

Consensus Board

As dictated by the curriculum guide, the modeling instruction classroom cycle consists of small group work that results in the creation of a whiteboard. This whiteboard helps students communicate their findings and ideas to the larger group in the white board meeting. As the instructor, your goal is to ensure that all of the discussion points listed in the guide for the particular whiteboard meeting are discussed and agreed upon. It is important that consensus is achieved and explicit so that it is clear to students what your expectations are for their success in the classroom. These expectations include notation, representations and their proper use, tools and processes for solving problems, course content (Newton's laws, kinematic equations, etc.), the correct solutions to problems, and what is expected in a full model. As there is no lecture format by which students take notes, the consensus board is like the notes one would find on the board during a lecture. It is important to give students time to write the information down for their own keeping. Often students take pictures of the boards using phones or other cameras.

***Consensus boards are a clear and explicit way to express these expectations
It is the instructor's job to introduce the consensus board and maintain its use.***

There is no prescribed method, but the following are suggested examples that have achieved the desired results:

-In order to establish the creation of a consensus board as a classroom norm, the instructor can enter the circle while leading a discussion (in this example the instructor leads a discussion on the definition of terms) and create the consensus board by eliciting student responses that dictate what the instructor writes on the board. [Video example](#)

-Once established, and students began to value the role of the consensus board, it is possible to develop this norm as a student responsibility.

-Another way of establishing a consensus board is by designating a group's board as the consensus. Sometimes this may involve adding additional items to the board. This can be chosen by the students or designated by the instructor through discussion. This method is often most useful for correct solutions, full models, representations and their proper use, or tools and processes for solving problems. It is also valuable to promote student evaluation of the work presented in large group discussion.

A consensus board may not always be necessary or desired. Again, this is at the discretion of the instructor.