

The Final Word Protocol

Purpose: The purpose of this discussion format is to give each person in the group an opportunity to have their ideas, understandings, and perspectives enhanced by hearing from others. With this format, the group can explore an article, clarify their thinking, and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Roles: Facilitator/ timekeeper (who also participates); participants

Process:

1. Sit in a circle, and identify a facilitator/ time-keeper
2. Each person needs to have one “most” significant idea from the text underlined/highlighted in the text. Make sure to have a “back up” quote as well.
3. The first person begins by reading the quote/ what “struck him or her the most” from the article in one minute. Possible questions to answer:
 - Why does s/he agree/disagree with the quote?
 - What questions does s/he have about that quote?
 - What issues does it raise for him or her?
 - What does s/he now wonder about in relation to that quote?
4. After this person is finished, each person then comments on the SAME quote/section as the one the first person in the round chose (without being interrupted). This continues around the circle. Responses should be less than one minute.

The purpose of the response is:

 - To expand on the presenter’s thinking about the quote and the issues raised for him or her by the quote
 - To provide a different look at the quote
 - To clarify the presenter’s thinking about the quote
 - To question the presenter’s assumptions about the quote and the issues raised
5. The person who started, then has the FINAL WORD. In no more than one minute the presenter responds to what has been said. Now what is s/he thinking? What is his or her reaction to what s/he has heard?
6. The next person in the circle then begins by sharing what struck him or her most from the text. Proceed around the circle, responding to this next person’s quote in the same way as the first presenter’s. This process continues until each person has had a round with his or her quote.