

TEXT-BASED PROTOCOL “4 A’s”

Introduction:

A text-based protocol allows coaches and teachers to ensure a thorough reading and understanding of a given text (article, chapter, poem, news item) by providing a timed or sequential format that gives all readers opportunities to share, interpret and reflect on the material.

“4 A’s” is a timed sequential method for thoroughly analyzing written material. It is a way to approach the text from different perspectives and has the added benefit of including listening skills through paraphrasing. The 4 A’s represent these four perspectives—agreements, aspirations, alignments and adjustments. The paraphrasing encourages and affirms good listening and summarizing skills.

Purpose:

The purpose of this protocol is to allow all voices to be heard and reinforced as participants grapple with the text from differing perspectives. A deeper understanding of the text and of its ramifications are equitably derived resulting in more focus and validity being applied to the work at hand.

Process:

Participants work in groups of 4. They take turns at being the facilitator and timekeeper (and a norm keeper is desired). The facilitator acts as the lead questioner and “debriefeer” of the protocol. The timekeeper keeps track of the time and issues “time’s up” signals to the speakers.

1. Participants are given 10-15 minutes to read the text (or approximately 5 minutes per page)
2. The facilitator presents the first “A”: **Agreements** and asks, “Which parts of the text do we agree do we agree with in terms of our work?”
3. Group members respond one at a time by using a whip (go round) taking 2 minutes each. However, before each person contributes, he or she must paraphrase the comments of the person before, taking no more than 1 minute to do so (3 minutes total).
4. The facilitator presents the remaining A’s in the same manner:
Aspirations: Which parts of the text do we aspire to? Or want to work toward?
Alignments: What is the current reality and what is the gap between where we are and our aspirations?”
Adjustments: What need to be done to succeed?
5. Debrief as follows:
Did the protocol work for this particular text? Why or why not?
What new insights did you have as result of this protocol?

What kinds of text would be most suited to this protocol?
What follow up assignment or activity would you recommend?

Timelines:

Suggested timeline: 65 minutes, 3 min. each to include paraphrase *and* response

12 minutes Reading of the text

12 minutes Agreements

12 minutes Aspirations

12 minutes Alignments

12 minutes Adjustments

5 minutes Debrief

Suggested timeline: 45 minutes, 2 min each to include paraphrase *and* response

11 minutes Reading of the text

8 minutes Agreements

8 minutes Aspirations

8 minutes alignments

8 minutes Adjustments

2 minutes Debrief

Protocol modified by Judith Gray, 2002

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