore about learner's gain in their work and display of learners work on bulletin boards.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To explore how bulletin boards are being used in schools, i.e. for what purpose like learner's work, information and curricular work.
- To find out ways about including and sharing bulletin boards and interactive bulletin boards for engagement of learners.
- To observe the use of bulletin boards in respect to the effectiveness in enhancing learner's understanding and learning.

### **DIRECTIONAL HYPOTHESIS:**

- What information is displayed on bulletin boards in schools?
- Display of learners' work motivates them to work better.
- Bulletin boards positively impact learner's standards.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

Jordan (2011) had talked about three types of bulletin boards; Mazone(2013) had identified four types of bulletin boards as Aesthetic, Informational, Sharing and Interactive bulletin boards.

Aesthetic bulletin boards are those which help the learners to appreciate the world they live in and to create interest in different areas by participating in making bulletin boards.

Informational bulletin boards, provides information to individuals regarding different matters like what is happening around the world, notices etc. These types of boards keep everyone updated.

Sharing bulletin boards refers to those boards, where learners can share their ideas, projects, thoughts etc. This type of bulletin board helps the learners to take initiative and present their ideas and interest in front of others. The work displayed on these boards should be changed on adequate intervals as it becomes visually stale.

Interactive bulletin boards allow learners to engage with them and make learning more effective. They need a lot of planning and they are movable and learners can interact with them. Mazone (2013) had also concluded that, although there are four different types of bulletin boards, but it is not necessary that only one bulletin board can be used at a time, they may overlap.

Bulletin boards can also be differentiated based upon the purpose of their uses. They are used to reinforce instructional goals but can also be used to provide instructions. These can be related to remind important dates, information related to a unit to be studied and many more or to communicate essential information like visuals to maintain discipline in the classroom i.e. rules, regulations, rewards etc. or to give notice about assignment submission, daily or weekly schedule of the room etc. or to include and motivate learners. Bulletin board can be used to display work, giving stars or 'learner of the week' tag, classroom task etc. to motivate learners or to make classroom a more appealing place like it can be used to display learner's artwork or seasonal decoration (Young, n.d.). These criteria helped in exploring what type of bulletin boards are being used in the school and for what purposes they are used.

A study in school by Parker & Curriculum committee (1959) found out that learners' achievement, motivation and work had improved after the optimum utilisation of bulletin boards in the school. Co-operative ability had increased in the learners after working in groups for the bulletin boards. While making bulletin boards one should keep in mind the principles (Sonia, 2010) and general steps (Swerdlow, 2013) to be followed. These are, old and new information bulletin boards should be kept separated, suggested plan for placement in educational administrator's office, library of study room or main words, material should be dated, board should be divided into sections, it should be kept a little above the eye level, objectives and theme should be clear, designing of rough layout etc.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

### **Sample:**

The learners of third grade and facilitators of third grade from a government school of Delhi.

### **Tools used:**

An observation schedule was used for observing and investigating how bulletin boards are being used in school and whether learners' work or facilitators' work was displayed on these bulletin boards. Unstructured Interview schedule was used for interviewing facilitators and learners to understand their perceptions about the uses of bulletin boards.

### **Procedure for data collection:**

On the basis of what had been obtained from observations made in the school, it was found how bulletin boards are being used in school at initial stage. Later, researchers prepared all types of bulletin boards based upon the curriculum, applied them in the classroom. After using all kinds of bulletin boards with the learners in the classroom, it was observed whether learners' engagement and work efficiency had been affected. And then, learners and facilitators were interviewed to understand their perception about uses of bulletin boards.

## **OBSERVATIONS ABOUT USES OF BULLETIN BOARDS IN SCHOOL:**

### **Use of bulletin boards to communicate essential information:**

In school, main purpose of use of bulletin board was to communicate information like RTI 2005, RTE 2009 (Right against corporal punishment). The information provided was not directly related to learners. Some of the information provided was in two languages (Hindi and English).

### **Use of bulletin boards to include and motivate learners:**

In one of the classes, learners' work was displayed to motivate and include them in their own class. The work display included only art work.

### **No use of bulletin boards i.e. blank bulletin boards:**

In most of the classrooms, bulletin boards were not used for fulfilling any purpose. These blank bulletin boards can also be an opportunity rather than drawback in order to create friendly environment in the classroom for carrying out group work (Jain, 2011).

## **HOW BULLETIN BOARDS WERE USED DURING THE INTERACTION WITH LEARNERS:**

After observation, researcher interacted with learners using bulletin boards. This created a lot of change about use of bulletin boards in the classroom. Some of such significant changes can be discussed as:

### **Making personal connection with the learners:**

In order to have conducive environment in the class, it is very important to make personal connections with the learners. This objective was fulfilled with the use of bulletin boards (i.e. birthday board and group chart). The bulletin boards under this head can also be classified as Aesthetic and Informational bulletin boards as they provide information and make classroom an attractive place.

### **Making information interesting and joyful:**

If information about any thing is provided monotonously, it may be boring for learners. To make the information interesting, a fun corner was made in classroom, where information in the form of interesting facts and books (story books and subject related books) was provided, so that the fear of boring information can be reduced. As per the use and nature of these bulletin boards, these could be categorically labelled as Informational and Interactive bulletin board in the school.

### **Reinforcing review of the concept:**

Once a concept is taught in the classroom, it doesn't mean that it should be kept out of classroom. It needs daily review for more clarity. For this purpose, bulletin boards were

displayed based on the concepts taught in the classroom. So that whenever needed, they can be reviewed based on the nature and purpose of these bulletin boards. These can be classified as informational bulletin boards.

#### **Making classroom more appealing place:**

Classroom should be an appealing place to visit, so that learners' can be encouraged or motivated to come to classroom. To fulfil this objective, door of the classroom can be decorated. A door plays an important role as a bulletin board; as learners come across it whenever they come or leave. It is highly visible to the learners (Reith, 1970). These bulletin boards come under the frame of Aesthetic bulletin boards.

#### **Ensuring classroom management:**

Now-a-days classroom management is a major issue for all the facilitators. To maintain classroom management rules are made with learners' cooperation and displayed in the classroom. A bulletin board with the head 'Smiley Meter' was displayed in the classroom. Smileys were pasted or removed from the bulletin board based on learners' work in their groups. These boards can be termed as Interactive bulletin boards.

#### **Making classroom an interactive place:**

Bulletin boards under this head provided hands-on experience to solve problems. Learners could engage with them at any time whenever needed. These bulletin boards were appealing and informational at the same time hence making better sense and were more interactive as also observed by McPhie (1979). These boards can be termed as Aesthetic, Informational and Interactive bulletin boards.

#### **Displaying learners' work and motivate them:**

Learners' academic as well as arts work were displayed, unlike the school's facilitator, who displayed only the art work. Learners' work was also used to make other bulletin boards, like Non-verbal and Verbal Communication board was created with learners' own work. Display of learners' work motivates them to work hard thus every learner's work was displayed. Bulletin boards under this head can be termed as Sharing and Informative bulletin boards.

#### **INTERVIEW WITH FACILITATORS AND LEARNERS:**

Facilitators' understanding of uses of bulletin boards came out to be that bulletin boards are used for putting up information like schedules of holidays, subject related material, notices etc. According to them, bulletin boards can also be used to make classroom beautiful with the help of learner's art work. That is, they had the knowledge of Informational, Sharing and Aesthetic bulletin boards. Whereas facilitators had a little bit more knowledge about use of bulletin boards, interviewing the learners revealed that bulletin boards, according to them, can be used to display either subject related matter or

their art work. That means they had the understanding of only Informative and Sharing bulletin boards.

### **ANALYSIS:**

There are four types of bulletin boards that can be used in school i.e. Aesthetic, Informative, Sharing and Interactive bulletin boards, out of which only two i.e. Aesthetic and Informative bulletin boards are being used in school. When all kinds of bulletin boards are used in combination, learner's vocabulary, efficiency and initiative for doing work, self-confidence, participation in classroom, as learners had the opportunity to use bulletin boards while answering any question, etc. was enhanced. With the use of Sharing and Interactive bulletin boards learners have got more positive impact on their learning and self-development. Although the bulletin boards can be categorised into four different types but most of the time they do not exist in isolation, they do overlap.

As per the interviews carried out upon learners and facilitators, it can be inferred that they have the understanding of informative, aesthetic and sharing bulletin boards. They are not aware of interactive bulletin boards and their understanding of sharing bulletin boards is limited to display of learners' work only. Hence, it can be inferred that facilitators had the understanding of more type of bulletin boards than what they had actually used in the school.

While before interaction with the learners, bulletin boards were being used in schools only to communicate essential information and to include and motivate learners but after interaction these were used for making personal connection with learners, making information interesting and joyful, reinforcing review of the concept, making classroom more appealing place, ensuring classroom management, making classroom an interactive place, displaying learners' work and motivating them in curricular activities. This enhanced engagement of learners in various ways.

### **RESULTS:**

Bulletin boards, before interaction with learners, were being used in most of the schools just for communicating essential information and including and motivating learners for school activities. After interaction with the learners, it was found that bulletin boards and interactive bulletin boards can be used for engaging learners in various ways viz. making personal connection with learners, making information interesting and joyful, reinforcing review of the concept, making classroom more appealing place, ensuring classroom management, making classroom an interactive place, displaying learners' work and motivating them in curricular activities. The study revealed that use of bulletin boards in the classroom during interaction with the learners not only enhanced effectiveness in their understanding but also had positive impact upon their learning through various strategies.

## CONCLUSION

Schools, generally, use bulletin boards for the display of information and learners' art work only, i.e. only Informational and Aesthetic bulletin boards out of the four types of bulletin boards are being used. When other two types i.e. sharing and Interactive bulletin boards were used during interaction, it was seen that learners' participation and initiative taking was enhanced. In totality, it can be concluded that learner's vocabulary, efficiency and initiative for doing work, self-confidence gets enhanced with the use of bulletin boards in the classroom. It is recommended that as a facilitator to learning one should have enhanced understanding of importance of bulletin boards and they should be used in the school for improving learning on the part of learners.

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