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CULTURALLY PROFICIENT LEADERSHIP MAY NOT BE EFFICIENT

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This paper addresses the need for developing culturally proficient educational leaders. Our experiences influence our mental models. Our mental models inform our attitudes, expectations, and behavior. Leaders in education are expected to influence current and future educational practices in ways that disrupt conditions of oppression in order to foster equity and justice. It is essential that educational leadership graduate work addresses the awareness of mental models, dimensions of diversity, deliberative thinking with reflection, and the value of student voice in order to integrate standards of culturally proficient leadership into daily behavior.

I was a linebacker, a utility player, a worker bee... Now I know that the best thing I can offer this world ... is a well-tended spirit, a wise and brave soul. My regrets... How many moments of connection I missed. Too busy, too tired, too frantic, and strung out on the drug of efficiency. (Niequist, 2016, p. 26)

Leaders can impact a system in ways that others cannot. As a faculty member in a graduate educational leadership development program, I have an obligation to stir in others a desire of deep thinking and passion in order to influence the educational system, promote change, and open doors for all students; that is, to ignite a desire within educational leaders to move beyond shallow thinking in which efficiency defines success. Successful educational leaders are educators who disrupt the educational system in order to cultivate ongoing success for all students, all staff, and the longevity of the system. Doing so requires a deliberative, culturally proficient lens.

A typical day in a typical middle school

The middle school assistant principal had just finished her last classroom walk-through for the week (*1). Students were engaged in a discussion about global warming. As ideas were shared, the conversation was balanced with multiple perspectives and citations from the class's sources. Behavior was not a concern and the discussion demonstrated evidence of critical thinking (*2). In the walk back to her office, her mind drifted, "Great lesson, I need to follow up with a quick note to that teacher. Wait, is global warming part of our approved curriculum? Did I receive a district email about that last year?" The internal conversation was over. Waiting in the office were three students from a different class on an office referral (*3). She quickly skimmed the referral paperwork and determined she could knock this out before lunch supervision. She assigned three lunch detentions and made calls home with each student individually (*4). Looking at the clock, "Yes!" she thought, "I will still be on time for cafeteria supervision and won't get an eye roll from the staff for being late." While chatting with students in the hot lunch line, her mind wandered in preparation for the parent meeting later that afternoon and the district committee meeting shortly after.

Note your mental models

*1. What does the assistant principal look like? How is she dressed? What is her race? Does she look similar or different from the other front office staff?

*2. What picture came to mind when the class was described as successful? What do the students look like? In the classroom you pictured, who is talking? Be specific. Note students' gender, race, and ability.

*3. What picture came to mind of the three students sent to the office for the referral? Be specific. Note students' gender, race, and ability.

*4. What do these conversations sound like? What words are used? By whom? Does this conversation sound different in your mind if the students are white? Black? Latino? Asian? Male? Female? A student who is receiving special education services? A student in the general curriculum? A student in the honors curriculum?

Based on many informal conversations and nearly twenty years in education, I know it is not unusual to picture a white, middle-class, moderately attractive woman dressed in a suit or other similar professional outfit. The other front office peers are likely a male principal and female secretaries. When thinking about the successful classroom, you may have pictured an orderly classroom with students raising their hand to speak, probably a mix of boys and girls, but maybe one gender was most likely to be called on first. It is also not unusual to picture three rough-housing boys in the office for a discipline referral. If the students came from an honors class, the assistant principal might display some intelligent humor emphasizing not to act this way again.

Mental models are one of the five disciplines for learning organizations described by Senge (1990). Mental models are, "...the images, assumptions, and stories that we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world" (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2012, p. 99). Mental models are how our minds organize our bag of tools. Our mental models are often hidden from us. Without intentional identification and mindfulness, our mental models stay below the level of awareness and remain untested and unexamined.

Review your mental pictures from the opening vignette. Own what your initial thoughts were. Don't edit your thoughts to be socially acceptable. Know your warts. Know the mental pictures of which you weren't so proud. Also notice the mental pictures that feel most comfortable and in line with our professional aspirations. Our initial thoughts are a mixture of aspiration, reality, uncomfortable honesty, and hopeful success.

Mental models

Mental models are both beneficial and dangerous. Mental models are mind pictures of how the world works. As a benefit, mental models can aid efficient thinking. For example, a quick mind picture showing two people peering over a fence, one who is tall and can see over the fence without any ladder, and another who is short and can only see over the fence with the help of a bench, clearly captures the concept of equity. This single, efficient picture summarizes the idea that fair does not necessarily mean equal. Equity is finishing, receiving, or creating the individually needed result regardless of unequal beginnings. All of the subtleties of equity, resource distribution, community, and end result are captured in one, quick mind picture of two people peering over a fence. Mental models can help us efficiently summarize our thinking.

However, mental models can also limit our ability to change and may reinforce incorrect thinking. Our minds can start to see trends as predicted facts. Mental models can trap our thinking in ways that are not innovative, helpful, or progressive. Our initial images and assumptions can feed inequitable trends. Recall your initial mind pictures from the opening assistant principal vignette. If your mental model associated the office referral with boy students, how does this automatic impression impact your subtle expectations on a daily basis?

Surface it and examine it

How do mental models get created? Our experiences, messaging around us, and the narratives we consume, all influence how we streamline information in our minds. Here are two narratives that we are familiar with: achievement gap and discipline gap. Below is the average ACT composite score by race/ethnicity for the state of Nebraska (ACT, Inc., 2016). Predict the score for the graduating class of 2016 in the cell for Black/African American, White, and Hispanic/Latino.

	2010 N	2010 Average	2012 N	2012 Average	2014 N	2014 Average	2016 N	2016 Average
All Students	16,172	22.1	16,581	22	17,768	21.7	18,598	21.4
Black/African American	674	17.8	747	17.1	755	17.3	729	?
American Indian/Alaska Native	105	19.1	97	17.9	116	18.2	132	17.1
White	13,375	22.6	12,870	22.7	13,220	22.5	13,274	?
Hispanic/Latino	920	19.1	1,495	19	2,020	18.6	2,324	?
Asian	303	23	413	22.1	458	21.3	453	21.9

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0	.	19	18.1	12	19.6	23	17.1
Two or more races	303	21.2	513	21.6	610	20.9	691	21.1
Prefer not to respond/No response	492	20.8	427	22.6	577	20.9	972	19.8

Without knowing the students or their educational context, your answers were probably close to the actual results. The average ACT composite score for the Nebraska graduating class of 2016 for Black/African American was 17.2, for White was 22.3, and for Hispanic/Latino was 18.3. Our minds could see the trend and fill in the blank. Any Algebra teacher would be proud that we mentally estimated the line of best fit. But, if we stop thinking there, we have not done our job as critically thinking educational leaders.

Without intentional identification and mindfulness, our mental models stay below the level of awareness and remain unexamined. Thus, let us examine a possible mental model that might have been reinforced as we reviewed the achievement data. Our way of noticing the achievement gaps might be summarized by:

Expected White > Hispanic/Latino > Black/African American
 Odd if either Hispanic/Latino or Black/African American > White

Writing this down is uncomfortable. Reading it on paper is likely uncomfortable. These statements bring a hidden mental model to our consciousness. This mental model staring at us from the page is not aligned with our professional aspirations or desires for the future. But, now that the mental model is identified, we can examine this concept further. No one expects *all* Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American students to score lower than *all* White students on the ACT. However, when *a* Hispanic/Latino or Black/African American student scores higher than the White average, we see this as an exception, a point of celebration. How, then, does this mindset influence our unconscious academic expectation of any Hispanic/Latino student or Black/African American in our classroom? How does this consistent pattern of achievement gaps influence our expectations and aspiration of change? Mental models can limit our thinking and limit our expectations of change.

Let us review another trend and possible mental model. Read the three statements from three different Office of Civil Rights reports. Can you place them in chronological order?

A	B	C
African-American students represent 18% of students in the CRDC sample, but 35% of students suspended once, 46% of those suspended more than once, and 39% of students expelled. One in five African-American boys and more than one in ten African-American girls received an out-of-school suspension.	On average, 4.6% of white students are suspended, compared to 16.4% of black students. Through CRDC data, we can also explore suspensions by race and gender. Black boys and girls have higher suspension rates than any of their peers. Twenty percent (20%) of black boys and more than 12% of black girls receive an out-of-school suspension.	While 6% of all K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions, the percentage is 18% for black boys; 10% for black girls; 5% for white boys; and 2% for white girls.

Statement A is from the 2009-2010 OCR data collection (United States Department of Education, 2012), Statement B is from the 2011-2012 OCR data collection (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014), and Statement C is from the 2013-2014 OCR data collection (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2016). But the real question is, “Would it matter what year?” The difference in suspensions by race and gender are still the same. White students are less likely to be out-of-school suspended than other students. Boys are more likely to be out-of-school suspended than girls. That is, for the last three national data collections, the resulting headline is that African-American boys are suspended more than other students. This headline becomes the story that we carry in our minds and shapes our quick thinking expectations.

How, then, does this mindset influence our unconscious behavior expectation of any male student in our classroom? How does this consistent pattern of discipline gaps influence our expectations and aspiration of change? Again, mental models can limit our thinking and limit our expectations of change.

Unexamined mental models can be dangerous and self-fulfilling. Additionally, our mental models directly influence our behavior and our attitudes (Senge et al., 2012). If we think of it as natural that boys will be out-of-

school suspended more often than girls, the discipline gap will likely continue. If we assume that Hispanic/Latino students and Black/African American students underperform White students, the achievement gap will likely continue. If we automatically think of an administrative team as a male principal and female assistant principal, the gender gap in educational administration is likely to continue. And because gaps of achievement, discipline, and other aspects of school life are still as far apart today as they have ever been, we have a moral call to action to disrupt these trends and reset our mental expectations. Incorrect narratives in our minds can influence our actions in ways that limit the success of those around us.

Disrupt and influence

The most dangerous implication of mental models is that we can accept them as fact. For the examples of achievement and discipline gaps, the dangerous implication of mental models is that we can resign ourselves to the disparity of achievement and discipline as if these gaps are expected facts. And so, without disruption in the trends, gaps will continue to grow. Our thoughts influence our actions. The actions of teachers and administrators either disrupt trends of disparity or feed them.

In the opening of this article, we may sympathize with the fragmented day of the assistant principal. She has curriculum, instruction, and supervision demands. She administers student discipline in one moment and influences district action through committee work a short while later. All of this is happening while working in relationship with students, families, and colleagues. Our sympathy, while appreciated, will not disrupt the trends.

For example, if the students in the office referral were Black males, her administration of discipline is only reinforcing the disparity of race and gender in discipline. In the discrete situation, the discipline might very well be appropriate. However, without strong critical thinking required to conceptualize beyond the immediate, this assistant principal might gloss over the fact that her actions just contributed to the OCR data trend. What is an administrator to do? Stop disciplining boys? Make sure that teachers are sending girls out of class just as much as boys? Avoid any discipline of non-white students? I hope these statements seem absurd to you. Quick reactions usually are.

Critically thinking educational leaders do not stop with simple awareness of gaps and trends or extreme quick reactions. Real change that disrupts trends is a result of awareness of our mind traps, our mental models, *paired* with critical inquiry. That is, we must equip this assistant principal to pause, reset, and think through her daily small actions in the larger context of the school and system.

Standard 3 of The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, states that “Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being” (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). A culturally responsive assistant principal is aware of her assumptions, critically reflects on whether those mental models reflect equity or inequity, and applies her learning in individual interactions as well as system-wide decisions. With critical awareness, experiences, and new learning, mental models change. Thankfully, because life is dynamic and interactive, old ways of thinking can be challenged and changed. Our minds are constantly being shaped by our experiences. Things happen to us just as our actions impact others. This reciprocal learning shapes our perceptions and influences the way our minds organize information. That is, our mental models are ever-changing as new information and experiences are known. Equally, our mental models are ever-changing as our own actions impact those around us.

Leadership development

Educational leadership development programs strive to develop culturally proficient leaders who can disrupt inequitable or ineffective trends. Leaders in education are expected to influence current and future educational practices in ways that disrupt conditions of oppression in order to foster equity and justice. The Educational Leadership Department (EDL) at the midwestern metropolitan university referenced in this article uses Arriaga and Lindsey’s (2016) definition of culturally proficient leadership to guide their work:

Culturally proficient leadership is characterized by core values embedded in the policies and practices of an organization, or the values and behaviors of an individual, which enable that organization or person to interact effectively with one’s clients, colleagues, and community (p. 18).

This definition recognizes the essential need to cultivate values and behaviors of individuals as well as the unique role of leaders to influence the policies and practices of the organization. Thus, an internalization of valuing equity and diversity allows an educational leader to work effectively in relationship with the entire school community including students, teachers, fellow leaders, families, and the broader community.

Cultural proficiency is not a stand-alone concept. To influence the values and attitudes of EDL graduate students, cultural proficiency is woven throughout the EDL course sequence. Cultural proficiency is complex and should not be trivialized as one or two courses “doing” cultural proficiency. Throughout the leadership development experience, students receive and respond to elements of cultural proficiency development such as a personal implicit bias awareness, identification of sources of influence in an educational system, and synthesis of the historical context of policy and practice within their professional space. The cognitive development of these skills and knowledge is essential. Additionally, EDL coursework is designed to influence attitudes and values in support of culturally proficient leadership so that, “...schools and schooling can be successful places for students when doors are opened, not closed to children and youth” (Arriaga & Lindsey, 2016, p. 18). In this culturally proficient lens, leaders may begin to integrate standards into practice and display actions of equity on a daily basis.

Culturally proficient leaders know their biases, intellectualize their personal growth plans, seek voices for deficits, and influence the organization, policies, and system. There is the potential for the leader to influence the larger system while at the same time continuing to grow and develop as an individual.

Graduate course intentionality

The demographic composition of the Nebraska K-12 student population is different than the composition of adults working in Nebraska schools (Nebraska Department of Education, 2015).

	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races
Teacher Race and Ethnicity	0.17%	0.38%	0.93%	1.89%	0.07%	96.13%	0.43%
Student Membership by Race and Ethnicity	1.42%	2.43%	6.70%	17.74%	0.13%	68.20%	3.38%

The demographic composition of the EDL graduate students closely mirrors this as well. The majority of EDL graduate students, the future leaders of our Nebraska schools, are White. How can a group of mostly White educational leaders develop cultural proficiency through graduate work?

As an EDL team we have an agreed-upon definition of cultural proficiency and a cognitive understanding of the professional standards for educational leaders. Each EDL faculty member approaches the work of Standard 3, (Equity and Cultural Responsiveness) differently (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). The remainder of this article describes the approach used to foster cultural proficiency in the courses I teach. In developing my classes, I reference two frameworks and two key concepts.

Frameworks

- Affective Domain (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964)
- Primary and secondary dimensions of diversity (Loden & Rosener, 1991)

Key Concepts

- Deliberative thinking and reflection (Kahneman, 2011)
- Student voice (Baroutsis, McGregor, & Mills, 2016)

Affective domain

A complete leadership development program addresses both content knowledge and value development. In addition to technical competence, educational leaders are entrusted to positively steer the quality of the school experience for students, teachers, fellow leaders, families, and the broader community. This responsibility is broad and requires a confident moral center. Educational leadership development programs, therefore, must be concerned with influencing future leaders' values and attitudes.

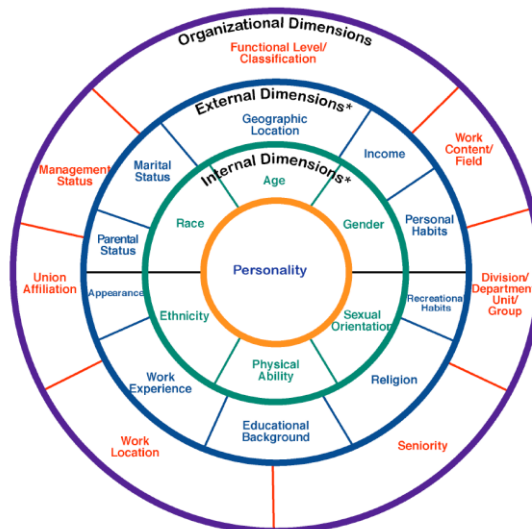
Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia (1964) proposed three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The affective domain describes changes in interest, attitudes, and values. Levels 1 and 2 of the affective domain focus on the learner's willingness to learn and the learner's engagement. Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the affective domain are non-cognitive. From level 1 to level 5, there is an increase in expected actions aligned to

values. Level 3 is Valuing and refers to the identification of a student’s value attached to the content. Here, that would be the attitude or appreciation of culturally proficient leadership. Level 4 is Organization and refers to the integration of standards into practice. Here, that would be a student’s integration of Standard 3 of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, (Equity and Cultural Responsiveness) into practice (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Level 5 is Characterization by a value or value set. This refers to a characteristic lifestyle. Here, that would be the pervasive, consistent, and predictable behavior displaying culturally proficient educational leadership on a daily basis.

	Level 1 Receiving	Level 2 Responding	Level 3 Valuing	Level 4 Organization	Level 5 Characterization
	Learner’s willingness to attend to learning	Learner’s interest in the learning outcome	Learner’s attitudes and appreciation are developed	Learner’s values become consistent and begin to be practiced	Learner’s display value on a daily basis
In regard to developing cultural proficiency as an educational leader...	Humility of desire to learn. Acknowledgement that personal actions can/have supported culturally proficient results as well as not. Awareness of personal implicit biases.	Understanding the concept of cultural proficiency and demonstrating willingness to learn more about cultural proficiency.	Development of attitude or appreciation of culturally proficient leadership.	Integration of The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders Standard 3.	Actions are aligned with tenets of cultural proficiency. Leaders display a characteristic lifestyle that models cultural proficiency.

Primary and secondary dimensions of diversity

A component of the Arriago & Lindsey (2016) conceptual framework for culturally proficient practices includes valuing diversity and adapting to diversity. Diversity is when we are with people who are different from us. Those differences can occur in many ways; some of those differences are seen (e.g. age, appearance, geographic location) and other differences are not seen (e.g. parental status, educational background, management status). Primary dimensions of identity, as noted towards the center of the circle, influence our self-image and world views and secondary dimensions of identity, as noted towards the circumference of the circle, influence our self-esteem and self-definition (Mazur, 2010). Below is the image used in class to represent the layers of diversity and identity:



(retrieved October 1, 2016 from <http://www.canatx.org/CAN-Initiatives/ccdi/index.php>)

At different moments, each of us identifies more strongly with some aspects of these concentric circles than others. The intersectionality of our social identities helps define our situational context. For example, my identity as a white, middle-aged female may be more present in some environments than my identity as a parent, spouse, or assistant professor.

Notice that the identity circles are layered from *me* to *we*. That is, the primary dimensions of identity are most tightly related with an individual while the secondary dimensions mostly reflect organization or system influences. In graduate coursework, students explore the relationship between individual and organizational influences. An organization's identity is influenced by the individuals in it. An individual's identity is influenced by the context of the organization. When students critically examine their personal identity and the diversity within the organization, it becomes easier to identify areas of influence and possible inequalities sustained by organizational characteristics. Educational leaders are especially in a position to positively influence organizational components. It is through relationship with others and interaction within the organization that this influence occurs. Through diverse relationships, educational leaders can become agents of change to establish socially just and equitable conditions in schools (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Deliberative thinking and reflection

Graduate school is a gift of intentional challenge for adult learners. Students enrolled in educational leadership graduate work are typically working full time, have had several years of experience in education, and are already in formal and informal leadership positions. The life of an EDL graduate student is full and demanding, just like the formal role of being an educational leader. Efficiency can become a hallmark of success. However, when efficiency drives action, there is little room for effortful, conscious, and deliberative thinking to take place. That is, there is little room for our mental models to surface and be examined. Thus, it is essential that students are provided tools of reflection in order to slow down their thinking and critically analyze the interplay of personal actions and organizational influences. One such tool is regular, written reflection about the milestones of the day or noticeable incidents. Reflection is a tool for deep examination of personal assumptions, values, and beliefs. The development of an attitude or appreciation of culturally proficient leadership is essential in order to display a characteristic lifestyle that models cultural proficiency. In the courses I teach, EDL graduate students complete regular reflection using the model:

- **Simple Description.** What happened? What is the content that was learned? Don't make judgements yet or try to draw conclusions, simply describe.
- **Feelings.** What were your reactions, thoughts, and feelings?
- **Analysis.** Looking back at your notes from class, your personal readings, and conversations/experiences, how does this critical incident relate back to that content? What is your "ah-ha" from this critical incident? How can you use your insight from the critical incident in your current professional position?

Critical reflection also promotes updated and fresh mental narratives. Through regular reflection and integration of course content, students uncover their mind traps. This regular, slow, deliberative thinking associated with personal reflection helps students define their attitudes and beliefs about education, leadership, and equity. These attitudes and beliefs about equity, cultural responsiveness, and cultural proficiency are the basis for educational leaders' actions.

Student voice

In the hectic, fragmented day of a typical educational leader, there is one essential concept that can steer immediate and long-term adult actions to promote equity: foster student voice. The best leadership is in service to others. It is common to hear the phrase, "Keep the student at the heart of your decision making." This statement is vague and the direct application unclear. However, the phrase "Foster student voice," clarifies the role of students in the daily happenings of a school, a district, and decisions each day. Student voice is an active descriptor of engagement and influence.

Has your voice ever been quieted? Maybe someone has talked over you at a meeting or cut you off mid-sentence. Perhaps you were in a conversation that was masked as a colleague seeking input, but really was an invitation to confirm their idea. Think specifically of the last time your voice was silenced or diminished. What feelings come to mind? Note them in the margins. Disempowered? Less worthy than those around you? Insufficient? A desire to disengage? A follower instead of a leader?

Having a voice is the exact opposite. Voice is sharing our words, our ideas, and our insights with others. Having a voice can foster feelings of power, influence, identity, worth, engagement, and presence. These are positive feelings that we desire for all stakeholders in the educational context, especially students. A most powerful notion of student voice is what Baroutsis, McGregor, and Mills (2016) coin as pedagogic voice, which is the student's "active engagement, participation and voice in the areas of teaching, learning and the curriculum" (p. 125); that is, a student's opportunity and ability to share words, ideas, and insights in teaching, learning, and curriculum. We can float by in life and let the noise of external narrative bombard us as if others' stories are more than our own. Passive existence is compliant, follows rules, and is efficient. However, active engagement in designing our destiny, our future story, is what nests real learning and challenges the status quo. We want students who are on fire for their learning—who consistently ask why and hypothesize the impact of changes. Engagement is a byproduct of being invested. We want to encourage, seek, and honor students' voices so that learning is not something that happens to students, but rather the cultivation of ownership in the school experience for each student. Educational leaders are uniquely positioned to foster student voice through programming, interactions, and leading by example. Student voice is an important gateway to developing our future leaders. Keeping voice as a key in all decision making helps us keep ourselves out of the decision. We can accidentally influence decisions that are self-serving. Instead, when we critically hold ourselves accountable for student voice in decisions, our value of "students first" can have a greater chance of success. Regardless of our position in education, the ultimate stakeholder in education is always the student.

A typical day in a middle school, again

Think back to the assistant principal at the opening of this article. Skimming the vignette again, we are reminded of the fragmented day of a typical leader. In the scope of a mid-morning through lunch, the assistant principal completed an instructional walk-through, office referral discipline, lunch supervision, preparation for a parent meeting, and district committee work. At the surface, this is a successful day. Many tasks were completed with accuracy and efficiency. However, accuracy and efficiency are not the only elements of success. Missing in this vignette is the assistant principal engaging in deliberative thinking with reflection and analysis of student voice. How can I be so bold as to put her actions under critical review? The assistant principal in the vignette was me.

How would this look today? Without belaboring the entire vignette, let us take the small slice of just the office referral discipline from the vignette and give this assistant principal a re-do.

...The internal conversation is over. Waiting in the office are three students from a different class on an office referral. She quickly skims the referral paperwork, pauses, and remembers the importance of student voice. With each student individually, she reviews the referral content and asks, "What will you do differently next time? What could you have done to prevent trouble this time? What are the consequences of your actions on the relationship with the teacher and other classmates? How do you want to influence that for the future?" The assistant principal assigns a lunch detention as consequence. Still individually with each student, the assistant principal calls the parent/guardian on speaker phone and the student shares news of the referral, the highlights of the referral conversation, and consequence of a lunch detention. The assistant principal follows up with each student and the teacher later that week to see how both the classroom behavior and the relationship between each student and the teacher are going. Later that day, the assistant principal jots a quick reflection:

- Simple Description. What happened? What is the content that was learned? Don't make judgements yet or try to draw conclusions, simply describe.
 - Office referral, 3 boys (2 White, 1 Hispanic), assigned lunch detention.
- Feelings. What were your reactions, thoughts, and feelings?
 - Drat, another referral of all boys. This is similar to the majority of our referrals. Boys are 50% of our school's population and account for 90% of our office referrals. There is no pattern of one teacher or one team sending more referrals to the office than another. The individual behavior of each referral is in-line with our building protocol for referrals. I'm confused as to why each individual situation seems fine, but, really, our pattern of disproportionate referrals is still the trend.
- Analysis. Looking back at your notes from class, your personal readings, and conversations/experiences, how does this critical incident relate back to that content? What is your "ah-ha" from this critical incident? How can you use your insight from the critical

incident in your current professional position?

- What are my own mental models for discipline? Would I be surprised to see a girl in the office for a referral? Have I been easier, harder, or the equal in consequence to girls than boys? What are our building's expectations of classroom consequences prior to an office referral? Do these expectations favor one gender over another?

The assistant principal asks the secretary to pull the data on just her own office referrals to see if there is a gender difference in the severity of consequence with similar referrals. She pulls the discipline handbook and sets it by her bag to take home tonight. The question of gender bias in classroom expectations prior to an office referral needs more thinking and reflection. That will happen tonight...

The additions to the vignette do not guarantee an immediate decrease in boy discipline referrals. However, the addition of deliberative thinking, honoring student voice, and critical professional reflection is likely to increase actions that are representative of core values, and that enable the assistant principal to interact effectively with others. The assistant principal valued dialogue with the student and giving them a voice in the interaction. She paused, focused on relationship, and continued her deliberative thinking beyond the interaction. She is working towards, "...culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being," (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

Conclusion

Leaders can impact a system in ways that others cannot. Our personal development will have times of success where our aspirations match our professional actions. We will have times of disappointment when we fall short of our intended influence.

In order to foster equity and justice, it is essential for graduate work that prepares educational leaders to address the awareness of mental models and engage graduate students in learning about cultural proficiency in order to integrate standards of equity into daily behavior. In each slice of the day, leaders can choose deliberative thinking over efficiency. Leaders can be intentional with student interactions, focusing on giving voice and influence to that student, and critically considering system-wide consequences of decisions. Culturally proficient educational leaders slow down, interact, and think. Educational leaders who choose to move beyond shallow thinking disrupt the educational system in order to integrate standards of equity into daily behavior.

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