

## Forming Classroom Teams: The Student-led Draft

Creating teams for class projects can be a daunting task for instructors and students. Choosing teams through a student-led draft is an easy and fair way to handle the process.

1. The instructor randomly assigns each student in the class a letter or number code on a piece of paper and asks students to remember their code.
2. The instructor decides on the number of teams that will be formed (for example, five) and asks for that many students to volunteer as leaders. The instructor may or may not choose to share with students what they will be leading. If students are reluctant to volunteer to lead, extra credit may be given to encourage participation.
3. The instructor asks the leaders to come to the front of the class and to introduce themselves by name to their classmates. As well, each leader is given 30 seconds (or a similar short amount of time) to describe his or her leadership style and teammate preferences to the class. For example, a leader might say that he or she needs team members whose work is organized and punctual. Another leader might ask for students who prefer to work independently to join his or her team.
4. The remaining students, after listening to each leader's presentation, are asked to write a list on their coded papers of the leaders they want to work with in order of most to least preferred. The students must also include brief notes regarding the attributes that make them suited to a particular leader's team. For example, a student might note "I work best under strict deadlines and due dates," or "I am a commuter and prefer the minimum of face-to-face meetings." No self-identifying information is permitted. One-to-two minutes is plenty of time for this activity.
5. The instructor collects the papers and gives them to the leaders, who will leave the classroom and draft teams. The drafting will take about 5 minutes (it may be helpful to give the leaders a time limit). The leaders are given the task of reviewing the other students' preferences and notes and then forming teams with equal numbers of students on each team.
6. The leaders are brought back into the classroom to read off the letters or numbers of their drafted team members.
7. The instructor then provides time for leaders to gather their teams and to share contact information.

An added advantage to this method of forming classroom teams is that it promotes self-reflection as it requires students to think about their work habits and the work environments to which they are best suited.

### **Submitted by**

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