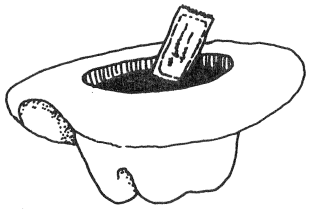

10 Alternatives for Selecting Group Leaders and Filling Other Jobs

One of the ways to facilitate active learning in small groups is to assign jobs such as leader, facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, spokesperson, process observer, or materials manager to some of the group members. Often, you can ask for volunteers to assume some of these responsibilities. Sometimes, it is fun and efficient to use a creative selection strategy.

1. **Alphabetical assignment.** Assign jobs in alphabetical order by first name. In a long-term group, rotate jobs using this order.

2. **Birthday assignment.** Make assignments in chronological order by participants' birthdays. In a long-term group, rotate jobs using this order.

3. **Number lottery.** Ask group members to count off. Place pieces of paper with the numbers held by group members in a hat, draw a number, and assign the person with that number to the job.

4. **Color lottery.** Select a color for each assignment. The person who is wearing that color receives that assignment.

5. **Article of clothing.** Assign responsibilities by selecting corresponding articles of clothing such as eyeglasses, silver jewelry, a sweater, or brown shoes.

6. **Voting.** Ask group members to vote on the job recipient. One popular method (used by Bob Pike[1]) is to signal members to point to the person they are voting for. The person with the most fingers pointing at him or her gets the job.

7. **Random assignment.** Ask each member to reveal the sum of the last four digits of his or her home phone number (for example, 9999 equals thirty-six). Announce a number from one to thirty-six. Award the job to the person in the group whose sum comes closest to that number.

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[1] Robert Pike, President, Creative Training Techonolgies International, Edina, MN.

8. **Pet lovers.** Assign a designated job to the person with the greatest number of pets.

9. **Family size.** Assign a designated job to the person with the most (or fewest) siblings.

10. **Door prize.** Prior to the session, place a sticker in such a way as to identity one member per group. You might place a sticker on a name tag, on a seat or desk, or on one of the instructional handouts. The person receiving the sticker gets the prize of a specific group job. For awarding more than one job, use stickers of different colors.