

First Turn/Last Turn

First turn/last turn is a structured process for engaging in dialogue and collaborative inquiry. It develops an appreciation for the power of listening and the personal and shared learning possibilities in exploring diverse perspectives. This strategy provides a clear protocol that is especially helpful for newly forming groups and for any groups working with controversial topics or technically complex information.

Instructions:

1. Have participants individually read/examine the selected material highlighting 2-3 items. Items could be points of agreement, points of disagreement, provocative statements, interesting facts or curiosities.
2. Break into groups of 4 to 6. Choose the first speaker. That participant shares one highlighted item from the article, not indicating why they chose it. The next person comments on that point. Each participant in that group comments on that same point. Finally, the original speaker indicates why he/she chose that point and offers original and perhaps new insight.
Another participant begins the second round, indicating a chosen point from the article and everyone takes a turn commenting about that point, finishing again with the original speaker of the second round.
Continue until all participants have had a chance to initiate a point found in the article.
3. Emphasize the restriction of cross talk.
4. It is often useful to designate the starting speaker. These individuals set the tone for the remainder of the group. Their positive modeling increases the likelihood of honoring the process.
5. Reconvene the full class for process/content reflections.