The National School Reform Faculty® (NSRF®) publishes the Connections newsletter six times per year. To suggest a topic or submit an article, email nsrf@nsrfharmony.org or call 812-334-8379.

National School Reform Faculty®
Harmony Education Center

September 2013

Connections

## From the Director

# Three Key Questions Around Planning a Great Meeting

By Michele Mattoon, NSRF® Director, NSRF National Facilitator, and CFG® Coach in Indiana, michele@nsrfharmony.org

No matter where you work or what you do, it's probably almost time to go to another meeting. Are you excited? Are you hopeful that something will be accomplished? If your answer to both of these questions is "NO," you have our sympathies. Many people like you are passively resigned to wasting a few more hours of their lives in the next meetings they have to attend.

Ineffective, soul-sucking meetings, sadly, are common in the education world (indeed, in the world in general). Take heart though, there is a better way.

You might be relieved to know that meetings can actually serve a useful purpose. Great meetings help create a healthy work culture, and they actually can make your work life more satisfying and productive.

Great meetings don't just happen by accident, though. They require proper planning, structure, and ideally some collaboration and facilitation training for everyone involved (or at the very least, for the person leading the meeting).

Proper planning is essential to a great meeting. Here are three questions you should ask when planning any meeting.

***Question #1: Do you really need to meet?***

This seems obvious, but think of any mandatory weekly or monthly meetings built into your work schedule. If you find yourself facing another weekly meeting and trying to figure out what you can do to fill up the time, your meeting will become just that—filler.

No one will leave a "filler" meeting feeling as if anything real was accomplished. If you don't really need to meet, don't meet.

If you do need to meet on a regular basis, make sure you have a clear meeting structure in mind. Great meetings are designed and structured to accomplish specific goals. Which leads us to...

***Question #2: Why are you meeting?***

Again, this seems like an obvious question. Of course you need to know why you are meeting! Unfortunately, many meetings are doomed before they start because no one spent any time thinking about the specific purpose of the meeting beforehand.

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To answer this question, consider first the condition or event that triggered the meeting. Then think about the outcome you desire. Both of these factors will influence your answer to...

***Question #3: What is the best structure for this meeting?***

You should structure your meeting based on the reason for your meeting. A meeting for the simple dissemination of information should be structured differently than a meeting where attendees are expected to collaborate, give feedback, or otherwise interact with each other and/or with the person leading the meeting.

For example:

***If your intention is to deliver information*** about a new initiative, and field any questions or concerns, be clear about the purpose upfront. Tell attendees explicitly: "This meeting is being held to give you information about incorporating differentiated instruction into our lesson plans. We will also answer your questions and address any concerns you may have."

Again, you might want to review "Question 1: Do we need to meet?" Can you simply send an email with the information or disseminate it in another more efficient way? If email isn't the best option, and you want to make sure that everyone receives the same information at the same time, a meeting is probably the way to go.

***If you require attendees to interact and/or collaborate,*** make sure that you are clear about the kind of interaction that needs to take place and what you will do with the information gathered.

You might want the attendees to simply give you feedback on your differentiated instruction program. You plan to use some but not all of the feedback to inform decisions you will make around it. It is critical that you tell attendees up front that the feedback they give in the meeting will be used in this way. That way they don't feel angry or misled when all of their suggestions are not used, or if their ideas are used in a way that they did not intend.

***If your goal is to allow the group to make a decision*** about how to solve a problem, state this clearly up front. You must accept ahead of time that you are ceding some authority in this situation. You've given the group the power to make the decision and you now need to let them make it.

A sure recipe for disaster is deciding, after the process has begun, that you've changed your mind and would rather make the decision yourself. Removing decision-making power from the group because they are not moving in the direction you desire is terribly damaging to your credibility and to the group's trust in you. If you "change the rules" during the meeting, you will, in one fell swoop, destroy any trust that the group has in you.

It's even worse if you let attendees think they are making a decision during the meeting, and then once the meeting is over, change your mind. They may assume that it was never your intention to let them make the decision in the first place, and thus feel lied to, used, and angry. Why in the world would they ever want to engage in a "collaboration" like this again when it appears that the whole exercise was a sham? Repeated episodes of this nature will poison your relationships and possibly your entire school

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culture.

If you want your group to decide something, you must commit to it fully. If you're not comfortable with letting the group make this decision, then don't mislead them in the first place.

Considering these three questions when preparing for your next meeting will go a long way towards making your meeting more efficient, productive, and rewarding for everyone involved.

Michele Mattoon
Director, NSRF

P.S. If you'd like some help getting your meeting facilitators better equipped, call or email us.

# ChalkTalk Advice

***At the start of a school year, it can be helpful to remember our aspirations. Here are some from a Chalk Talk at last year's Autumn Open Training. Feeling inspired? What can you do to improve this year?***

Race is not a predictor of success or lack thereof

Create a space to have difficult conversations to move beyond old "hurts"

Equal access to tools and experiences that others have across the country

Assess formatively for progress and growth!

eliminate grades!

How would you know about success?

How do you know NOW?!

More job security at a specific grade level. Less bumping or displacing...Sometimes a change is good, though!

Follow every child on their path and challenge them. Know your students!

Less worry about what others are or are not doing

See that it's not "your students" and "my students" it's "OUR students"

Creative/develop a mindset that ALL students can learn at high levels

# What would you change for your students & staff?

A sense of urgency about stuff! YES! Time is of the essence!

Have Inspirational Leadership!

That teachers and students would understand the relevance and satisfaction of building relationship

Get rid of stuff! Declutter!

Train across content areas to increase understanding of common cores

Are these connected?

Focus on student achievement/instruction, not general school business

Decide what school should NOT do/be/held accountable for

create a more trusting environment

Provide staff with paid time for planning AND CFGs

Mandate that all regular education and content area chairs take a course in special education ... and reading!

That students would have someone at home to talk to about their day, take a special interests in them, and give them some TLC

More cross-grade-level articulation

Embrace creativity!

more opportunities for teacher learning and collaboration!

"Value-added" is not just based on test scores

More $$

Make use of technology to increase comfort level

# PROTOCOLS IN PRACTICE: Modifying The Fishbowl Technique

By Dave Lehman, Connections Executive Editor, NSRF National Facilitator, and CFG Coach in Wisconsin, davelehman@mac.com

Many of us are familiar with the "Fishbowl" technique for introducing a protocol early in a CFG coaches training. The technique can also be used in a classroom setting, or for an established CFG to assist a new CFG getting started. (See page 6 for excerpts from the newly revised NSRF Fishbowl Technique.)

Typically, in a group of 15 participants, six of the group volunteer to be "fishes" sitting in a circle (the "fishbowl") in the center of the room, along with the person presenting their work and the NSRF coach/facilitator. The other seven participants are then seated outside of the inner group as observers, to watch and learn how a given protocol proceeds.

> Traditional Fishbowl: Some are "Fish" and the rest are Observers, sometimes swapping out.

Sometimes the coach will establish a ground rule in which someone from the outer group can tap the shoulder of someone in the fishbowl, and then take their place in order to make a contribution. However, all too often – at least in my experience – relatively few people choose to step into the inner group from the outer group, and more typically, those outside the fishbowl all too often simply tune out, sometimes even doing something else and chatting quietly with each other.

> Fishbowl Consultants: Observers are assigned to individual "Fish" to actively assist them.

I have been using the following two variations on the Fishbowl Technique and have found them to more effectively engage everyone. Here is an overview or summary of these two modifications of the Fishbowl:

1) Fishbowl Consultants – Rather than simply observing, in this modification, each person on the outside of the Fishbowl sits directly behind one of the "fishes." Then, at various points throughout the protocol, the coach says, "Cut. Turn to your consultant," thereby instructing each of the "fish" to turn to the person behind them and briefly discuss that point in the process of the protocol being demonstrated. For example, in Fishbowling the Tuning Protocol, the coach could call "Cut" at these points: clarifying questions, warm feedback, and cool feedback. The "fish" would then turn to their "consultants" for some brief suggestions, then

Dave Lehman is the former founding principal/teacher of the Lehman Alternative Community School, a public middle-high school recently named after him and his wife by the Ithaca, New York Board of Education upon their retirement after 30 years. He currently is leading "School Improvement Coaching" at East High School in Madison, Wisconsin.

Contact him with your questions or comments at davelehman@mac.com

## Fishbowl Countoff: Everyone is a "Fish" and an Observer, with alternating times and tasks.

return to the fishbowl and continue the protocol. This can even be done with a somewhat larger group where all of the "fish" have a pair of "consultants" seated directly behind them.

2) Fishbowl Count Off – In this modification, everyone is in the inner circle of the fishbowl. For example, again thinking of Fishbowling the Tuning Protocol, everyone is seated in a circle of 15. Excluding the presenter and the coach, the participants are asked simply to "count off, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2…." around the circle. Then the coach assigns "warm feedback" to all of the 1s, and "cool feedback" to all of the 2s. For a larger group or a different protocol, the facilitator can count off by threes and give different assignments. This way, everyone participates in the protocol practice round, but only part of the group is actually speaking at any point in the protocol.

A third modification specifically for classroom use is suggested by our ***Connections*** editor, Luci Englert McKean, which she calls "Observer Scientists." In this variation, each observer is either given a specific "fish" to watch for particular analysis, or is given a specific task to observe in the entire group, such as "How often did the individuals confuse Probing Questions with suggestions?" As scientists, these observers would take specific notes to be able to share with the group later.

## Fishbowl Scientists: Every Consultant observes a particular "Fish" or observes the group for specific behaviors.

Each of these modifications have the advantage of actively engaging your peers rather than having half or more of the group simply observing. This seems particularly crucial as the point of Fishbowling is for the observers to learn as well as the participants, and so we logically want everyone fully engaged.

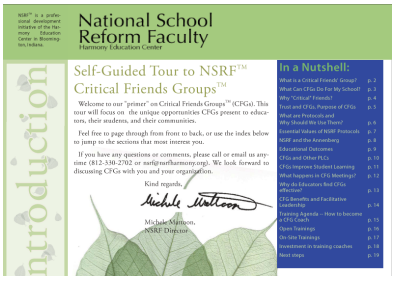
Let us know what you think of these modification of the typical Fishbowl. Try them out, and tell us if you've found any of them to work especially well for you. — *Dave Lehman*

Do you, your colleagues, or your administrators have questions about NSRF and Critical Friends Groups? Click the photos or the links below to review our latest promotional materials, or email us to request copies and links:

A Self-Guided Tour to NSRF Critical Friends Groups (pdf)

and

Video Glimpse of NSRF New CFG Coaches Training



Book Reviews

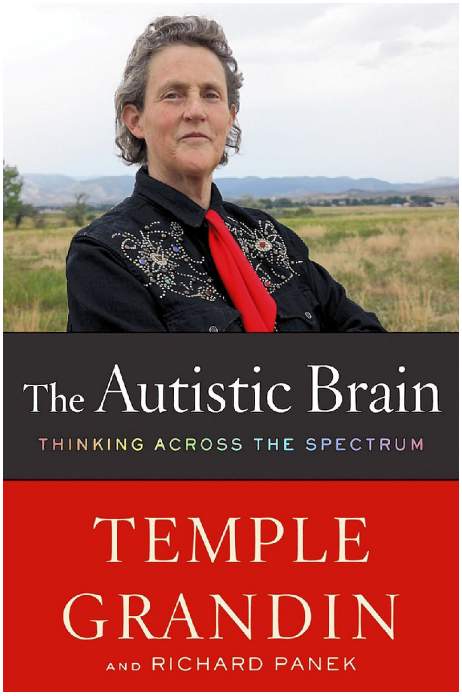
# BOOK REVIEW: Temple Grandin's latest book, The Autistic Brain

By Dave Lehman, Connections Executive Editor, NSRF National Facilitator, and CFG Coach in Wisconsin, davelehman@mac.com

## The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum

By Temple Grandin (with Richard Panek), 2013,
Houghton Miflin Harcourt

Several years ago, before Temple Grandin was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People, or had given her TED Talk, or was portrayed by Claire Dane in an HBO movie about her life, I had the opportunity to hear an amazing speaker address a huge audience in Bailey Hall at Cornell University. A Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, the speaker was beginning to be known internationally for her innovative design of cattle-handling facilities and other more humane methods of working with domestic animals. She spoke not from a written script or typed-out speech, but from a series of images on a large projection screen because, as she put it, she "thinks in pictures." That night, the speaker surprised me at first with her appearance: dressed in a western shirt and tie (what has now become her signature style), the middle-aged Dr. Grandin was there to speak about her life with Autism. Soon, like the rest of the audience, I was captivated and rather awed. And soon after, Time magazine, the TED Conference, and the rest of the world felt similarly.




Grandin is now the author, co-author, or editor of twelve books. Three of my favorites include ***Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from my Life with Autism***, and two with Catherine Johnson, ***Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior*** and ***Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals.***

Her twelfth book arrived in bookstores this year: a deep look into her own brain and behavior and an amazingly readable review of the past twenty plus years of research into ASD, the Autism Spectrum Disorder. In ***The Autistic Brain***, Grandin retraces and recounts her own subjection to every neuroimaging brain technique available, from "structural MRI" (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) of the 1970s and "fMRI" (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) in 1991, to the most recent techniques of "FA." Functional Anisotropy measures the movement of water molecules through the white-matter tracts below the brain's outer layer or cortex, deep inside the brain. She's also undergone the recent "DTI" and "HDFT" (Diffusion Tensor Imaging and High-Definition Fiber Tracking) begun in 2012.

Excitedly, Grandin describes the new DTI technology as showing "the highways and off-ramps and crossroads of your brain as if they were all on a two-dimensional map."

Then she goes on to explain that the new HDFG brain scans can actually track individualized fibers over long stretches, farther than any previous technology: "It even shows if a damaged circuit still has continuity or if it's stopped transmitting."

Enough of the neuroscience already, you say! Why is this so significant? Temple Grandin answers:

*"HDFT is going to have a major impact on diagnoses involving brain trauma… First, the diagnoses are going to be more precise. The existing state-of-the-art DTI scanner collects data from 51 directions. HDFT collects data from 257 directions. As a result, HDFT doesn't just tell you what section of the brain has been damaged. It tells you what specific fibers have been damaged, and how many. Second, the diagnoses are going to be more persuasive…. HDFT will show what the blows to the head [in concussions] have done to the brain."*

Grandin goes on to explain how when her own brain was scanned using this new technique, it showed two findings that "really jumped out."

*"One, my visual tract is huge – 400 percent of a control subject's* [Remember her wordless slides and how she self-describes as "thinking in pictures."]. *Two, the 'say what you see' connection in the auditory system is puny – one percent of a control subject's. This finding made sense. In my book* ***Emergence [Labeled Autistic]****, I discussed my childhood speech problem: 'It was similar to stuttering. The words just wouldn't come out'."*

Grandin underwent the HDFT scanning under the direction of Walter Schneider of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. (Incidentally, the scanning was shown and discussed on a "60 Minutes" TV show!). Grandin reiterated Schneider's hypothesis as:

*"Something happened developmentally during the single-word phase [of early child development] so that the fibers didn't form a connection between 'what you're seeing' and 'what you're saying.' This would be the tract that was one percent of the size of the control subject's. To compensate, my brain sprouted new fibers, and they tried to go somewhere, anywhere. Where they wound up primarily was in the visual area rather than traditional language-production areas. That's the tract that was 400 percent of the size of the control subject's."*

In such a scenario, Schneider continued, the babbling phase might be normal but language development would slow down dramatically between ages one and two, which would match a developmental pattern that the parents of children diagnosed with autism often report.

But what does this have to offer teachers who are working with Autism Spectrum Diagnosed students? The central point that Temple Grandin stresses throughout her book, given her own personal experiences as well as her incredible research into ASD, is NOT to focus on the deficits. Rather than putting your attention on what the child, the ASD student in your classroom cannot do, focus on their strengths! Here's how she puts it:

*"I'm concerned when ten-year-olds introduce themselves to me and all they want to talk about is 'my Asperger's' or 'my autism.' I'd rather hear about 'my science project' or 'my history book' or 'what I want to be when I grow up.' I want to hear about their interests, their strengths, their hopes. I want them to have the same advantages and opportunities in education and the marketplace that I did.*

*I find the same inability to think about children's strengths in their parents. I'll say, 'What does your kid like? What is your kid good at?' and I can see the confusion in their faces. Like? Good at? My Timmy?*

*I have a routine I follow in these cases. What's your child's favorite subject? Does he have any hobbies? Does she have anything she's done – artwork, crafts, anything – that she can show me?"*

In a similar vein, in the middle of her book, Grandin provides a particularly useful summary chart in which she identifies persons with visual-processing problems, auditory-processing problems, touch and tactile sensitivity, and olfactory and taste sensitivity with practical tips for people with each of these symptoms of ASD. For example, in the part of the chart dealing with touch and tactile sensitivity she first lists these identifying characteristics:

** pulls away when hugged by familiar figure*

** takes off all clothes or wears only certain articles (wool and other scratchy material cause the most problems)*

** seeks deep-pressure stimulation by getting under heavy pillows or carpets, rolling up in blankets, or squeezing into tight spots (for instance, between a mattress and box spring)*

** lashes out or throws a tantrum when lightly touched*

She offers the following practical tips for people with tactile sensitivity:

** Deep pressure can help desensitize an individual; it can also help teach feelings of kindness. Most individuals with autism can be desensitized and can learn to tolerate being hugged by, for instance, wearing weighted vests, getting under heavy cushions, or receiving firm massages.*

** Sensitivity to scratchy clothing is more difficult to desensitize, but try washing all new clothing several times before letting it touch the skin; remove all tags; and wear underwear inside out (which gets the seams away from the skin).*

** Sensitivity to medical examinations can sometimes be desensitized by applying deep pressure to the area that has to be examined.*

In a chapter entitled, "From the Margins to the Mainstream," Grandin lists seven pieces of advice for "folks who ask me how to prepare someone who's on the spectrum for employment:"

*1) Don't make excuses.*

*2) Play well with others.*

*3) Manage your emotions.*

*4) Mind your manners.*

*5) Sell your work, not yourself.*

*6) Use mentors.*

*7) And if one door closes, and another, and even another, 'keep on knockin'.*

Grandin also identifies three (not two as previously thought) major ways autistics think: visually, verbally, and in patterns. ***The Autistic Brain*** ends with a useful, three-page table listing dozens of Jobs for "Picture Thinkers," "Word-Fact Thinkers", and "Pattern Thinkers." For example, she lists the following as potential jobs for "Picture Thinkers" – architectural and engineering drafter, photographer, animal trainer, graphic artist, jewelry/crafts designer, web page designer, veterinary technician, auto mechanic, and computer troubleshooter, among numerous others.

This insightful book offers a variety of information regarding Grandin's personal experiences as well as her research, and, for educators, it includes a number of specific things to do while working with a student who is "on the spectrum," diagnosed with or suspected of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Temple Grandin
Photo: Wikimedia Commons - Jonathunder

What has been your experience with students on the autism spectrum? NSRF would love to hear from you. Please email us with your comments. — *Dave Lehman*

# Win-Win-Win: Using NSRF Protocols in a Partnership Between a County Museum, University Pre-Service Education Students, and Elementary Students

By Ruth Johnston, Valparaiso University, CFG Coach in Indiana, ruth.johnston@valpo.edu

Ruth Johnston, lecturer at Valparaiso University, is a doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago. She is Valparaiso's Elementary Program Level Coordinator, and serves on the Porter County Museum Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors for the Geography Educator's Network of Indiana. Her elementary teaching career included 2nd-5th grades. She was Indiana Elementary Geography Teacher of the Year in 1993, and received a Distinguished Teaching Achievement Award for excellence in Geography Teaching from the NCGE in 1995.

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The 21st Century Schools initiative encourages K-12 schools across America to actively engage in global studies, real-world problem-solving, and building geographic literacy. However, social studies instruction time is a low priority because schools are striving to build competency in literacy and mathematics. In the field of education, the emphasis on spending considerable amounts of human and financial capital on these latter two content areas is widespread. Through their analyses of NCLB data, Jennings and Rentner (2006) found that 71% of the public school districts reported a reduction of time spent on instruction of non-tested content areas; and social studies was most frequently sacrificed. Therefore, after asking numerous principals for an opportunity to host my elementary pre-service teachers for a social studies methods field experience, I was universally informed that they only wanted support in literacy and math. Over the past decade in field experiences, the pre-service teachers have been told by classroom teachers that they only have time to read the textbook and answer questions at the end of chapters, or complete worksheets and tests created by the publishers.

Knowing the best practices of teaching social studies, I decided to transform the formerly adequate but mediocre lesson preparation to include an engaging, real-world placement at the Porter County Museum of History in Valparaiso, Indiana. This location offers numerous primary sources on which to base social studies lessons for the pre-service teachers to create. In order to satisfy teachers' main focus on literacy, all lessons needed to include a literacy component based on the Common Core and Indiana State English Language Arts standards. Combining these factors with NSRF protocols, the pre-service teachers had multiple opportunities to practice giving and receiving professional feedback while improving the quality of both their lesson development and teaching skills. Thus began the partnership among the county museum, university pre-service teachers, and local elementary students.

*A Valparaiso University pre-service teacher discusses prior knowledge about boats and Lake Michigan with visiting elementary students.*

The process to introduce the pre-service teachers to the museum required several necessary

steps over the course of about three weeks. Establishing contact with the principal and teachers at a local elementary school happened first, to obtain specific information on elementary class demographics and curriculum content sequencing. At the beginning of the semester, the class norms were established in the university course, then the NSRF North-South-East-West Compass Points exercise was presented to gain insights on group work preferences and impact on group dynamics.

Next, the university class took a field trip to the Porter County Museum of History to learn about its exhibits. Given opportunities to brainstorm lesson ideas and use knowledge of developmental levels of specific grade levels, the pre-service teachers referred to Social Studies and English Language Arts standards. The next class period, pre-service teachers brought their initial ideas on possible formative assessments, standards, and activities to their groups and used the NSRF Tuning Protocol to flesh out their lessons. An important piece of this process was to develop critical thinking questions and activities around the artifacts and exhibits in the museum. Then the Tuning Protocol was repeated with a second draft, and I then gave my professional feedback to help guide lesson plan development. Finally, I reminded the pre-service teachers of the specific demographics of the class they will teach in order to assure that appropriate differentiation is provided for English Language Learners or students with specific learning needs.

*Valparaiso first graders perform a reader's theater script about a hand-crafted dubout canoe created by young women from Michigan City.*

After all this preliminary work, field trip day at the museum for the elementary students finally arrived. Three to five teaching stations were located in different rooms of the museum. Approximately half of the pre-service teachers taught their lessons while the other half observed and served as tour guides for the elementary students. Before the rotation ended, the teacher candidates practiced giving a simple assessment, then collected student performance data to analyze later. When the elementary students left the museum, the pre-service teachers met in small groups to share specific warm and cool professional feedback using the Success Analysis Protocol. Student comments reinforced countless benefits of practicing the protocols, as stated below:

*While I was always open to what my peers were suggesting to me, it was difficult to think on the spot on how to tell others that they could improve their lessons. My favorite strategy that we used to give feedback was when each group presented their reader's theater ideas and everybody wrote their ideas on Post-its to give to them later. This took the pressure off and allowed me to write suggestions while they were presenting. Although sometimes difficult, providing and receiving feedback is a very important quality to have when developing lessons and ideas to include in my classroom. - University Student 1*

*In this class, we have spent a lot of time working on listening to the ideas of our peers and giving constructive feedback. This has been a great experience because I have learned how to share ideas with others. The feedback I have received has been extremely positive. Sometimes it can be difficult to determine where I am headed with some of my lesson ideas. Having other people that I can talk to, ask suggestions of and bounce ideas off of is really helpful. There have been things in my lessons that have needed to be changed for reasons that I simply overlooked, but that I was able to fix because of collaborating with my peers. – University Student 2*

Pre-service teachers completed the final portion of the lesson, which was a written assignment requiring students to reflect deeply upon one's own teaching, student performance, and the feedback given by peers. Several of these reflections included specific acknowledgment of professional growth:

*Just as elementary students thrive from positive feedback and beneficial critiques, I found discussing my ideas and opening myself up to knowledgeable feedback consistently*

*resulted in the betterment of my work. I believe it also previewed what the professional environment will be like in my future school of employment. From these experiences, I believe that peer review and feedback will be included in my future classroom as an integral part of the learning process. – Student 3*

*When considering my peers' suggestions along with the clarifying questions that they asked, I realized how confused my students could have been or certain points which I needed to make clearer within my lesson. My peers also opened my eyes to some misunderstanding that my students could have, allowing me to again strengthen my lesson. [They] also helped to identify additional standards in which I could apply to my lessons or ways that I could alter my lessons slightly to more effectively meet the standards that I desired. – Student 4*

This partnership proved positive all around. Pre-service teachers practiced developing and teaching museum-specific integrated lessons, the museum received a large number of visitors who returned with friends and family, and the elementary students and their teachers experienced a high-quality, local, inexpensive field trip, building and reinforcing social studies and English language arts content knowledge in an engaging manner. Every one of the teachers requested that we continue to include their classes in our field trip program because the students learned much social studies content in a short amount of time. Additional teachers have benefited as the partnership between the university and museum now includes reader's theater lessons created in the "Fine Arts in the Elementary Classroom" course. Most importantly, incorporating NSRF protocols contributed meaningfully to enhancing the future teachers' personal and professional efficacy levels.

*Jennings, J. & Rentner, D. (2006). Ten big effects of the no child left behind act on public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 88(2), 110-113.*



## Help us give you what you want!

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## How'd we do?

**How did you like this issue? Do you have ideas for future articles, book reviews, or topics you'd like to explore (or you'd like us to explore)? We'd love to hear your experiences with NSRF Protocols and CFGs. Email us, or call 812-330-2702.**

The National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) is a professional development initiative that focuses on increasing student achievement through professional learning communities. We train individuals to coach Critical Friends Groups, or CFGs, a specific type of Professional Learning Community (PLC). Critical Friends Groups use protocols and activities to facilitate meaningful and efficient communication, problem solving and learning.

As the NSRF does not receive grant support, your paid membership helps us continue to freely provide the original NSRF protocols and supporting materials via our website, as well as support our mission to continue offering training across the nation and world. We encourage you to support our scholarship fund so that any teacher could participate in a training regardless of ability to pay our fee.

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