

# Save the Last Word for ME

*Developed by Patricia Averette.*

*Modified by Elaine Rector*

**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 25 minutes. Timing is important; each round should last approximately 5-6 minutes.

**Total Time:** approximately 25 minutes.

## The Protocol:

1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
2. Each participant silently reads the text and identifies what s/he considers to be (for him or her) the most significant or provocative ideas addressed in the article. Highlight those passages. Each person should select a minimum of four phrases or sentences (not to exceed two sentences). Having four selections as possibilities for sharing is important if one is in a group of four (minimum number of passages selected should match number of people in each discussion group.)
3. When the group is ready, a the person to the left of the timekeeper identifies a highlighted part of the article that s/he found to be significant/provocative and ensures that each participant knows where this passage is located within the piece. After reading 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. (To ensure a quick flow, this phase starts with the person to the left of the presenter and moves clockwise around the group.)
6. The first participant then has 2 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.” (Since each participant has marked several passages, no one should share the same passage which has already been presented.)
8. If a group finishes early, there can be an 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?  
What did you learn about yourself while listening to others discuss your passage?  
How did the process influence your interpretation of the text and therefore your final words?