

White Boards

In Modeling Instruction, whiteboards serve as a tool for the communication of ideas within both small and large group interactions, as well as student-instructor or group-instructor interactions. All groups have access to personal whiteboards, about 2' by 3' in size, to use while completing their work. Whiteboards of this large size, as opposed to notebook-sized whiteboards, allow for all members of the group to participate.

The instructor assigns each group of students to complete a whiteboard with their model and then bring it to present at the whiteboard meeting. Within these meetings, whiteboards serve to facilitate and mediate the discussion.

We feel that by using an easily erasable surface it allows for students to feel comfortable with changing or revising their thoughts or ideas. Although temporary, the use of whiteboards also has the students committed to ideas, which are then presented to the class for evaluation. These evaluations are low-pressure for the students because it removes them from having to solve the problem in front of the class, and because their answers can always be edited.

We also feel that whiteboards allow the instructor an open door into the minds of students by allowing their building of conceptual models to be seen. Also, the whiteboards serve as a source for interaction between the instructor and students.

One of the other benefits of whiteboards is that they always work and are relatively cheap.