The Making Meaning Protocol
Adapted for use With a “Text”

Developed by Daniel Baron.

1. Getting Started
   • Participants read the text in silence, making brief notes about aspects of it that they particularly notice.

2. Describing the Text
   • The facilitator asks the group, “What do you see?”
   • Group members provide answers without making judgments about the quality of the text or their personal preferences.
   • If an interpretation or judgment emerges, the facilitator asks for the evidence on which it is based.

3. Asking Questions About the Text
   • The facilitator asks the group, “What questions does this text raise for you?”
   • Group members state any questions they have about the text.
   • The facilitator takes notes.

4. Speculating about the Meaning/Significance of the Text
   • The facilitator asks the group, “What is significant about this text?”
   • Participants, based on their reading of the text, construct meaning about the insights, problems or issues that the text seems focused on.

5. Discussing Implications for Our Work
   • The facilitator invites everyone to share any thoughts they have about ways this particular text might influence their work as teachers and educators.

6. Reflecting on the Making Meaning Protocol
   • The group reflects on the experiences of or reactions to the protocol.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.