

## INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 20

### TASK 20 SAVE THE LAST WORD

*Organized and deliberate classroom discussions can help students practice the skills of collaborative conversations in which they listen to other's ideas, build on them, and express their own ideas clearly. This discussion strategy that requires all students to participate as active speakers and listeners; the clearly defined structure helps shy students share their ideas and ensures that frequent speakers practice being quiet. Beyond integrating elements of speaking and listening it can be used to help students debrief a text they have read or organize their thoughts before writing. The topics and amount of direction students receive in selecting discussion points can vary depending on content goals, experience, and prior knowledge. This task can be adapted to address text structure rather than content.*

#### Steps Outlined:

1. Select text(s) for students to examine.
2. Students read the text(s) without stopping.
3. They then re-read the text, selecting three sentences that particularly stand out. The sentences are recorded along with explanations for selection.
4. Divide the students into groups of three, labeling one student A, one B, and the other C. Invite "A"s to read one of their selected sentences. Then ask students B and C discuss the sentence.

Examples of discussion questions include:

- a. What do they think it means?
- b. Why do they think these words might be important?
- c. To whom?

After several minutes, ask the A students to read their explanation, thus having "the last word." This process continues with each student sharing.

#### Variations:

- **Images/Video:** Select images/video related to the time period/topic you are studying and then ask students to select three images/scenes that stand out.
- **Tea Party/Discussion Line:** Rather than remaining with a group for discussion, students find a partner and each share one card then discussion the relationship between the two cards/ideas. Students move on to a new partner after a set time. This can also be done in a 'discussion line' (student form two parallel lines, facing each other, share with the person across from them, then slide to the right wrapping around the ends and share again).
- **Student Generated Questions:** Ask students to write three questions the text raises for them. These could be compelling questions (one that is interpretive, it has no clearly defined "right" answer) or questions about uncertainties/omissions in the text. Students write explanations for the questions and share.

#### Source:

*Facing History and Ourselves. "Save the Last Word for Me." Accessed April 19, 2013.*

<http://www.facinghistory.org/resources/strategies/save-last-word-me>

