

Final Word

The purpose of this discussion format is to give each person in the group an opportunity to have his or her ideas, understandings, and perspective enhanced by hearing from others. With a structure, the group can explore a text concept, article, or chapter; clarify their thinking; and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Roles:

- Facilitator
- Time Keeper
- Participants

Materials:

- Expository text
- Clock or timer

Procedure:

1. *Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students.*
2. *Ask students to sit together with their group members and identify a facilitator and timekeeper. The role of the facilitator is to keep the process moving, keep it clear and directed to the selected text or narrative piece. The timekeeper is to help the facilitator keep time so everyone gets an opportunity to start and finish a round.*
3. *Ask students to have one “most” significant idea from the text marked. It is often helpful to have several back-up quotes or ideas as well.*
4. *The facilitator asks the first student to begin by reading what “struck him or her most” from the text. Have the student refer to where the idea or quote is in the text – one thought or quote only. Then in less than 3 minutes, this student describes why that idea or quote struck him or her. For example, why he or she agrees/disagrees with the quote, what questions are generated about that quote, what issues or what new thinking have been created.*

5. *The facilitator continues around the group, beginning with the person sitting to the right of the student sharing and he or she has one minute to respond to that idea or quote and what the student presented. The purpose of the response is to expand on the student's thinking about the issue, to provide a different look at the issue, to clarify thinking about that issue, and/or question the student's assumptions about the issue (although at this time there is no response from the student who presented his or her thoughts).*
6. *After each student had an opportunity to respond for one minute or less, the facilitator asks the student who presented his or her thought to have the final word. In no more than a minute, the student presenter responds to what has been said. The idea is that understanding has deepened and it is now possible to share new thinking and reactions.*
7. *The facilitator motions to the next student to begin by sharing what struck him or her most from the text. Proceed with steps 3-6.*
8. *This process continues until each person has started and finished a round.*
9. *For each round allow approximately 8 minutes (5 participants: presenter 3 minutes, response 1 minute for 4 people, final word for student presenter 1 minute). Total time is about 40 minutes for groups of 5; 32 minutes for groups of 4). End by debriefing the process in your small group.*