Advice for Effective Use of the Blackboard in Class

- Outline the day's topics
- Remind students about assignments
- Emphasize major points of a lecture or discussion
- Summarize ideas raised in class discussion as "group memory"
- Present graphs, diagrams, charts, timelines
- Show computations, formulas, or steps in a proof or derivation
- Provide complementary or redundant representations of key ideas
- Spell out new terms

Tips
- Use the blackboard when you want draw students' attention to comparisons between different segments of the lecture (e.g., the relationship between a diagram and a mathematical representation or between two different examples) so they are able to see the segments simultaneously.
- Plan and structure your board work. Sketch in your notes how the board for the whole lecture will look.
- Include headings, circling or other methods of emphasis to highlight important information.
- Move enough that students can see what you have written. You may want to practice writing with your arm extended rather than close to your board. Also, depending on the shape of the room, you may need to move to the side of the board to avoid blocking some students' view.
- Write legibly - both large print and moderately spaced. You may want to look at the board from the back of the room before you erase at the end of a class to monitor yourself. If your writing is difficult to read on the board, consider making handouts to supplement what you write.
- Put very important material in the most visible parts of the board-top left and center. Use the far sides for announcements, reminders and asides.
- Erase old chalk completely. Taking time to erase also gives students time to pause, reflect and ask questions.
- Acknowledge the origin of your accent and suggest to them that if they do not understand something you have said, they should let you know. At the same time it is ok for you to ask your students to repeat or clarify something they have said to you. It is much less frustrating and confusing if you and your students work together to understand each other.

Before Class
- Check in the dictionary for the pronunciation of key words, and practice them.
- Plan and write down key questions in your lesson plans, e.g., "Why is the exponential function its own derivative?" or "Which measure of central tendency might you use to describe the poverty level? Why?"
- Practice your talk out loud.
- Watch yourself speak into a mirror, and/or use a tape recorder. Even experienced teachers do this.

During Class

Use specific, local examples as often as possible, e.g., "Let's look at the case of McDonald's. Labor to work at the counter and to make hamburgers, as well as the cost of hamburger, lettuce and tomato, are examples of variable costs. These costs are variable because they go up or down depending on the number of customers McDonald's has."