When NSRF decided to place equity in its mission statement, it was a turning point for those of us who felt that the organization didn’t do enough for those that impact the lives of students and children we were serving. From the onset to the conclusion of our five day seminars, we remained focused on how the work of CFGs could bring about the results that we also asked how could design training for groups who were comprised predominantly of people of color who work in urban settings. What would be different from other groups that we’d trained? Doubtless, we both knew that it would indeed be different from what we had done in other places. How could we both build on the foundation of CFGs and address the realities of inner city educators, their students and families?

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, the work of planning to open new small high schools in urban communities. My NSRF colleague, Camilla Greene, and I designed and facilitated these trainings. (Gina Kaplan co-facilitated with us in Milwaukee, WI.) Camilla and I asked ourselves all of the questions other facilitators ask about goals, objectives, audience, resources, logistics, etc., but what was significant was also how could we design training for groups who were comprised predominantly of people of color who work in urban settings. What would be different from other groups that we’d trained? Doubtless, we both knew that it would indeed be different from what we had done in other places. How could we both build on the foundation of CFGs and address the realities of inner city educators, their students and families?

We planned and conducted these trainings and, as always, to say they were quite unlike others of them that I was aware of. We included readings authored by people of color who wrote about successful experiences with students who were racially, ethnically and economically different. We used resources of these and also from Asa Hilliard’s chapter in Black, No Mystery: Closing the Achievement Gap Between Africans and Excellence. We also began the “equity” dialogue on day one as opposed to the usual point of entry on the afternoon of days two or three. On one hand, the groups were surprised to see two African-Americans facilitating and leading work in education reform. On the other hand, participants commented on how surprised they were that issues which were important to them as adults and those that impact the lives of students of color were intentionally addressed in depth throughout the training. From the onset to the conclusion of our five day seminars, we remained focused on how the work of CFGs could bring about change and lasting improvements in the lives of the educators, parents, families and children we were serving. We were elated with the reception we received, the daily reflections and evaluations. As we continued to observe and think about why our trainings were so successful, I came away with three critical beliefs that I believe enabled our accomplishments and will ensure the success of other CFG Seminars where there is a significant mix of African-Americans (or more broadly the First Amendment Center. This association grew from a meeting on “Examining Student Work and Reflective Democratic Communities” held in Chicago in 1999, which is a resource for schools, and students. The site provides a home for students. We include each member of the child’s family in their visit/appointment, not just the “custodial” adult. I focus on sharing information and power that cut across all the lives being described. All of the people described in the book were busy. None of the people had an abundance of time, yet they all held on to the ways they could connect deeply with the lives of these strangers offered us powerful reminders for our practice in schools. Using the Success Analysis Protocol we were able to connect their lives with our own. As we debriefed the process, some people talked about wanting to go back to the text to reread particular sections, while others talked about sharing this book with their “staff” and their school. Everyone agreed that using the protocol to put ourselves in the shoes of the children helped us go even more deeply into the lessons of these lives, the lessons of the text. We moved beyond feeling passively inspired into a distance to feeling motivated to act in ways that embody respect in our schools. In particular, we discussed the need to make our personal decisions to respect others consistently explicit. Our conversation of the text ended with a conversation about the ways we could systematize respect in our departments and schools. Our conversation, our examination of ourselves.

Having used the Success Analysis as a lens to read about the lives in Respect, has given me a new way to read people’s stories, a way that draws me in as another spectator. It draws me in as an insider. I use this approach to read all the books I use to devour as a child and I hope this new use of an old tool will be powerful for others too.

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How could we both build on the foundation of CFGs and address the realities of inner city educators, their students and families?

- a hospice worker who understands the importance of just being there when there is no more medical advice to follow;
- a pedestrian who knows that a sick child is a member of a family and includes the entire family in their visit/appointment, not just the “custodial” adult;
- the focus on sharing information and power that cut across all the lives being described.

All of the people described in the book were busy. None of the people had an abundance of time, yet they all held on to the ways they could connect deeply with the lives of these strangers. Their stories offered us powerful reminders for our practice in schools. Using the Success Analysis Protocol we were able to connect their lives with our own. As we debriefed the process, some people talked about wanting to go back to the text to reread particular sections, while others talked about sharing this book with their “staff” and their school. Everyone agreed that using the protocol to put ourselves in the shoes of the children helped us go even more deeply into the lessons of these lives, the lessons of the text. We moved beyond feeling passively inspired into a distance to feeling motivated to act in ways that embody respect in our schools. In particular, we discussed the need to make our personal decisions to respect others consistently explicit. Our conversation of the text ended with a conversation about the ways we could systematize respect in our departments and schools. Our conversation, our examination of ourselves.

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Protocols in Practice
Using the Success Analysis Protocol to Unpack a Text
by Debbie Bambino, Pennsylvania

For the past few years I’ve been reflectively using the Success Analysis Protocol in my work with new coaches and school teams. I’ve found that taking the time to reflect deeply about our strengths, the things that are working, is not only a shot in the arm, it’s a way of building in accountability for those changes we can and should make immediately.

Recently, I was searching for a way to connect with the successful experiences of others whose lives had been captured and described in a book and I decided to try the Success Analysis Protocol with a text. Here’s the way it worked in our CFG.

Our group decided we would like to read a book together. We read Respect by Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot and wanted to share our responses to the rich lessons in the book without taking months to get through them. Using a modified Success Analysis Protocol, we were able to discuss the entire book in one session.

We divided the text into its six chapters, each of which corresponded to one person’s experiences. We are a group of twelve so we worked in pairs. Each pair reread their chapter and pulled out the evidence of “respect” that they saw in the person’s daily project; 7. Large group discusses implications of these success stories for their practice with students, colleagues and families.

6. Large group looks for patterns and surprises in the ways these six people “lived” their respect for others. Finally, we talked about the lessons or implication these six lives held for us as practice as teachers, as caregivers, as people.

Even though most of the people being described were not classroom teachers and none of them were principals, we found many attributes with which we could connect. We were repeatedly reminded of the power of personal relationships and the value of taking the time to really listen to the people we work with, and those we work with each day.

Here are a few concrete examples of evidence we shared from the text: a photographer who never takes anonymous, “candid” photos and always shares prints with his subjects;

1. Divide the text into chapters or sections of comparable size.

2. Divide your group into small groups of two, three or four.

3. Have small groups read their assigned section and discuss the evidence of success they see in the story.

4. Small groups chart the attributes of the success they found and present it to the larger group.

5. Large group asks clarifying questions. (Repeat steps 4 & 5 for each small group.)

6. Large group looks for patterns in the success stories that have been shared.

7. Large group discusses implications of these success stories for their practice with students, colleagues and families.

8. Debrief the process. If your CFG is using an I-Map or reflective writing to document their work and “Close the Loop”, you might want to specifically pose a prompt that asks what changes in practice individuals are considering after this text-based discussion.

Success Analysis with Text

How does one establish authentic relationships with those whose backgrounds differ from one’s own? How do these relationships impact CFG trainings and our ongoing personal and professional development? How can our work “close the achievement/preparation gap?”

How does one establish authentic relationships with those whose backgrounds differ from one’s own? How do these relationships impact CFG trainings and our ongoing personal and professional development? How can our work “close the achievement/preparation gap?”

Excerpts from the Success Analysis Protocol adapted by Debbie’s CFG Group

Debbie’s CFG Group

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