The October Open Training for new CFG Coaches was remarkable in more ways than one. We sold out the full cohort of 15 early, opened a waitlist to see if we could open a second, simultaneous session ... and then not only opened the second room, we filled it!

Most of the training happened in separate rooms, but on day one and day three, we gathered both cohorts together for a few protocols. (Several schools and organizations sent more than one trainee, so, for the broadest perspective, we split those groups between the two trainers. The combined sessions allowed all trainees the experience of working with different trainers and interns.)

One highlight was the combined-room Chalk Talk, during which 30 attendees worked simultaneously on two different Chalk Talk boards: “What would you change about your own education?” and “What would you change for your school/staff?” It was amazing to see and read the variety of opinions expressed (silently!) on long lengths of chart paper. The ensuing discussion and debriefing brought forth even more rich content.

Within a few weeks, we had a second “photo opp” for use of the Chalk Talk protocol—in the 5th/6th Grade classroom of Harmony School, an independent, pre-K-12 school. (Both NSRF and Harmony School are divisions of the Harmony Education Center.)

“We use Chalk Talks in our...
curriculum as well as a tool for exploring win-win solutions for conflicts and issues within the group,” says Kathy Boone, one of the two 5th/6th co-teachers and a trained CFG Coach.

Scott Evans, her co-teacher, says, “We like to give the students the power of rule-making and decision-making, and Chalk Talk is a good way to get a lot of ideas out on the table from everyone. Three or four years ago, we had a very chatty class and we used Chalk Talk to talk about the issue. The students came up with a ‘quiet monitor’ that rotated, and they developed appropriate consequences. The ideas came from the kids instead of top-down, and that’s the power of using this protocol.”

These photos show the students working in a theme on immigration, answering the question “What human rights do you think all people should be guaranteed universally?” Almost every April or May, Kathy conducts a Chalk Talk around the question, “How can we help make the world a more just and peaceful place?”

“The challenging part for fifth and sixth graders is to remain quiet!” Scott says. “But this discussion was quite deep. They really paid attention to others’ ideas, brought forth a lot of ideas that were just on the perimeter of their awareness, and then were able to bring those in and make it real.”

*If you use NSRF Protocols in the classroom, we want your stories! Email us!*