

First Turn/Last Turn

Information Processing: Exploring and Discovering

PROCESS

- Form groups of four to eight.
- Silently and simultaneously, members read a section of text and highlight three or four items that have particular meaning for them.
- The facilitator names a person to start in each group.
- In turn, members share one of their items but do not comment on it. They simply name it.
- In round-robin fashion, group members comment about the identified item with no cross-talk.
- The initial person who named the item now shares his or her thinking about the item, and therefore, gets the last turn.
- Repeat the pattern around the table.

ALTERNATIVES

- When possible, have members read the text before coming to the meeting. When

cont.

they have read prior to the meeting, allow 3–4 minutes for them to review what they marked. This can save face for those who forgot to read.

- Reading sources can include journal articles, policy statements, mission statements, a sample of student work, or original writing by members on a common topic.

TIPS

- Select the first speaker geographically (e.g., the person sitting with his or her back most directly against the wall). Selection that is both structured and random can interrupt problematic patterns that occur in group dynamics (e.g., having one person always be the first responder).
- Stress that there is no cross-talk. Explain that when cross-talk occurs, it takes the focus off the speaker, changes the topic, diminishes the speaker's influence, and interferes with listening.
- Explain that structured dialogue allows members to develop the necessary emotional skills and values for high-quality dialogue. This experiential learning will serve as a scaffold as participants learn to dialogue.
- Monitor and intervene when cross-talk occurs as groups begin.
- Groups of six are ideal.