

Adaptation of Save the Last Word for Me*

Purpose:

To enhance text understanding, to foster group interaction and problem-solving, to provide a “scaffold” for challenging text material, and to encourage purposeful note-taking.

Materials:

Multiple copies of text, either fiction or nonfiction; index cards or ½ sheets of paper.

Procedure:

1. Students form groups of three.
2. Students read the text (or portions of the text) silently. On the index cards, they note areas of agreement/disagreement with the author and/or questions that occur to them while reading.
3. Students discuss the text (or portions of the text). Each member of the group selects a comment or question from the note cards for the group to discuss. Other members of the group react to the comment or question by sharing their own opinions, in the case of areas of agreement/disagreement, or by attempting answers, in the case of questions.
4. The student who initially shared the comment/question has the “last word” by summarizing the discussion or by offering his/her own opinion.
5. Another member of the group shares a comment/question, and the discussion cycle begins again.

Optional:

After the entire text has been read/discussed, the group can summarize important issues/questions. A recorder can take notes of this summary discussion for sharing with the entire class.

*Originally developed by Carolyn Burke. Described in Newman, J. (1993). Whole language activities. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Department of Education, Dalhousie University.