As we began the journey of identification, inviting them to grapple with common terms in community to get participants’ thoughts on the landscape, we agreed to take the risk and support each other ally only get them to the same results as the schools they sought to change. As some of us began to wrestle with smaller scale? As some of us began to wrestle with simply reproduce unsuccessful high schools on a just might get us to a point of challenging not just etymologies, but also educators’ understanding and notations about the issues that beset the poor, the market- ginalized, children of color and other victims of bias and discrimination, it can be a way to “bring it up” without “taking it up.” While there’s safety and anonymity in the Chalk Talk, it does a disser- vice to simply create silent spaces to name inequi- ties without the proper curricular connections and skilled facilitation to allow participants to verbalize their thoughts and feelings that surface as a result of “doing the protocol”: without then creating and holding the space to un-silence the dialogue. Another point that may seem minor to some was incredibly important and telling to me. As I watched the Triple Chalk Talks play out, I began to notice that while they happened in differing locales, the questions repeatedly ended up being placed in a similar order. First and/or second were the questions “What is education?” and “What is schooling?” usually placed in close proximity to one another. Then, in another distant space, just as we began the journey of identification, inter- pretation, transition and transformation. Rigorous, yes. Relationships— we asked ourselves and our participants what the relationships were in the three terms, and also what the relevance was of posing the three questions within the context of our seminar and their schools. These questions were asked in the debrief and we’ve always been surprised at the outcome. We oftentimes stood in angst, confusion, enlightenment and clarification with more questions— a deeper reflection on prac- tice in schools—and a yearning for ways to truly create something radically different, not only for the students and parents, but also for the educators who yearned for greater satisfaction in what they were doing for their students and school communi- ties.

On facilitation...
I also learned that the facilitators’ rationale for using this protocol with these questions should be made clear before it is implemented. Depending upon the purpose for using Chalk Talk, it can be counterproductive, or an escape route for address- ing equity superficially, if it is only intended to be used as a “silenced” dialogue. If the equity dialogue isn’t unpacked and connected to other curricular components to deepen understandings throughout the seminar, it is insufficient— and dare I say irresponsible— to open and shut the dialogue at the Chalk Talk. For those who want to hide behind their discomfort in pressing for public conversa- tions about the issues that beset the poor, the mar- ginalized, children of colour and other victims of bias and discrimination, it can be a way to “bring it up” without “taking it up.” While there’s safety and anonymity in the Chalk Talk, it does a disser- vice to simply create silent spaces to name inequi- ties without the proper curricular connections and skilled facilitation to allow participants to verbalize their thoughts and feelings that surface as a result of “doing the protocol”: without then creating and holding the space to un-silence the dialogue. Another point that may seem minor to some was incredibly important and telling to me. As I watched the Triple Chalk Talks play out, I began to notice that while they happened in differing locales, the questions repeatedly ended up being placed in a similar order. First and/or second were the questions “What is education?” and “What is schooling?” usually placed in close proximity to one another. Then, in another distant space, (continued on page 19)
Protocols in Practice: The Triple Chalk Talk- An Alternative Way to “Set It Off”
Rolesia Holman, North Carolina

I explicitly recall having a conversation with Nancy Mohr when she, Katy Kelly and I participated in the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools’ (BayCES) Leading for Equity seminar in the summer of 2004. I remember thinking, it seems like a perfect marriage... if we could integrate BayCES’s equity pedagogy with the processes and protocols of NSRF. Lo and behold, it wasn’t long afterward that the work began with a few of our National Facilitators and BayCES colleagues, work that launched the Coaching for Educational Equity (CFEE) Seminar in the summer of 2005. This particular article is intended to put to paper some thinking around an NSRF process, Chalk Talk; content that emerged from CFEE as a result of the partnership with BayCES; and the Gates Foundation’s attributes of high achieving schools: rigor, relevance and relationship- ships for those involved in the National Small Schools movement.

As we sought to create agendas for those who were interested in professional learning communities that were a radical departure from business as usual, we knew that we had to research, adopt, and implement critical pedagogy and practices that were engaging and potentially transformative. As a group comprised of some of the National Facilitators from our CFEE cohort, we continued to grapple with processes and content that would deepen our practice and intensify the experiences of those who passionately wanted to explore deepening our practice and intensify the experiences of those who historically had been least served and were yet the most needy.

Triple Chalk Talk
How could we preserve and protect the integrity of Chalk Talk while increasing its rigor, relationship and relevance to the content which was to follow? The responses to that question led to the “Triple Chalk Talk.” The thought was to ask not just one question, but three that would cause people to enter a space of dissonance-dissonance that was intended to direct us inward and call to the core that which was both personal and professional, cognitive and emotional.

Reflection quotes:
Warm
• Our facilitators did an excellent job of meet ing all needs of our group.
• Incredible! This was an unbelievably relevant and productive conference.
• Thank you for bringing in Gloria Merrie. She was quite an inspiration. What an amaz ing “giver” she is.
• We worked together more deeply than any other group I have ever been a part of!
• I plan to do this work at my school. I think this is a great way to look at and learn from student work.

Cool
• I would like more “nuts and bolts” information/resources about how to implement SLCs within different school settings.
• I was disappointed in the facilitation of my Home Group. It felt like the main facilitator was teaching us. The focus seemed to be on acting as a CFG rather than on deepening any aspect of our facilitation. Not much processing – and even sometimes, no debrief.
• As far as I could tell issues of equity were not part of the ongoing conversation.
• Time was rushed but meaningful.
• I thought student work and was disappointed I did not get to present.

Instead, those of us who remained met to debrief the meeting and discuss plans for the next Winter Meeting.

The 2009 Winter Meeting, which will be our lucky 13, will be held in Texas, where we will be hosted by no fewer than three NSRF Centers of Activity- Houston, Austin, and San Antonio. The Urban Forum for Leadership and Learning/Houston Independent School District, and San Antonio NSRF Center at Trinity University. We look forward to seeing you all again next January!

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For more Winter Meeting follow-up, including evaluation results and please visit our website: www.nsrfharmony.org

Winter Meeting Wrap-Up (continued from page 3)

Shanghai American School
(continued from page 14)

year fatigue to be with their groups. Similarly, this fall the school superintendent proposed a program based on CFG protocols for teacher leaders. This developed into our TIT (Teacher Facilitator Training) program. The TTP was designed to provide two to three day training for all teacher leaders to become facilitators of CFG protocols for all school meetings and collaboration on every team across the school. The intent of this program was to initiate a kind of systemic CFG presence across the school to provide equity, voice, and effectiveness in meetings at every level.

I cannot help but be disappointed that the essential work of teachers sharing their teaching practices and strategies in the context of comfortable community circles is not moving forward as quickly as I would like. I am encouraged, however, by the positive reactions that emerged from many of my colleagues as they are exposed to the protocols in areas like full faculty meetings, key accreditation committees involving parents, admin, and teachers, as well as developing programs like teacher assistant training, parent education groups, and high school student associations. That’s not to say that we have found no resistance to the use of protocols, but what began as an October cohort of 15 participants is moving into a scope of acceptance and use across an organization of hundreds. Indeed, as we get ready to go back to school after the Chinese New Year break, I feel that, by and large, the majority of teachers in this faculty of about 300 are feeling the community building power of the conversations that CFG protocols bring to their professional lives.

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