“Being a part of this school is helping me to be more of a leader, because when I see the school doing new things and being the trendsetters for the rest of the nation in a lot of different initiatives, then it makes me not afraid to try something new.”

supporting students’ projects. Using CFG protocols and practices we were able to examine, reflect on and inspire students’ efforts.

Even though not all agency representatives experienced the benefits of the students’ projects in their work, they felt that their contribution to the students’ efforts was worthwhile. We do want to stress that the agency members who felt most connected to the work of the CFG were those working directly with students on their service projects.

Reflecting back on the experience we see that more effort should have been devoted to outreach efforts with people of color and the poorer members of our community. Although we tried from the beginning to recruit CFG members from the Latino and African-American communities, we were not successful in doing so. We need to closely examine our past efforts and come up with a new plan for next year.

Creating and coaching this CFG was not an easy task to undertake, however it turned out to be quite rewarding in the end. It was probably most satisfying to see the students interact with the agencies, share their work, and brainstorm new ways of impacting on poverty with professionals. Keeping this collaboration alive and bringing about positive change in our school and community remains our goal and we look forward to the coming school year.

We hope that this broad-based approach to CFGs will be developed in other schools so that we can learn with others as we stretch the potential of the CFG within the school and in the greater community.

---

If you would like more information about this CFG and its work, e-mail Gina at gweir@bloomington.in.us. Editor’s note – if you’d like more information about the Harmony/VISTA Service Learning Demonstration Project please contact Heidi Vosekas at hvosekas@harmonyschool.org

---

**Protocols in Practice**

was my job to facilitate the organization of Year 5’s work. I found it very difficult to step into a position in the last year, as I did not feel that I had a broad picture of the work that had been done previously. This reflective portrait helped me to see the beginning, the middle, and the present.”

Jackie: “I’ve worked with both students before, and I’ve also presented with Warren at a conference. I am not only amazed by his technical growth, but also by his perceptions of the work at Eisenhower. I feel that Patrick and Warren have captured Eisenhower and what we are about.”

**Facilitator Response:**

MichaelAnn: “It’s sometimes difficult to facilitate something that is so close and personal, yet I am always amazed by the professionalism of both teachers and students when given an opportunity to present their work.”

How did this help us grow?

Having students more involved has allowed the adults/coordinators to step away and see the parts of the systemic structure and their relationships, as opposed to focusing only on the happenings of their programs. As the Critical Friends experience of the faculty and students deepened over time, aspects of the “Critical Friends Group culture” became embedded into the school landscape. Formal and informal signs are present throughout the school. Informally, the language of Critical Friends—“clarifying questions”, “warm and cool feedback”, and other terms, peppers our everyday conversations. Formally, you can walk into classrooms across the campus and see Connections being done in a social studies classroom, a Tuning Protocol being done on an AP Art Studio portfolio, or students presenting and facilitating discussions in a biology classroom.

Rather than looking at individual groups and programs or evaluating test scores, the reflective portrait/video gave us a chance to achieve a holistic view of the reform work that is being done by our school community. The reflective portrait, like the portfolio, tells our story and shows the learning that has occurred among students, teachers, and administrators. We’ve learned how interrelated our learning is when we’re committed to creating a school community that seeks to be the best for all of its students.

“Woah! You didn’t think we were going to close the book with that, now did you? No. We’re starting a new chapter. That was only the beginning.”– an Eisenhower student, “Dwight D. Eisenhower Houston Annenberg Challenge Peer Review Reflective Portrait”, 2002, Eisenhower High School.

---

MichaelAnn Kelley and Paul Gray are teachers and CFG coaches at Eisenhower High School in the Aldine Independent School District in Houston, Texas.

MichaelAnn teaches visual art and has been the campus-based reform coordinator for five years. She has been actively involved in CFG coaching and work since 1998. mkelley@aldine.k12.tx.us

Paul teaches mathematics and has been a program coordinator for five years. He was trained as a CFG coach in 2001, but has been participating in CFG work since 1998. pgray@aldine.k12.tx.us