

## The Four A's Text Protocol

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

The 4 A's represent these four perspectives—**assumptions, agreements, arguments and aspirations**. 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.

1. Read the article and highlight and write notes in answer to the following four questions:

- What **Assumptions** does the author of the text hold?
- What do you **Agree** about within the text?
- What do you want to **Argue** within the text?
- What parts of the text do you want to **Aspire** to? (**Act** upon)

2. In a round, each person identifies one assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence.

3. Facilitate a discussion in which the group discusses the text in light of each of the remaining "As", taking them one at a time - what do people want to argue with, agree with, and aspire to in the text? Try to move seamlessly from one "A" to the next, giving each "A" enough time for full exploration. Consider allotting ten minutes for each question round.

4. Debrief the text experience.