



The first cohort is full, but we're now building a waitlist for a second, simultaneous class! Join us!

Summer Critical Friends Group New Coaches Open Training July 8-12

Bloomington, Indiana, \$795 for five days' training

Visit the [website](#) or call 812-330-2702 for the waitlist.

Look what CFGs can do for your school:

- Help students succeed
- Model and build 21st Century Skills
- Build trust
- Reduce teacher and administrator isolation
- Transform school culture

- Build diversity of thought
- Extend and share leadership
- Facilitate participation from all members
- Provide healthy challenges
- Foster equity
- Honor and prioritize time for deep reflection

- Support strategic planning
- Reveal solutions to complex dilemmas
- Develop critical problem-solving
- Encourage creative, new thinking (sometimes around old problems)
- Carefully analyze work, and support everyone in receiving and giving focused, actionable feedback

“After a week of this training I feel we now have more tools to improve meetings, communication and the community at [my] school. Thank you so much.” -- A new CFG coach from Wisconsin

*S/he, She or He, They: Language Choices

By Luci Englert McKean, Connections Managing Editor and CFG Coach in Indiana luci@nsrfharmony.org

As a trained journalist, I've struggled with decisions about style for this publication. AP vs Chicago Public Manual, upstyle versus downstyle headlines, other typographic choices all have been in question for a year now. In the end, I've decided to stop struggling and simply try our best to be consistent on a shoestring budget and with a very limited staff.

That said, the issue of gender equity in the English language has long been troublesome for me. GLBT (gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender) issues have become more widespread in the media. Frankly, I've become more aware of gender issues among people I actually know personally. Recently, [Sweden adopted a gender-neutral pronoun](#) for instances when the speaker/

writer is uncertain of a person's gender, genders are mixed, or it needs to be deliberately ambiguous.

Since American English does not (yet) have a singular, gender-neutral pronoun for humans, with this issue and forward, I'm asking the grammarians among us to join with us in a bit of a throwback. Rather than the recent historical preference for “he” speaking of single humans of any gender, or the more complicated “s/he,” I'm asking that in this publication we return to using “they” as a singular as well as plural pronoun that will encompass people who identify as masculine, feminine, or something elsewhere on the continuum.

I have it on good authority from Erin McKean (no relation), for-

mer editor of the Oxford English Dictionary and now chief wordsmith at Wordnik.com that “they” as a singular pronoun was perfectly respectable language use since the 14th century. She referred me to [this post “citing credentials so thoroughly it might shake even the ossified beliefs of William Safire.”](#)

I expect that, like me, many of you may cringe the first several times you read “they” and “their” as singular pronouns, but I hope you will remember those around us who do not fit neatly into “his” and “her” boxes, and will join us in standing at the forefront for this particular brand of equity.

Questions, comments, or indignant rants? Let's talk. Email luci@nsrfharmony.org