National School Reform Faculty

Harmony Education Center

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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.
The process is designed to build on each other's thinking, and 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 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.

2. Each participant silently identifies what s/he considers to be (for him or her) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlights that passage.

3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that s/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the *presenter*) says nothing about why s/he 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 3 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 first participant then has 3 minutes to state why s/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what s/he heard from his/her colleagues.

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 open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.

9. Debrief 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.nsrfharmony.org.