

Forming Groups or Committees

As part of a Social Studies activity one year, I wanted my students to work on one of four different committees. To make the “Choose a Committee” process bearable, I used our set of numbered clothespins.

1. I found an empty cardboard box in the supply room.
2. Using a permanent felt marker, I wrote the names of the four committees on the outside of the box, one committee per side.
3. During Social Studies time, I held aloft the cardboard box and discussed the four committees and what the members of these groups would do.
4. After this committee preview, I placed the hat with the clothespins and the box in the back of the room.
5. The students then clipped their clothespins on the side of the box that represented the committee on which they wished to work.
6. After every student had chosen a committee, the box was given to two students who then made committee rosters.

Advantage #1: Looking at the clothespins left on the hat will alert you to the students who have yet to make a choice.

Advantage #2: Looking at the box will tell you if the committees are balanced or in need of some adjusting.

Advantage #3: Switching committees will be easy to do if a student decides that he didn't like his first choice.



Fig. 4-20
A cardboard box and your set of numbered clothespins makes committee organization a breeze.

Overachievers: I suppose that I could have typed up committee descriptions with a listing of responsibilities and requirements. Then, after printing out the four sheets, I could have glued them onto the sides of the box. This would have allowed anyone who wasn't clear about one of the committees an opportunity to review the information.

Bonus Idea: Get some gold spray paint and spray a dozen clothespins gold. During times when the committees are working on their projects, you can give a gold clothespin to a committee and have one of the members clip it to the box to indicate they had been working especially well. (The numbered clothespins had been removed during step 6.) The gold clothespins could then be incorporated into the final assessment procedure at the conclusion of the activity.