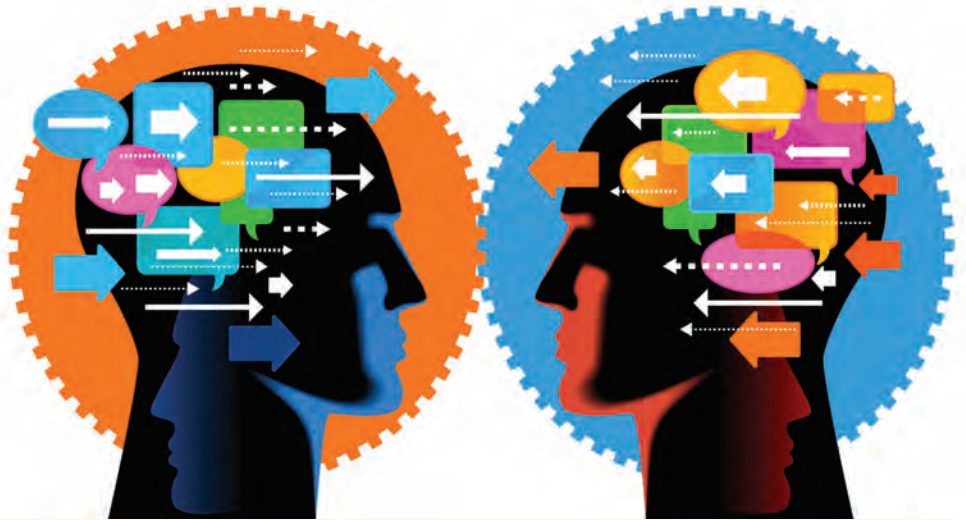# PROTOCOLS FOR DISCUSSING TEXT

Use the protocols on pp. 6-7 to discuss important aspects of this issue's feature article. These protocols may be used with any text.

SAVE THE LAST WORD FOR ME

PURPOSE: This protocol allows everyone to discuss a significant aspect of a text.

STEPS

1. Write a significant quote from the text on one side of an index card. The quote should resonate with the reader, perhaps stating an idea that the reader agrees with or strongly disagrees with.

2. On the other side of the card, explain the quote's significance.

3. One person at a time reads the quote and points to where in the text this quote can be found. The person does not explain its significance.

4. The rest of the group discusses the quote.

5. After a designated time, the discussion stops and the first person reads the back of the card or explains the significance of the quote. In other words, the last word is saved for the person who presented the quote.

6. Move on to the next person until everyone in the group has had a chance to have the last word.

Variation

If the group is large or time is short, have each person read the quote on the card even if the quote has previously been read. Do not have the group respond to any of the quotes.

The facilitator listens for patterns or repeated quotes to decide which quotes to clump together for group discussion (Step 4). Only one person should restate repetitive or similar quotes before the group discusses them. However, at Step 5, each individual who listed that quote gets to have the last word.

PURPOSE: To build or deepen an understanding of a text. (Text is defined broadly, i.e. an article, a book, a video, an art presentation.)
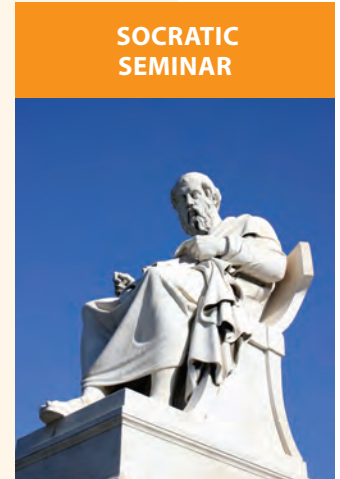
STEPS

1. Facilitator selects a text and frames a question or two to guide the discussion.

2. The group reads the text several times to nudge meaning out of every word.

3. The group discusses the text, focusing on the framing questions.

Tips:

- Comments need to be grounded in the text.

    o "Where in the text do you see that?"

    o "The comment on page ___ appears to contradict the author's earlier statement."

    o "I wonder what the author means when she says …"

- Conversation needs to be shared among group members.

- People are encouraged to challenge ideas, not individuals.

- The success of the discussion is the group's responsibility, not just the facilitator's.

4. Debrief the process

SOCRATIC SEMINAR

Source: Adapted from Easton, L. B. (Ed.) (2008). *Powerful designs for professional learning.* Oxford, OH: NSDC.