Scaling the Pyramid of Self Reflection: A Model and an Assignment for the Preparation of Inclusive Leaders[*]

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Abstract

This manuscript provides a model and an assignment based on the model that allows emerging leaders to examine the purity of their heart, the accuracy of their thoughts, whether they operate from reasoned emotions, effective dispositions, words seasoned with grace, appropriate actions, and habits that engender honorable leadership character relative to inclusive leadership.

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2 Sumario en espanol

Este manuscrito proporciona un modelo y una tarea se basó en el modelo que permite surgiendo líderes para revisar la pureza del corazón, la certeza de sus pensamientos, si operan de emociones razonados, disposiciones efectivas, las palabras sazonar con gracia, apropian acciones, y los hábitos que engendran carácter honorable de liderazgo con respeto al liderazgo inclusivo.

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3 The Case for Reflection

Soren Kierkegaard once said that life can only be understood backwards (Costa & Kallick, 2000). For certain, hindsight can be much clearer than foresight or even in-the-moment vision. Reflection is an ancient Latin and French term that means 'bending back' on oneself (Seibert & Daudelin,1999). Costa & Kallick (2000) upheld reflection as a rigorous way of thinking. Rodgers (2000) contended that reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of self and others whereas questioning demonstrates an understanding of the significance of interrogating one's own actions (McCotter, 2009). Reflection, then, is a meaning-making process that moves an individual from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the bridge of meaning that connects one experience to the next in ways that give direction and impetus for growth. In the same way, reflection is data-driven in that it is a persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge (Wagner, 2006). Reflection has the ability to transport an individual from a disturbing state of perplexity or disequilibrium to a harmonious state of understanding or equilibrium (Dewey, 1944). The ultimate reason for requesting candidates to reflect is to get them in the habit of thinking about their experiences (Costa & Kallick, 2000). In sum, reflection is vital for maximizing the meaning and lessons of life experiences.

To this end, numerous assessments have been designed to help leaders (and emerging leaders) identify their probable leadership traits, styles, and other personality constructs that could be essential to successful leadership. Dubrin (2010) offers numerous assessments that shine a light on various leadership qualities that include leadership readiness, resilience, charisma, flexibility, situational perspective, conflict resolution, influence, assertiveness, empowerment style, task orientation, mentoring, propensity for risk-taking, need for recognition, cultural value and acceptance of cultural difference, strategic thinking, emotional expressiveness, communication effectiveness, and attitudes and behaviors for trustworthiness and integrity.

The emphasis on self-understanding stems from the hypothesis that many leadership capacities reside and are developed in the inner world of individuals. Before leaders focus on organizational change, they must be willing to continuously undergo reflection that attends personal change. Without such a commitment, school leaders will accept their new roles and immediately commence to changing the school culture, the curriculum and instruction, the staff, the parents, the students, and community stakeholders. In others words, leaders attempt to add to and subtract from all parts of the school equation before they consider making adjustments to the variable of 'self'. Indeed it is possible that all of the aforementioned internal and external stakeholders bear some responsibility for the success of the school; nonetheless, individual improvement must accompany school improvement.

Reflection retains an ageless appeal since schools are mandated to be inclusive and to successfully educate children regardless of their culture, native tongue, learning abilities, physical abilities, socioeconomic status, or geographical idiosyncrasies. What is more, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009) asserted that education is a daily fight for social justice while it promotes opportunity and reduces inequality. He further purported that every child is entitled to a quality public education regardless of race, creed, or zip code. For these and other reasons, contemporary leaders must adopt a routine practice of reflection to ensure that their beliefs, worldviews, and values are consistent with optimal 21st century school leadership. If districts are to move their schools forward, they must move beyond blame and excuses. They must employ school

leaders who are prepared to do the work of leading, effectively and inclusively, the diverse populations that enter the doors of American schoolhouses today and into the future.

This discourse is presented with the intent of helping professors of school leadership preparation programs offer additional strategies that help candidates recognize the importance of self-reflection in effective leadership and a method for self-evaluation that is purposeful, productive, and practical. This manuscript will provide a model and an assignment based on the model that allows emerging leaders to reflect upon whether they are at peace with the labels that exist for their students and whether they will accept what the data report as irrevocable truth. The manuscript compels leaders to determine whether they will surrender to the history of students or forge ahead for what is possible in the future of their students. This journey begins with scaling the pyramid of self reflection so that earnest reflection stems from a pure heart, accurate thoughts, reasoned emotions, effective dispositions, words seasoned with grace, appropriate actions, and habits that engender honorable leadership character.

4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the pyramid of self reflection model is rooted in the notion that since the early days of Dewey (1933), educators have been encouraged to be self reflective. Dewey asserted that reflective educators do not accept current principles and repeated practices without questioning the status quo. They seek to improve efficiency and effectiveness for the individual, the group, and society. Schön (1987), supported by Dewey, advanced the notion of reflection by describing it as more than merely recalling experiences, but reconstructing them, generating alternatives, and considering ethical implications. Much of the conceptual thinking on reflection in education has focused on teacher reflectivity. Considering the importance of teacher reflection, how much more should school leaders adopt a philosophy and practice of reflection?

The National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2008) necessitates reflection for all candidates, including leadership candidates, as part of their professionalism. NCATE expects candidates to participate in clinical practice on which they reflect while it also compels education faculty to oversee and assess candidates' development of such qualities as reflective and critical thinking, problem solving, and professional dispositions. Other proponents of reflective practices in school leaders include Edmonson and Fisher (2002) who defined reflection as focused meditation as a means to internalize learning and make the connections between course content and licensure standards as well as to link content with their roles as future administrators. They propose individual and small-group reflection in ways that not only ensure internalization of course content but also stimulate school reform. McCotter (2009) recommended that school leaders not only continue the work they began as teachers but that they should model reflection, stimulate reflective practice, and provide related professional development opportunities. Given that leaders are in the people business and must facilitate organizational change, reflection must also be promoted as a social experience among learning communities (Collier, 2010; Danna & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010). Professors of educational leadership preparation programs, then, must employ reflective activities as one of their many tools for measuring candidate success in licensure standards.

5 The Pyramid of Self Reflection Model

The pyramid of self reflection model stems from the perception that, without self examination, individuals are unlikely to sort through and acknowledge the underpinnings of their life experiences. The model, therefore, offers self-directed learning so that students can become sophisticated learners who make meaning of their personal discoveries in ways that enlighten their future experiences with structures that also support becoming the architect of their own transformation. The model takes an instructive role in helping learners critically examine their assumptions and beliefs, interpret their assumptions, and revise them as needed for transformation. It is aligned with Galileo's philosophy that *one cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself* (Quote World, n.d.).

This model is an extension of the author's work in reflection vis-à-vis inclusive school leadership, teacher-leadership, and individual success (Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2010; Gallavan & Webster-Smith, 2009; Webster-Smith, 2010; Webster-Smith, 2008). From this work, she realized that individuals need guidance if their reflective activities are to be fruitful, meaningful, and insightful. Even though reflection is among NCATE standards, teaching the concept, purposes, and processes of reflection may not be a routine part of leadership preparation. Too often, candidates are requested to reflect on their thinking and practices but are provided little guidance. As a result, professors and mentors of leadership candidates become exasperated when candidates lack the necessary tools and refined techniques that ensure that reflections represent the depth and breadth of their respective experiences. At the same time, candidates may not realize the significance of reflection in cultivating their leadership competence or its significance in broadening their leadership capacity. Reflectivity, as a result, needs to be deconstructed and analyzed in ways that are comprehensively organized, systematic, and constructive.

In this model, the process of reflection can be likened to the design of a pyramid. The majority of the weight and spread are closer to the bottom whereas the design and process narrows as one ascends to the top (see Appendix I). Reflecting, using the pyramid of self reflection, is recursive in that one could travel up the pyramid to test the fruitfulness of one's assumptions or travel down the pyramid to investigate the origin of one's conventions. It is instructive in helping individuals slow down to ask difficult questions with regards to each point along the pyramid. Then one could answer such inquiries for more judicious decision-making and interactions with others.

To illustrate the point, the heart (or belief system) is at the base of the pyramid. The heart gives birth to thoughts, that in turn fuel emotions and attitudes that shape a person's words, actions, habits, and over time, their character. In essence, when a person's character is observed, one is really seeing only the tip of the iceberg (Sils & Lown, 2008). Beneath one's character is an entire history of positive and/or negative beliefs that have served as the foundation for one's character. Therefore, understanding self requires getting to the heart of the matter.

5.1 The Pyramid of Self Reflection – The Heart

The heart, or the human spirit, houses the belief system and is the place from which intentions and motivations emanate. Beliefs can be pure or not and they can embrace truth or not. The problem with beliefs is that they can be a two-edged sword (Walker, 2006). On the one hand, beliefs can enlighten, open one to new evidence, energize and even empower. On the other hand, beliefs can send a person over a precipice of intransigence closing one off from new ideas, blinding, paralyzing, and even decapitating them. Another tenuous aspect of beliefs is that, in some instances, they were passed along during one's formative years, before one could intellectually or emotionally process them. An examination of the conditions of the heart should be routinely done taking into account that people own their beliefs and accept them as truth (Walker, 2006). In this model, the veracity of beliefs determines the remaining steps in the pyramid.

5.2 The Pyramid of Self Reflection – Thoughts

The affairs of the heart (beliefs, faith, intuition, hunches and the like) frame thoughts that determine which ideas, concepts, models, and theories one will embrace as well as those one will discard or ignore. It is important to note that mental assent is different than believing with the heart. Information can be accepted as factual, yet disbelieved. When mentally reasoned albeit disbelieved, the thought remains academic in nature serving as an espoused theory; whereas, when information is believed and accepted as truth, the thought moves forward and becomes a theory-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Recent findings in neuroscience suggest that the inconsistencies between a person's espoused theories and their theories-in-use are essentially conflicts in the person's mental models (Rock, 2006). From a neuroscientific perspective, when any thought is repeated or considered important, it is hard-coded or hardwired for conservation of time and energy (Rock, 2006). On one hand, one is spared the inconvenience of re-thinking every single concept. On the other hand, mental models (Craik, 1943) once formed, may disallow future considerations and analyses. These mental

models become one's concepts on how people are and how things work. The mental maps are hypothesized to play a major role in decision-making (Craik, 1943) and sound thoughts are critical to such judgments. Ancient texts caution *as a person thinks in his heart, so is he* (Proverbs 23:7 Message Version).

5.3 The Pyramid of Self Reflection – Emotions

For certain, thoughts are no small matter as meditated thoughts coming from a believing heart carry feelings, sentiments, and affections that are expressed through emotions. Goleman (1995) promoted the concept of emotional intelligence as personal and social competencies that are so important that they might be the largest single predictor of success in the workplace. Bar-On (1997) advanced the work describing emotional intelligence as social competencies that determine how well one understands and expresses oneself, how well one understands others and relates to them, and how well one copes with daily demands, challenges, and pressures. Mayer, Caruso & Salovey (1999) asserted that emotions play a vital role in success in that they must be managed so that one's sentiments and affections are expressed appropriately and effectively. As with every other point along the pyramid, this is unlikely to occur without a well-examined heart. To this end, Hein (2010) purported that emotional awareness or knowing one's feelings as well as forecasting one's emotions are important steps in the development of emotional intelligence. The pyramid of self reflection model allows for both emotional awareness and forecasting in that attentiveness to one's beliefs and thoughts helps to identify and predict emotions. Each point of the pyramid also serves as a foreshadowing of one's destination, if uninterrupted. But thankfully, emotional competencies can be developed through proper beliefs and thoughts.

5.4 The Pyramid of Self Reflection - Attitudes

Prolonged and sustained emotions, whether positive or negative, influence one's attitudes or state of mind, mood, temperament, and dispositions. They might be expressed through one's pitch and tone of voice and/or through body language such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture. Ritchart (2002) claimed that dispositions are telltale signs of what one is likely to do and they offer insight into the gap that is sometimes seen between the talents of individuals and what they are actually able to accomplish through their behavior, conduct, and actions. Schulte & Kowal (2005) also supported that dispositions are driven by values and beliefs and undergird perceptions, behaviors, and actions. Identifying and understanding one's own attitudes is also noted in NCATE (2008) standards in that all candidates/educational professionals are expected to demonstrate professional dispositions that facilitate the learning of all students. Awareness of one's attitudes and dispositions can be detected without ever speaking a word. Therefore, reflectivity, as a way of life, can reveal whether one's attitudes are positive before they seep into one's declarations.

5.5 The Pyramid of Self Reflection - Words

The journey from the heart to attitudes is wrought with indicators, red flags, forwarnings, and even cries for reflection. One's thoughts, emotions, and attitudes reveal the purity or malevolence of the heart and offer the commodity and gift of reflection before charging ahead. Individuals should heed these opportunities to get it right ever before the all powerful word is ever uttered. Words are powerful because they convey images and messages; they are carriers that can hearten or demoralize, lift, or deflate. Consider concepts such as verbal insults, verbal offenses, and verbal abuse and one gets a greater sense of the power of words (Smalley, 2008). Words are potent in that, according to ancient texts (Proverbs 18:21 King James Version), death and life are in the power of the tongue! What is more, words spoken from the abundance of the heart reveal the good or malevolent treasures of the heart (Matthew 12:34-35 King James Version). Espoused theories (Argyris & Schön, 1974) from an unbelieving heart are rendered null and void. They are deficient of corresponding actions. Conversely, words that have been meditated in the heart unveil the conditions of the heart and compel action (theories-in-use). They propel movement and have a direct bearing on the conduct and behavior that lead to deeds and actions that can run the gamut from life-giving to venomous (Proverb 10:11 Message Version). Whatever is so plenteous in the heart that it overflows, will tumble out

of the mouth. Besides, contemporary science has documented the power of words to affect one's actions. For instance, scientists have found that just hearing or reading sentences about elderly people leads research subjects to walk more slowly (Bargh 2006; Bargh, 2005). In other research, when individuals read words that are considered aggressive and bold, the participants acted accordingly directly thereafter. The flip side of that study reported that participants who read words that represented respectfulness and kindness responded accordingly (Bargh 2006; Bargh, 2005). As school leaders communicate throughout the day, orally and in writing, being watchful of the convictions of the heart is important as corresponding thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and actions are sure to follow. What is more, they will impact the health of the school's culture.

5.6 The Pyramid of Self Reflection - Actions

The strength of words compels individuals toward action. This is evident in everyday life. Following are several cases in point. The words of advertisers influence people to buy. The words of publicists and promoters endear people to their clients, inspiring them to watch their movie or show, listen to their CD, or post to their blog. The words of advocates motivate people to right a wrong, to become involved, or to participate in causes that, without intoxicating pronouncements, they ordinarily would not. Just as the words of others affect one's behavior, similarly, one's own words obligate one to take action.

Words, whether oral or written, command action. These commitments may occur through casual conversations, promises, pledges, or vows. Exemplars include a chat to do lunch, a promise to visit, a contractual agreement, a financial pledge of philanthropy, and even the vow of marriage. Words shape behavior, the way people conduct themselves, and the things they accomplish straightaway, in stages, or through frequent repetition. Words that are spoken from the convictions of the heart as well as those words that speak to the convictions of the heart are acted upon. Conversely, when one speaks hastily due to pressures of self-preservation or self-aggrandizement, one is unable to substantiate the words. This view can be likened to the differences between espoused theories and theories-in-use. This is the difference between merely talking versus acting, making action of greater consequence because it is the process of changing reality (Freire, n.d.). Another consideration is the power of one action. This can be likened to the butterfly effect in that one small action at one place in a complex system can have large effects throughout the system, for better or worst (Hilborn, 2004). So goes school leadership.

5.7 The Pyramid of Self Reflection - Habits

Over the course of daily living, habits are learned, whether they develop intentionally or unintentionally (Wood & Neal, 2007). They are settled tendencies and manners of behavior that have become fixed through recurrence. *They are a form of slowly accrued automaticity that involves the direct association between a context and a response* (Wood & Neal, 2007, p. 843). *Once formed, the habitual response comes to be primed or triggered by the perception of cues in the performance context* (Wood & Neal, 2007, p. 843). Unfortunately, when performing habits, one tends not to engage in self-analysis and often with limited introspective access to their causes (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). This makes any unexamined viewpoint or action a matter of automaticity. In the words of Malcolm Gladwell *free will is largely an illusion: much of the time, we are simply operating on automatic pilot* (Gladwell, 2005, p. 58). For these reasons, the journey from the heart to the thoughts, emotions, attitudes, words, behaviors, and habits warrant reflective attention.

5.8 The Pyramid of Self Reflection – Character

Character, according to Cloud (2006 p. 24), is the ability to meet the demands of reality. Ritchhart (2002) saw it as the aggregate of distinguishing features and attributes that represent integrity, fairness, and adherence to moral and ethical codes. It speaks to the morals that govern one's life as much as it represents one's moral and ethical strength. It is inextricably connected to one's reputation as it is one's "mark" in accordance with its etymology. Character is what people have come to expect from a person as it reflects their habits. It is indispensable for long-term success as it is the ultimate determinant of whether one's

talents, gifts, and abilities will allow the individual to reach their height and capture all of the advantages their investments should afford them (Cloud, 2006).

6 The Pyramid of Self Reflection Assignment

The pyramid of self reflection model is particularly appropriate for school leaders in that they are entrusted to lead diverse yet inclusive organizations that are filled with the promise of the nation. Therefore, emerging school leaders were requested to use the pyramid of self reflection model to unveil their beliefs and the corresponding journey they traveled to shape their character with regards to inclusive school leadership. In particular, they were instructed to take one concept to ascend or descend the pyramid with regards to their inclusiveness with high-needs students and parents at their existing schools. Areas of inclusiveness targeted high-needs populations (Ohio Board Certified Teachers, 2006) which includes children with varying physical and intellectual abilities; children or parents whose primary language is other than Mainstream American English; children or parents in poverty; or children or parents with a culture, gender, or geographical residence unlike their own. In selecting a child or parent, they were also requested to consider someone with whom they, historically, had little or no relationship or someone with whom they had little to no shared experiences. They were directed to specifically state descriptors, sentiments, and/or personal experiences that represent each reference point on the pyramid and to speak to their personal struggles and commitments regarding inclusive leadership. They were also instructed to note areas where their professional dispositions may need to be adjusted and develop plans to do so.

This assignment proved insightful in that students excavated, heretofore, unexamined interiors of their hearts to reveal great awakenings. Five abbreviated accounts of inclusiveness challenges are provided to demonstrate the significance of the self reflection model as it pertains to inclusive leadership. In essence, these reports unveil how the world might become a better place because of this model.

6.1 Scaling the Pyramid for Cultural Inclusiveness

One student grew up around his father's business that employed a goodly number of non-English speakers. With this exposure, he considered himself to be open and loving to cultures unlike his own. However, with further examination through the pyramid assignment, he learned that he was not totally on a path to inclusive leadership as he had imagined. He was operating on the values that his father modeled before him. While his father was fair to his non-English speaking employees and socialized with their families at Christmastime, his father's inclusiveness held a condition that all people of Latin descent must speak English. While this may be a fair requirement for an American business, speaking English is not a requirement for enrollment in America's public schools. Here lies the significance of this reflection. This candidate, therefore, examined how his father's requirements negatively translated into his interactions as an emerging leader. He noticed that he holds an unenthusiastic attitude about non-English speakers. He talks down to them and becomes frustrated when speaking to non-English speaking parents. He sometimes does not attempt to communicate with them due to the language barriers placing himself, as an emerging leader, and the parents in a proverbial lose-lose situation. Moreover, he pities the students and blames their parents for placing them at such a disadvantage. Further, he does not hold the same high expectations for the non-English speakers as he does for his English speaking students. As much as possible, he avoids them unless they have a reasonable command of the English language.

6.2 Scaling the Pyramid for High Socio-Economic Inclusiveness

Growing up in a rural, poverty stricken area, this candidate told stories of how her father was ill-treated by the wealthy during his youth. In his heart, her father harbored grudges and disdain for the more affluent. The pyramid assignment brought to her attention that by hearing the snide remarks about the wealthy throughout her childhood and into adulthood, she had a deep-seated bias lurking within. She had unwittingly trained herself to think that money equals misplaced faith and an assumed lack of character. Her father's beliefs that money matters very little and that character and faith are valued above all else places the wealthy at a

disadvantage when interacting with her. Consequently, when she interacts with wealthy parents in her roles as an emerging leader, she judges them harshly. She assumes their children are pampered and deficient the developmentally appropriate independence they should display. She makes such postulates without giving them the benefit of the doubt.

6.3 Scaling the Pyramid for Special Education Inclusiveness

Several candidates expressed mixed feelings about special needs students. One student grapples with the effect that the scores of special education (SPED) students play in the achievement of his overall class. He is certain that his scores would be better if SPED student scores were not included. He reported feeling sorry for them on several levels. For instance, he witnesses the name calling, joking, and harassment of his SPED students without offering relief. He ignores what he knows to be right about the treatment of fellow humans.

Another candidate questions her beliefs about whether each and every one of her SPED students can learn all subjects. She doubts if she has the same aims and goals for them as she does for other students. Sometimes, she believes they are just lazy. Some of her negative feelings have definitely been fashioned from colleagues but she also gives credence to the years of negative experiences she has working with children with learning disabilities. She expressed the emotion of pity (feelings of sorrow that breed hopelessness) rather than love (which is compassionate and compels one to positive action). Other times she reported feelings of indifference, pessimism, dispassion, and lacking enthusiasm. In some cases, she summons attitudes of hopefulness. However, such dispositions are neither consistent nor are they across the board. She remembers using non-supportive language and even put-downs that stem from their past failures and the limits she now places on them. On some days, her actions include ignoring and tolerating students instead of valuing or celebrating them. She readily looks for blame in them whenever something goes awry. Before the pyramid assignment, she attributed all of the negativity to the children but none to herself.

6.4 Scaling the Pyramid for Parental Inclusiveness

According to another student, this exercise was not easy but proved to be cathartic. Upon the excavation of her heart, she unveiled pure hatred for alcoholism and the impact it has on children. With first-hand experience as the child of an alcoholic, she now winces when she has to speak with an alcoholic parent who has made a series of poor choices that negatively affect the well-being of their children. Besides seeing the child as a victim, she mentioned her intolerance for the alcoholic parent's inability to place the child as a priority, as evidenced through interest in their education, help with homework, and/or support of the school. These conditions foster a strong dislike and lack of respect for the alcoholic parent that she readily detects upon interacting with them. Although academically she understands that alcoholism is considered to be a disease, she finds herself judging the parents. She is certain that her bristling body language is not concealed. She can see herself not asking for or accepting their involvement even if they offered. To her chagrin, she realizes that promoting strife between the school and home is potentially adding to the struggles of the child she so desperately wants to rescue. Even so, she remains on this course.

6.5 Scaling the Pyramid for Low Socio-Economic Inclusiveness

One student felt compelled to reflect upon her views about children in poverty because children in her area of the state are among the poorest children in the nation. When asked what she really feels in her heart about children in poverty, she considered it to be a tough question. Although she currently teaches many children with fragile living conditions and believes she will likely serve as principal with a similar, if not the same population, until the pyramid assignment, she never gave it much thought. She sees the tough road ahead for the students, the road blocks, and the easy detours. She categorically believes they can succeed. She questions, however, what her role is in educating the poor who struggle with motivation, meeting the daily academic demands placed on them, and those with a turbulent home life. The student also questioned whether the majority of her energy was invested in emotional support more than academic support. She believes they need her in different ways than the child who has a stable home life. Remaining vigilant rather

than becoming weary of all the individualized instruction is a challenge that sometimes gives way to a harsh tone and a grim face that is void of the smiles that elementary school leaders oftentimes afford their students.

7 Discussion

In each of the aforementioned scenarios, emerging leaders were faced with inner conflicts as much as they were with inner strengths. Sparks (2002) asserted that educators tend to wrestle most with those matters for which they have great passion and commitment. These leadership candidates, for instance, expressed their desire to be inclusive, effective leaders who hold high standards for all learners. They spoke of wanting to bring hope into the lives of children. They referenced the desire to inspire children and parents, to help build a bright future for all children, and to reframe from distressing them. Despite these desires, their unexamined belief systems could easily hinder their efforts to become inclusive 21st century leaders.

For certain, each of the students represented in this manuscript is a compassionate, considerate, and thoughtful emerging leader who has demonstrated no less than stellar engagement, participation, and inclusiveness in their graduate studies. One must believe that the myriad school leaders in schools today share these qualities. In spite of all of these attributes, their inclusive leadership is under siege. They all are fighting to act upon their most ethical values and standards and they must determine if they are even their own. This was brought to bear as some candidates revealed that their beliefs derived from their parents, societal factors, or simply false assumptions.

These paradoxes, in the emerging leaders, can be explained as warfare between old and new hardwiring. As with most, the leaders have competing and conflicting values (Sparks, 2002) for which the brain has yet to resolve. While the candidates are committed to becoming forward-thinking school leaders, they also have competing and sometimes conflicting commitments. In the parent inclusiveness scenario, for instance, the emerging leader believes in forging positive relationships with parents but she also believes in protecting children. Likewise, in the high socio-economic inclusiveness story, the candidate is committed to inclusive leadership but is also loyal to her father's ideals. Such discordance must be addressed in order for the leaders to move ahead with passion and grace absent conflicting, internal commitments.

According to Sparks (2002), the most powerful driver of behavioral changes is in helping people sort out how they understand the world. In many cases, transformational leadership and lasting change require reconstructions of underlying beliefs and ways of thinking. This decision to change is a decision of the heart. Operating with intelligence alone would limit vision and wisdom as one is unable to see the complete picture absent the expanded intelligence of the heart (McArthur & McArthur, 2004). The heart increases intellectual capacity, stimulates the brain to a higher level of effective functioning, and can discern beyond the limits of thoughts and emotions. It serves as the center of the intelligence and manages the distribution of energy (McArthur & McArthur, 2004).

Beliefs are difficult to change as they are enmeshed with the emotions one has about the people who contributed to one's socialization, as well as the conditions and era involved in the socialization. Without any intent to blame, one has to question the influencers, the circumstances, the context, and the times. Even so, the intent of the model is to disrupt complacency and to interrupt ineffective beliefs, thoughts, emotions, attitudes, words and actions that become unproductive habits, and dishonorable character.

Professors of school leadership preparation programs could afford opportunities for candidates to recognize the importance of self-reflection. For example, professors could design assignments or exercises so that candidates could experience what Bain (2004) calls the expectation failure. Namely, these are situations in which one's current mental models lead to faulty expectations that in turn point to problems with one's current belief system. In addition to the assignment described here, the author has designed several other assignments such as *Roots and Wings* (Webster-Smith, 2008) where students privately write a letter to the instructor about key influences of their childhood such as culture, where they were reared, parents' political beliefs, parents' professions and socioeconomic status, and faith, etc. *Family Ties* (Webster-Smith, 2008) offers students a rich opportunity to examine their families' personal and profession interactions with others unlike themselves. *Yesterday's News, Today's Views* (Webster-Smith, 2008) allows candidates to delve into their interior lives to assess whether their inner realities are based on truth or socialization. In each case,

guided journaling is prescribed.

These exercises lead students to the valley of decision. Of course their decision to change must occur from the innermost purity of the heart, unencumbered by tradition, customs, mores, and status quo. In the case of competing and conflicting commitments, one must reflect to determine the highest, most honorable value and commitment and/or how they can be tempered (Sparks, 2002). With a renewed heart to change, one must make a quality decision that old ways of thinking will not override the new commitment. Often, old thoughts and mental models must be repeatedly cast down. Improved thinking, according to Rock (2006), is the predecessor to improved performance. Likewise, one must have an undivided focus on the matter, being cautious of potential distractions. For example, one must believe that the former concept is no longer acceptable and that there is nothing satisfactory or tolerable about it. One must become vigilant to give attention to new information, literature, and ideas that are aligned with the new thinking. One must also become selective about what one hears and who one will listen to on the specific subject. One must learn new ways of expressing the new ideals with words that are consistent with the change of heart plus make plans and endeavors that honor the spirit and letter of the new commitment.

8 Conclusion

Paulo Freire (n.d.)once wrote that those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly in ways that do not allow for ambivalent behavior. Self reflection, then, should provoke a profound rebirth to the point of no longer remaining the same.So it is in American schools today. The successful leader must categorically resolve inner conflicts regarding expectations for high-needs populations. *No Child Left Behind* pointed leaders in the right direction. However leaders, at this juncture, must take the personal journey inward to excavate any vestiges of the past that are inconsistent with inspiring and modeling a dynamic vision with parallel structures that educate all children as if they were their own. Tradition has its place and much can be honored and retained. However, in cases where there has been little to no precedence for widespread success, new leaders must become innovative and creative to conceive new conventions. At this moment in time, America's public schools must serve the most diverse populations of its history. With that, American educators need a newness of heart to shape contemporary, uplifting, and inclusive ideals and practices. Unless current and future leaders resolve in their hearts that there are ways to serve well all children so that they can progress toward lives of promise in a global society, America is unlikely to move ahead. There is much work to be done. So, contemporary professors of educational leadership preparation programs must develop leaders who are prepared to rise to the contemporary task. NCATE (2008) calls for candidates to demonstrate professional dispositions that create caring and supportive learning environments for all students. Where their professional dispositions fall short, candidates must identify the areas that need adjustment and develop plans to do so. Scaling the pyramid of self reflection is among the necessary steps that honor this mandate.

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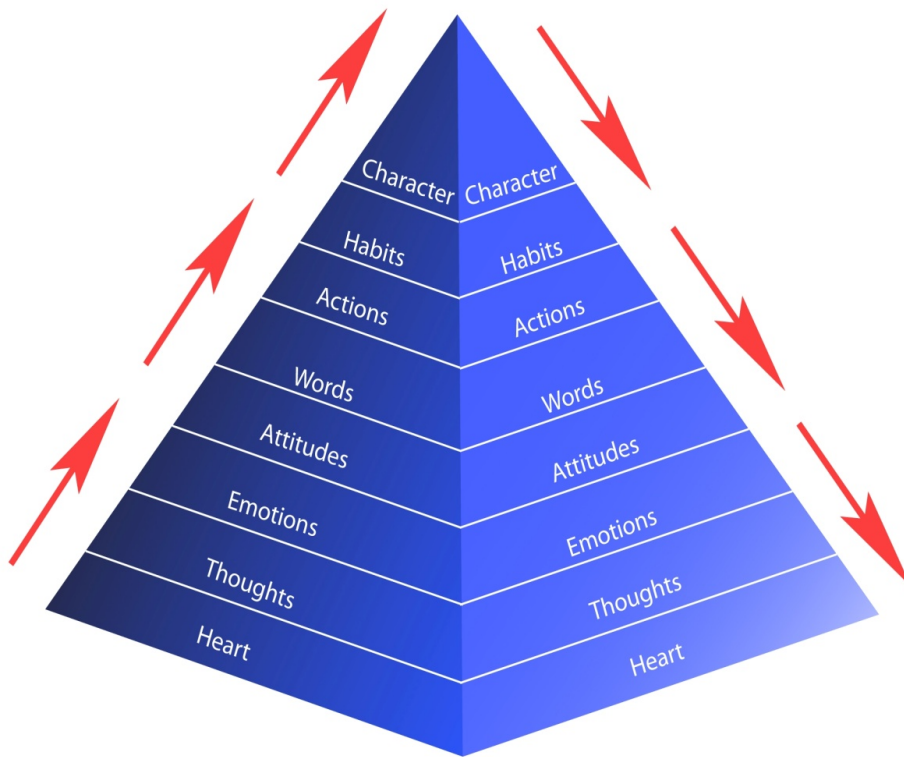
9.1 APPENDIX 1

Pyramid of Self Reflection

Figure 1