

Save the Last Word for Me

Developed by Patricia Averette.

Purpose: To clarify and deepen our thinking about articles we read.

Roles: Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving; three other participants. The four participants each take a turn as presenter.

Design: The process is designed for participants to build on each other's thinking, not to enter into a dialogue.

Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes. Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.

Total Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

The Protocol

1. Create a group of four participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
2. Participants each silently identify what they consider to be (for themselves) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlight their chosen passage.
3. When the group is ready, a member volunteers to be the presenter. The presenter identifies the part of the article that he or she found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. The person says nothing about why he or she chose that particular passage.
4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
5. The other three participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage—saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
6. The presenter then has 3 minutes to state why he or she chose that part of the article and to respond to—or build on—what the other participants have said.
7. The same pattern is followed until all four members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have “the last word.”
8. Optional: the group may then hold an open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised.

9. The group debriefs the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrffharmony.org.