

Using Protocols to Engage Classroom Discussions

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Agenda

- Welcome
- What is a Protocol?
- Final Word Protocol
- Let's Practice
- Examples
- Uses in the classroom and online learning
- Questions



Protocols

- Simple definition – protocols bring clarity to the task at hand
- Formal definition – rules and procedures used to conduct effective communication and collaboration
- National School Reform Faculty
 - <https://www.nsrharmony.org/content/protocols>

Protocols

- Protocols serve as a written guide to focus professional dialogue in a structured format. Specifically, protocols set a well thought-out format following established group norms, time, and professional respect.
- Educators often create protocols for their own use or adapt existing protocols as needed.

Why use Protocols?

- Students have a voice in the discussion
- Requires all students to participate
- Provides structure for students who try to dominate the conversation
- Sets specifics for the discussion
- Offers parameters for the discussion
- Members on Task
- Time Limits

Final Word Protocol

- Structured tool so all students have an equal opportunity to voice an insight, opinion, description etc.
- Assign an article or chapter and instruct students to choose three-four pertinent passages to discuss with classmates.
- Place students in groups and follow the Final Word Protocol.

Thoughts...

Construct groups prior to class – make groups the size that will work with specific classroom.

Setting norms at the beginning of the process is important

Set time according to instructor's time in class.

The Final Word Protocol

Purpose: to explore a text & build upon on one another's thinking

Keys to Facilitation: timing & avoiding dialogue

Number: any number / no more than five-six

Time: 30 minutes (depending on the length of the article)

Procedure: The group is given time to look over the text, briefly, and note a passage / sentence or two which has particular meaning for them.

1 minute The group is asked to sit in tight circles of six. Each group should choose a timer who will not waiver! The first person begins by reading a quotation and explaining why it was the one chosen.

30 seconds Proceeding around the circle, the other five people get to respond briefly.

1 minute The first person (1 minute person above) has the "final word" to respond to what was said.

The next person begins with their 1 minute and so on. Allot 4.5 minutes in total per participant.

Large group reflection: How did the protocol work in your group?
What do you hear that was interesting?
Was it easy to stay with the protocol?
(How might you use this protocol in your school/class?)



Ping Pong Protocol A Consultancy for Groups

Developed by the Vermont NSRF Center of Activity.

The purpose of this protocol is to assist a group in having substantive discussion about an issue that all of its members collectively face. There is no presenter in this protocol, and no facilitator is needed if the group takes joint responsibility for following the protocol.

It is important that all members of the group enter into this protocol in the spirit of self-reflection and improvement. Everyone should be prepared to change their practice if the protocol reveals an opportunity for improvement on their part. The next steps determined at the end of the protocol might include actions for all or just some of the members to take, but at the outset everyone should engage in the protocol with a willingness to take personal steps to address the issue at hand.

1. Pose the problem (5 minutes)

Someone in the group states the issue to be addressed. This may be done in the form of a question that the group would like to explore together. Check to see if there is agreement on the issue at hand; re-frame as needed.

2. Writing (10 minutes)

Everyone writes about the problem from their own point of view.

From this point on, if the group is larger than eight, smaller groups can be formed. Create groups that include diverse perspectives on the issue.

3. Share the reflections (15 minutes, depending on the size of the group. If there are multiple groups, add time for highlights from each group to be reported out.)

Each person has the opportunity to explain their own approach to the problem from their writing, and they are written in bullet form on chart paper. After each presentation, clarifying questions are asked of the writer, if necessary.

4. Probing questions (20 minutes, depending on the size of the group)

Each member of the group has an opportunity to ask a probing question of any other group member or members. It is important that each person in the group get the chance to respond to at least one probing question. This can continue until clarity is reached or as long as time allows.

5. Writing to synthesize what we've heard (10 minutes)

This is an opportunity for each group member to make sense of what's been said.

Case Study Protocol

Case Study Protocol

Purpose:

To provide all participants the opportunity to share ideas and respond to colleagues, allowing everyone to have "the final word."

Roles:

Timekeeper – adhere to the time allowed each participant

Participants – assigned groups of four

Procedure:

Participants read the case study, *Silencing Social Media on Suicidal Matters at a School Setting*, and the three questions listed below. Develop an answer to the three questions and be prepared to discuss using the protocol process.

Questions:

1. Explain the potential positive and negative consequences of the way the high school principal managed the crisis. What would you have done differently if you were the principal?
2. Has the principal correctly prioritized the issues that the school is facing? Has the principal effectively relied on her team to develop and implement the necessary plan?
3. What stakeholders should the school principal include when developing the crisis management plan? Does your school have a crisis management plan in place if a crisis occurs such as the one at Heartsville?

Protocol Process:

Group members form a circle facing each other. Timekeeper is chosen and is also a participant.

Begin with one participant who shares his/her response to question one – **participant speaks for 2 minutes** sharing his/her thoughts – continue the round with each participant speaking from his/her prepared remarks with a **1-minute response**.

The person who began the round finishes with a **1-minute response** to what had been shared by the other group members (agreeing, disagreeing, etc.).

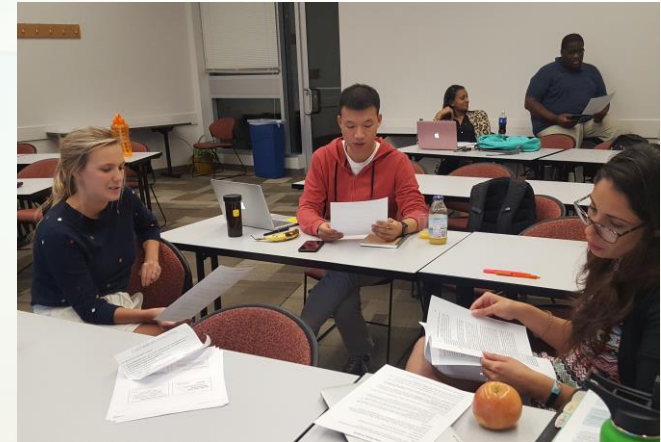
The group engages in the process until everyone has completed the round.

The round concludes with a **4-minute** open discussion on the article.

Continue the process for the subsequent questions allowing everyone in the group to go first in answering one of the questions.

Option:

Conclude the Case Study Protocol with a large group discussion.



Let's Practice the Final Word Protocol

- Group Formation Determine Timekeeper (must adhere to time allotted)
- Read the article and highlight 3-4 pertinent points you want to discuss... agree with the point, make a connection to the point, new learning, disagree with the point etc.
- Sit in a circle with group
- First person introduces idea/quote/point speaking for **90 seconds**
- Proceed around the circle with each person responding to the speaker for no more than **1 minute**
- The speaker has **1 minute** to respond with the **Final Word**
- Engage in the process so all members participate with the first and final word

Creating Protocols

- National School Reform Faculty suggests participating in Critical Friends Group Training before creating Protocols

<https://www.nsrffharmony.org/content/protocols>

- My experience has been... if following a structured path protocols can be created

Some Examples...

Student Learning Objectives Sharing Protocol

Purpose

The purpose of the Student Learning Objectives Sharing Protocol is to provide participants the opportunity to share his/her SLO and receive feedback on the goal statement, performance measures, and performance indicators.

Roles

Two to three participants; one participant serving as the time keeper.

Time

50-55 minutes for complete process.

Norms

One person presents/speaks at a time.

All feedback given is done in a collegial and professional manner.

Timekeeper must adhere to time limits posted.

Procedure

First participant introduces SLO Goal Statement to other participants and explains the purpose of the goal statement. 3 minutes

First participant identifies the Performance Measure(s) chosen and explains the connection to the goal statement. 3 minutes

First participant explains how the Performance Indicators are utilized to show growth, mastery, or growth and mastery. 3 minutes

Suggestions for using Protocols

- Begin with the Final Word Protocol
- Determine what conversations, chapters, comparisons etc. need to have a structured format
- Create a protocol
 - Task
 - Time
 - # in Group
 - Intended Outcome
- One concern people may have is the limit of input – I add a talking chip for each person so they may have one additional chance to comment

Suggestions for using Protocols for Online Learning

- Asynchronous
 - Most difficult to adapt
 - Discussion Boards
 - Google Docs
 - Chat Rooms
 - Groups designed by instructor to conduct protocol as an assignment via Skype, WebEx etc.
 - The Sharing Protocol
- Synchronous
 - Explain protocol procedure
 - Assign groups within videoconferencing platform

THE SHARING PROTOCOL

- Purpose:** to share a text and to build on shared ideas
- Number:** 2 people with two different articles on a common theme
- Time:** 10 minutes (depending on length of the article)
- Procedure:** Each participant should read the assigned article (at times “professionally skimming the article is appropriate) and highlight several salient points for discussion. Identify who will be Participant A and Participant B.
- 3 minutes:** Participant A shares the overall theme of the article and several salient points with Participant B.
- 1 minute:** Participant B responds with a reaction or asks for clarification on a specific point.
- 3minutes:** Participant B shares the overall theme of the article and several salient points with Participant A.
- 1 minute:** Participant A responds with a reaction or asks for clarification on a specific point.
- 1 minute:** Participant A comments on a question posed by the facilitator or gives an overall reaction.
- 1 minute:** Participant B comments on a question posed by the facilitator or gives an overall reaction.

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

Albert Einstein

Questions?

McDonald, J. P., Mohr, N., Dichter, A., & McDonald, E. C. (2013). *The power of protocols: An educators guide to better practice*. Moorabbin, Vic.: Hawker Brownlow Education.

The Final Word Protocol. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nsrharmony.org/>

