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## A qualitative study into the inner leadership of transformative California school principals

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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A QUALITATIVE STUDY INTO THE INNER LEADERSHIP OF TRANSFORMATIVE  
CALIFORNIA SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Conrado Tiu

February, 2016

Robert R. Barner, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Conrado Tiu

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jeffrey. The man in my dream. The love of my life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Still, you’re not alone. No one is alone. Truly. No one is alone” (Sondheim, 1988, track 18).

This journey to achieve a doctorate has always made me feel like a character from Stephen Sondheim’s (1988) musical *Into the Woods*. Each character goes into the woods on a quest to obtain something, a goal. Most come from the safety of home and travel a path where they not only discover their true selves, but also transform. They meet each other, and some other characters, native to the woods, who contribute to that transformation. This allusion is an acknowledgment that the journey was not made alone and would not have been possible without the following people who enabled my personal transformation.

The mothers. My mother, Maria de los Desamparados, who loved me first, who stood by unimpressed as the school administrators accelerated my education and I ended up in my elder sister’s class, as the teachers praised and gave rewards. She constantly reminded me of the parable of the talents, saying she prayed I have not been given five bags of talent only to lose four and bury one. This doctoral effort and culmination brought approval from her. Alice Lejano, Raul’s mother, who fed me *merienda* almost every day in high school, and a decade later remarked that since I was such a good teacher, I should get an Ed.D. Something clicked inside, then. Something sparked, and now, here I am. Serena Carroll, spiritual writer, who opened an alternate world of inner reality to get both wonderfully lost and guided. Irene Herrera-Stewart, director, who showed me, unequivocally, for the first time, how a principal who put students’ needs first, acts. Her support in this work was crucial. Carol Dodd, Los Angeles Unified School District, local district superintendent, who made me feel I can move mountains, and certainly do this quest. Linda Wootan, who cautioned wisdom before attempting to move the mountain. Dr.

Juanita Brown, World Café originator, who through this journey, invited and gave me the extreme honor of working beside her in world cafe leadership sessions as if it were the most natural and ordinary thing in the world. She sent me a box full of resources for qualitative methods on inner experience research. Dr. Anne Doshier of the Ashland Institute, who taught me Circles and advised me on inner experience studies. Finally, Dr. Rhoda Marcovich, Psychologist, who nurtured my growth for 15 years before her passing in 2007. She inspired me on a path of self-discovery, encouraging me to go through a Marriage, Family, Child Counseling degree program. She urged me to continue to this doctoral program, and patiently listened to me once a month, every month, without fail.

The fathers. First, the Jesuits. Father Perez, who taught me to go beyond the obvious, and to value my inner self and imagination. Father O'Brien, who showed me what being a man for others, really is. His *Tulong Dunong* program gave me my first taste of being a teacher. I will be eternally grateful for that opportunity. Northwestern University professors David Downs and Robert Schneidemann, whose creative laboratory classes gave me safe spaces to fail gloriously in the quest of finding a personal truth. Richard Alonzo, Los Angeles Unified School District, local district superintendent, who let me look behind the curtains of his great leadership and showed me how it worked. He gave me the opportunity to be a school principal. Byron Maltez, Los Angeles Unified School District, local district superintendent, who exemplified to me what servant leadership is. David Isaacs of Clearing Communications, and Dr. Bob Stilger of New Stories, two masters of leadership, who took me on learning adventures across the country and internationally, apprenticing me in their leadership conferences during this doctoral work. Finally, Dr. Bo Gyllempalm, the originator of the Organizational Cone, master of creative leadership, faculty emeritus of Fielding Graduate University, School of Human and

Organizational Development, who nurtured me through the darkest and most uncertain times of this dissertation journey. He always made sure to see me in his travels halfway around the world. He is a true father. Thank you.

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Professional Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential

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Instruction Technology Applications Facilitator

July, 2000–June 2003

Teacher and Coordinator

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International Forum of Visual Practitioners

National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation

Society for Organizational Learning

Association of California School Administrators

Professional Facilitators Network

## ABSTRACT

The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* gave birth to an effort to reform K-12 schools and increase student achievement all over the United States. More than 30 years later, the school reform efforts have grown into immense industries with marginal effect. Major legislation and programs have been launched throughout 3 decades, with *No Child Left Behind* legislation and *Common Core States Standards Initiative* being the latest and biggest endeavors, still with minimal outcomes. These efforts follow and run along with many years of structural changes such as Voucher, Small, Pilot, and Charter Schools. The problem of effectively transforming K-12 schools into places of high student achievement remains intractable.

The principal's role by its unique position in the educational delivery structure and its very nature is key, and may be the single most determining factor in the failure or success of a school. There are very few studies that focus on principal leadership and its effect on student achievement outcomes. All studies and most literature on principal leadership and effectiveness put most attention on traits and observable behaviors. However, it is important to look at the inner world of principals, for this influences, if not determines, the traits and behaviors they exhibit in their leadership. There are no known studies that have focused in on the inner states and experiences of effective school principals.

This phenomenological study represents a seminal effort to study the inner experiences of principals. The participant selection was done through criterion type purposive sampling to link this study to leadership effectiveness. Only principals who were able to transform their schools from failing into successful according to the objective California State Standards of Adequate Yearly Progress were included. This sampling method also enabled the study to look deeply into the inner phenomenological experience of these transformative principals.

The study findings yielded data compelling enough to propose a conclusion of effective school transformation and proposed a model to illustrate how the inner experiences of principals fit into effective school transformation. The study also presented its implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter I: The Intractable Problem of School Transformation

### Background

**The external landscape.** The educational system in the United States is a focal point of discussions and debate around the country's future. The K-12 school system, where America's youth are educated, becomes a first consideration. This system has been attacked from all fronts since April of 1983, with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). The report charged that "our society and its educational institutions have lost sight of the basic purposes of schooling, and of the high expectations and disciplined effort needed to attain them" (p. 9).

Like its assertions, the above publication became controversial and inspired much debate regarding its veracity and intent. For example, The Sandia Report revealed statistical anomalies and misinterpretations on the very standardized scores on which the *Nation at Risk* report based its conclusions (Carson, Huelskamp, & Woodall, 1993). This was countered by another critique (Stedman, 1994) and followed lately by dramatic accounts (Bracey, 2007) and refutations (Ravitch, 2007). Berliner and Biddle (1997) stated that the notion of failing schools as started in this report was a myth.

The ongoing debate on this issue has created further confusion and made way for the next wave of educational legislation.

**No Child Left Behind.** With the passing of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the 2001 reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the American educational system was once again challenged to effectively educate America's children. All reaching, heavy on mandates and accountabilities, this current law requires that every K-12 school receiving federal funding must ensure that 100% of its recipient students at the proficient



or advanced level by 2014. According to an independent study (NCLBGrassroots.org, 2005), NCLB would label most schools in the Great Lakes area as failing. This is due to the inability of most schools to continually meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements, a system of complex and varied educational achievement accountabilities that grow stricter every year.

According to Posnick-Goodwin (2004) 36% of California schools have been put on the list of schools failing to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2004. She adds that moreover, this number is expected to rise exponentially as the percentage of students required to score proficient ratchets up to 100%. By 2009, the percentage of failing schools rose to 50 (California Department of Education, 2009). This total does not count schools that are not included due to the Safety Harbor clause. Safety Harbor exempts a school for not making AYP if it shows that it reduced recipient subgroups not meeting proficiency labels by 10%, if and only if other criteria, such as attendance or graduation rate are met (EdSource, 2004). The second consecutive year of not meeting AYP standards places the institution in School or Program Improvement Status Year 1 (PI 1). Following consecutive years of failing to meet the AYP adds a value to the Year designation (PI 2, PI 3, and so forth), and carries with it increasing mandates (see Appendix A) and sanctions. These increasing approbations will be removed if the school leaves or exits out of PI status by showing that it has met AYP standards for two consecutive years. However, even if a schools exits PI status, the increases in benchmarks and achievement rates that need to be met year after year (to approach the mandated 100% proficiency level for all students by 2014) do not give the school any room to pause. Continuing self-improvement till 100% is reached has become the new rule.

***Three decades of reform.*** Since the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report there has been three decades of unceasing policies and programs to reform schools, NCLB being one of them. School

reform has been an educational mainstay and evolved to become an industry in itself. As seen by the continual introduction of new reform programs, no one has the ultimate solution. From a Chaos Theory fractals perspective, *A Nation at Risk* was the simple self-referring equation from which would grow the entire fractal of school reform in all its myriad components, culminating into the all-reaching NCLB. This environment of constant, increasing demand for improvement and reform now becomes the context to which all schools must adapt or die. We see the permutations and self-organization of charter, pilot, voucher and small schools as differentiated responses and adaptation to the new and changing demands.

As the 2014 NCLB deadline approached, a new school reform initiative called Common Core (CC) has emerged (Bidwell, 2014). This time, the push has been to align at least 80% of all of the states' educational standards into one unified set. Each state may have 15% to 20% of the standards to modify and make particular for the unique conditions within its jurisdiction. Almost immediately, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories adopted CC. Almost immediately, a national highly contested debate ensued as to the initiative's viability and value. Ravitch (2013a) posted compelling reasons why CC should not be supported.

The wave upon wave of school reform movements did not make much difference in terms of educational achievement output. A program may initially work in raising achievement. However, after some time, the situation goes back to the initial, problematic state. Or, an increase in one area of achievement is balanced by a decrease in another. Another failure to improve scenario may be seen at various scales. Though he does not describe it as a fractal, Elmore (2004) describes this chaos theory phenomena when he writes about a problem that exists at various scales in education. He calls it a "nested" (p. 11) problem of scale:

That is, [the condition] exists in similar forms at different levels of the system. New practices may spring up in isolated classrooms or in clusters of classrooms within a given

school, yet never move to most classrooms within that school. Likewise, whole schools may be created from scratch that embody very different forms of practice, but these schools remain a small proportion of all schools within a given district or state. And, finally, some local school systems may be more successful than others at spawning classrooms and schools that embody new practices, but these local systems remain a small fraction of the total number in a state. (p. 11)

The issue of universal school reform remains an intractable problem. Sarason (1990) contended that until educational stakeholders go beyond the superficial conceptualizations and become aware of the unseen values, attitudes about power, knowledge, and privilege, resulting in fundamental governing values shifts in how they think and interact, including how they explore new ideas, then all the reorganizing, fads and strategies will have marginal, if any, effect. In fact these fixes, rooted in superficial reactive understandings, well intentioned or not, have made problems worse.

If we go by Sarason's (1990) argument, the question of school reform, the process by which schools transform from failure to success, is something that cannot be achieved by manipulating external, superficial factors alone. Program changes, schedule changes, leadership changes, all manner of changes that affect only the superficial elements will not stick. What are essential to consider are fundamental factors that are not easily observed or measured. These factors pertain to values, attitudes, beliefs, and other inner factors. It begs the question: If this is to be attempted, where do we start?

**The principal.** The principal is closely identified with the success or failure of a school. A usual method of understanding an occupation is to determine its position in its entire organizational chart. Educational institutions are usually highly bureaucratic entities. From the point of view of the school, the principal's position is the nominal head, at the top of the executive and organizational chart. Looking at the entire school district's organization however, one notes that the actual position of the school principal, in the hierarchical order, is in the

middle. The principal reports to superiors in the school district office who delegate work to the principal. The principal, in turn, delegate to the teaching and operational staff of the school.

The principal, being the nominal head and authority of the school site is assumed to have the most leverage and power to enact change in order to increase student achievement at that particular site. There are numerous published books with prescriptions on how the school principal can go about behaving to make positive educational achievement change happen. Educational experts have been weighing in during the past three decades with their own advice on how a principal can turn around a school. All of the preceding with no measurable results. Unfortunately, as more books on this topic are published, there has been little actual research done on principals and their agency on student achievement (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Perhaps the answer lies not in what principal must do, or behave, as prescribed in numerous publications. The answer may be in the internal state of the principal.

**The internal landscape.** William O'Brien, the former CEO of the Hanover Insurance Company, gave a single sentence summary of his decades-long experience in leading change as quoted by Scharmer (2000): "The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor" (para. 84). In explaining the previous quote, Scharmer (2000) adds:

In other words, the success of a tangible move in a particular situation depends on the intangible 'interior condition' of the intervenor. The capacity to create such an interior condition is becoming one of the most significant topics for future research and practice. (para. 136)

Halal (1998) states: "Entire libraries have been written on leadership traits, styles, and skills to clarify these murky matters. This 'outer' view, focusing on the leader's behavior, is useful, but it misses the inner reality from which power emanates" (p. 205).

The preceding quotes beg the question: what exactly is this inner state or reality? What are its features, characteristics, and forms? The preceding quotes also assume that this inner

reality or state in large measure affects, if not determines, the behavior and decisions that result in the effectiveness of the leader and at the same time indicate the lack of research into this inner experience. Fields and concepts such as psychology, spirituality, emotions, motivation, desire, attitude, transpersonal communication, values, morality, ethics, self-efficacy, etc. are but few of the multiple entryways that could begin a step into this little studied subject.

### **Problem Statement**

The external educational landscape is not going to change in the foreseeable future. If anything, it will grow more complex and chaotic. Multiple programs have been imposed on schools, creating layers upon layers of operational and instructional procedures without much changing the statistics on school success as measured by student achievement on standardized tests and by other school success measures. The rate of this imposition has increased dramatically since 1984 and shows no signs of letting up. As schools are mandated to change once more, accept and work another program, such as Response to Intervention, Common Core etc. on their overloaded agendas, or struggle to convert into SLCs, Pilots or Charters, the evidence still shows that, on the whole, there is not much that changes in achievement results.

The principal's role by its unique position in the educational delivery structure and by its very nature is key, and may be the single most determining factor in the failure or success of a school. Robinson et al. (2008) states: "the fact that there are fewer than 30 published studies in English that have examined the links between leadership and student outcomes indicates how radically disconnected leadership research is from the core business of teaching and learning" (p. 668). The researcher has searched and has found no known study that has examined the inner experiences of principals who lead their schools from failure to success. There is a definite need to study the leadership of principals not just as leadership per se but as leadership tied to the

achievement and success of schools defined by the measures that are imposed on them. With this tie-in, there is a need to go beyond traditional quantitative measures (such as filled-in questionnaires on observable traits and behaviors) into the inner world of principals because this influences, if not determines, the traits and behaviors they exhibit when they interact dynamically with the complex external environment.

The task of exploring this inner state is daunting yet important if one is to understand the source of external actions, decisions, communication and effectiveness manifested by successful transformative school leaders. There are many skeptics that question whether this is even possible (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007). Understanding this vast inner world would require multiple points of inquiry from different directions. Studying the inner experience of principals becomes imperative to the efforts to save our schools from failure. These studies may give schools a better chance at delivering the learning and achievement for all students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the inner experiences of California school principals who have successfully transformed their schools from a Program Improvement status to a clear exit from P.I. Since this examination of principals' inner experiences is a first, the researcher, appropriately, has no preconceived notions on the findings. Lack of knowledge of the results does not mean the study is unproductive. As with any pioneering venture, finding nothing may be as useful as finding a treasure.

### **Research Questions**

Leithwood, Harris, and Strauss (2010) describes the three stages of school turnaround process as: "Stage 1: Stopping the decline and creating conditions for early improvement. Stage 2: Ensuring survival and realizing early performance improvements. Stage 3: Achieving

satisfactory performance and aspiring to much more” (p. 445). This research follows these stages as critical points around which the principals’ inner experience are queried. Describing inner states can be amorphous. Focusing the questions around critical points in the experience concentrates the discourse.

The main research questions this study attempts to answer are:

1. What are the inner experiences of the principal in schools that are able to transform from failing (program improvement) to successful (clear status) at critical points of this transformation?
2. What inner experiences are common among these principals at each critical point (please see previous paragraph for details on critical points)?
3. What inner experience does the principal consider to be the most important in the transformation process?

### **Importance of the Study**

It is important to conduct this study for the following reasons: (a) to reiterate what has been stated, there is very little research done in this area of school leadership; (b) inquiring into the inner leadership of successful principals may very well be seminal in revealing an important field of study that can mean the difference between the success or continued meandering of our educational system; (c) this study and others like it has the potential of being an important source of knowledge and resource for beginning and even seasoned principals as they struggle to raise their students’ and school’s achievement levels; (d) this study, and others like it, can inform policy and legal mandates written by educational leaders at the state and federal level; (e) this study can inform the various groups and stakeholders that make up the education community, such as parents, teachers, business leaders, etc., regarding the real, personal challenges and

complexity of running schools from the principals' perspective and open doors to greater understanding and further dialogue; and (f) this study can inform the public at large of a heretofore mostly closed area of inquiry and thought that can inspire and generate a new level of interest about schools and our educational system's future. It is inescapable from the preceding that the time for this category of inquiry is at hand and must commence. It is the intent of the researcher to value the importance and answer the call and the need for this study.

### **Role of Researcher and Assumptions**

A primary responsibility of a researcher in any study is to reduce researcher bias and safeguard the validity of the study as much as possible. Researcher bias in carrying out the role in any qualitative study must be recognized and taken into account as an unavoidable component (Creswell, 2009; Morse & Richards, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). The qualitative study researcher is both the instrument for data collection and interpretation. The researcher can also influence the subjects in both subtle and complex ways during the data gathering interaction like the interviews in this study. While these conditions bring concerns of bias and reactivity, "the dangers of being insulated from relevant data are greater. The researcher must find ways to control the biases that do not inhibit the flow of pertinent information. Relevance cannot be sacrificed for the sake of rigor" (Erlandson, 1993, p. 15). As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, this research utilizes established strategies to minimize bias and increase validity.

A standard source of researcher bias is the component of a researcher's professional experience and history that has a bearing on the focus of the research. These must be disclosed to permit a more rigorous view of the material. The researcher has been employed by the Los Angeles Unified School District for the last twenty six years: as a teacher for the first 11 years, a



specialist for the next 3 years, and as a school administrator for the last 12 years. The researcher has been a principal of a continuation high school for the last 6 years.

The researcher assumes the following:

1. The researcher assumes that the participants will be truthful and unreserved.
2. The researcher assumes that the participants will be able to articulate their inner experiences.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are definite limitations that must be noted to gain a full understanding of the true value and meaning of the work and inform further inquiry into the field:

1. The effect of the researcher's age, gender, ethnicity, appearance, and personality to the outcome of the interviews or study is unknown.
2. The participants' age, gender, ethnicity, values or beliefs, economic status, professional experience, capacity for introspection and communication of inner experience, are not determined nor controlled for.
3. The type of school (private, public, elementary, secondary, small, pilot, magnet, comprehensive, span, options, alternative, etc.) are not controlled for.
4. All the inquiry is done with California school principals operating within the California educational system. Other states and their local educational systems may have different variables, measures and degrees of implementation that need to be considered when continuing this inquiry.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid any ambiguity, the following terms are defined for the purposes of this study:

*Transformative school principal*—is used to describe principals who have presided over the successful transformation of a failing school.

*Successful transformation*—is used to refer to the process by which schools are removed and cleared from “Program Improvement” status. This occurs after two consecutive years of meeting AYP.

*Failing school*—is used to refer to schools in “Program Improvement” status. This occurs after a school fails to meet AYP for two consecutive years. For the purposes of this study, it does not matter what program improvement year a school is in prior to successful transformation.

*Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP*—as referred to in this study has the same definition as the one used by the California Department of Education. There are many components to measuring AYP. The combination of the components that make up the AYP depends on the type and level of school. Not all schools have all the components. Not each school has the same components.

*Program Improvement or P.I.*—as referred to in this study has the same definition as the one used by the California Department of Education. Schools in P.I. status are also labeled with the number of years it has been in P.I. so far (e.g., P.I. year 1, or P.I. 1)

*Academic Performance Index or API*—as referred to in this study has the same definition as the one used by the California Department of Education. The API is a common AYP component in every California school.

*Inner Leadership*—is the inner experience of principals around the process of running and heading schools as defined by the nature of their position in the school’s authority structure.

*Inner Experience*—is the private phenomenal consciousness of the subject. Perhaps, and necessarily so, it is the most potentially ambiguous term. It is an amalgam of psychological

processes such as thinking and awareness, of feelings and emotions, self-talk, inner voices, spirituality, instinctive private responses, etc. These are not easily observable, tested or measured and can only be described and communicated by the subject (see Appendix B for a partial list of traits).

### **Organization of the Study**

There are five chapters in this study as follows:

Chapter I describes the background of the study and the purpose. It explains why doing the study is significant. It describes the limitations and defines important terms that are to be used in the study.

Chapter II is the literature review of the context, important findings, topics and discussions related to the study. The main sections are: (a) California school reform, (b) principal's role, (c) inner experience, and (d) organizational and leadership theories.

Chapter III describes the methodology and procedure by which the study will be conducted and why this is appropriate, as well as how it is valid and reliable, to the inquiry. The researcher's role will also be discussed.

Chapter IV is the discussion around the data collected from the inquiries and a thorough analysis of the findings.

Chapter V synthesizes and summarizes the analysis of the study. It includes concluding statements as well as an evaluation of the entire study and offers recommendations for further study into the topic

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### Transformation

This chapter is presented as a review of literature that supports the importance of studying the inner experience of school principals who have led the transformation of their schools from failing to successful. This will be accomplished in sections that will focus on four areas that relate to the subject of this dissertation: (a) the California context, (b) the role of the principal, (c) inner experience, and (d) organizational and leadership theories related to inner experience.

**The California context.** To begin a study into the inner experience of school principals who have led their schools from failing to successful, the researcher will lay out the context and meaning of the terms failing and successful. As expressed in Chapter I, it is necessary to keep the subject pool namely, school principals, to one state because different states have different standards of failing and successful. Since the researcher and the university are both located in California, it was the obvious, convenient choice. The researcher is most familiar with California and its standards for failing or successful schools. A brief history of California school reform will be presented along with the California criteria of designating a failing or successful mark on a particular school.

**The role of the principal.** Since gathering and studying the inner experience of principals is the main purpose of this study, there will be a review on looking at the nature of the principal's role and position in a school.

**Inner experience.** The researcher will present literature describing the concept of inner experience as currently understood in research. Studies of inner experiences and the methods used in those studies will be included.

**Organizational and leadership theories.** The last section of this literature review chapter will present organizational and leadership theories as it relates to the concept of school transformation and inner experience.

### **Literature Search Strategies**

To access pertinent literature for the preceding described sections, the researcher enacted several strategies.

**Expert advice.** The researcher attended conferences and seminars on leadership and organizational topics as both participant and presenter. During the events, the researcher sought out experts in the areas of schools, organizations, and leadership and sought advice on literature that might be helpful in this study. The researcher had direct contact with some of the authors cited in the research, particularly: Juanita Brown, David Isaacs, Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, Daniel Goleman, Joseph Jaworski, Otto Scharmer, Peter Senge, Meg Wheatley, and Dana Zohar. Materials suggested were listed and catalogued for library searching.

**Libraries, Google, Scribd.com and Amazon.com.** The researcher accessed materials through Pepperdine Library online portal, specifically for journal and article searches. The researcher also visited the physical library at the Pepperdine Graduate School of Education and Psychology site, to access physical books and journals that were not available through the Pepperdine University online library resource.

The researcher used Google Search as a main online search strategy, second to the Pepperdine Library online resources. Most of the resources accessed were obtained from Google Scholar and Google Books. Scribd.com was a resource to read books that are not easily available or readily obtainable. Amazon.com was the main source of books bought by the researcher for resources he wanted to include in his personal library.

**Personal library.** The researcher has built a personal library of educational and leadership books and used this to access materials pertinent to this study.

### **California and School Reform**

For the purposes of this study, in order to set the context under which the participant principals' inner leadership was occurring as they transformed their schools from failing to successful, this literature review will only include the recent history of California school reform.

**Public Schools Accountability Act.** In 1999, California enacted the California Public Schools Accountability Act (see Appendix C). The Public Schools Accountability Act called for the creation and provision of an accountability measure, the API, the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP), the Alternative Schools Accountability Model and an Award Program directly related to the API. This new set of accountabilities is unprecedented in California educational history. For the first time, California schools were being held to a standards-based education that clearly and specifically delineates the areas and skills that students are expected to know, and show proficiency in, across all core subject areas, in every grade level. What the California Department of Education used to give as frameworks and loose curricular guides, subject to wide latitudes of interpretation, were replaced by the California Standards for Education that were now, very explicit and clear about the expected achievement outcome at each grade level. Yearly-implemented state tests given near the end of the school year, usually in May, measure the achievement according to these defined standards.

California school educators were not well prepared to take on these measures and their school scores showed it. The API, a single score attributed to each school, is derived from a formula that is quite difficult to decipher because it is a complex tangle of interdependencies

containing variables that change yearly. Sometimes, a change in the formula would occur within the year, and all the API scores were recalculated. This change means that many schools will end with a different API score from the score assigned at the beginning of the school year.

For California, the API was included in the AYP mandates. Neither teachers nor administrators were well acquainted with the standards. The data that came with the testing were new to educational practitioners who were not trained in analyzing or interpreting them. The results are usually given in August or September, just as the next school-year begins for most schools, or two months into the school year for those on year-round calendars. This calendar hardly allows educators the time to examine, learn, and improve. Every year, as the API scores are handed out, all schools are assigned an API score goal or gain that it must achieve for the next school year. A school that does not make the API gain that it was assigned the previous year triggers a failing mark on its federal AYP mandates unless the Safety Harbor clause can be applied. Safety Harbor exempts a school for not making AYP standards (by failing to meet the state API score goals) if it shows that it reduced recipient subgroups not meeting proficiency labels by 10%, if and only if other criteria, such as attendance or graduation rate are met (EdSource, 2004). Two consecutive years of failing to meet the AYP standards labels the school as failing, and places the school into Program Improvement (P.I.) status. In order to change that status into a “successful,” label and clear the P.I. designation, a school must show passing marks on all AYP areas for two consecutive years. It would then be characterized as having exited P.I. status and “clear.”

**California school organizational adaptations.** It can be argued that the educational system was not intended to help every child succeed but was structured to sort students with the result that only a portion of students do succeed (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2002). This assumption,

however, has changed (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). With the passing of the NCLB legislation, schools receiving any form of federal funding were mandated to progress according to a specific table of improvement. In order to fulfill the new mandates, adaptations were made. Some of the adaptations to these changes in expectations, for example, voucher schools, charter schools, expanded homeschooling, have been highly controversial and became part of the reform movement in California.

Within existing schools, there are other efforts being instituted such as “smaller learning communities” (SLCs). Larger schools, usually with more than 1,000 students enrolled, are restructured by creating small schools within schools called “houses or academies.” Here, students and teachers are in more constant contact, increasing “personalization” (Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006), and improving the accountability of both teachers and students.

Another attempt at reform is emulating the Boston Pilot Schools Network, a school reform initiative started in Boston in 1994 as a partnership between the Boston Teachers’ Union and the Boston Public Schools. This reform came around the same time Massachusetts enacted legislation that enabled the creation of charter schools. Pilot schools are supposed to offer more choices within the school district without having to go into charter school status (Center for Collaborative Schools, 2009).

School reform has been an educational mainstay and evolved to become an industry in itself since *A Nation at Risk*. As seen by the continual introduction of new reform programs, no one has the ultimate solution. The effectiveness of small schools is still unknown (Miner, 2005). Moreover, voucher and school choice results are based on questionable research validity (Lubienski, Weitzel, & Lubienski, 2009). The pilot schools results are complex and problematic (UMass Donahue Institute Research and Evaluation Group, 2009). Ravitch (2013b), contends



that the basis for many school reform initiatives are based on erroneous claims promoted by special interests who want to encourage the privatization of schools and weaken public education. This stance is echoed by De Bernard (2014).

However, with or without a reform program, some schools do improve, exit PI status, and consistently get beyond the AYP curve. Nonetheless, this pattern is not evident in the majority of the schools, and the issue may be a question of scalability (Elmore, 2004). Still, one cannot doubt that schools can succeed and continually improve.

### **Principal's Role**

Studying the role of the principal is pertinent to this study as it gives the context under which the inner experiences being studied occurred. The principal's role in schools is a complex topic. The following sections offer several points of view that make up a holistic view of this occupation.

**The principal is in the middle of the organization.** A usual method of understanding an occupation is to determine its position in its entire organizational chart. Educational institutions are usually highly bureaucratic entities. From the point of view of the school, the principal's position is at the top of the executive and organizational chart. However, if one considers the role from the school district's organizational chart the actual position of the school principal, in the hierarchical order, is in the middle. According to Fullan and Barth (1997):

Principals are middle managers. As such, they face a classical organizational dilemma. Rapport with teachers is critical as is satisfying those in the hierarchy. The endless supply of new policies, programs and procedures ensures that this dilemma remains active. The expectation that principals should be the leaders in the implementation of changes which they have had no hand in developing and may not understand is especially troublesome. This situation becomes all the more irritating when the "system" generates a constant stream of fragmented, multiple demands lacking coherence and follow-through. In fact, the job cannot be done on these terms. (p. 7)

To restate the preceding, the principal is, at the core of the position's authority, the representative of the school board and the district superintendent at a local school site. Such authority, however, depends much on the work and cooperation of the school constituents, particularly the teachers, to be effective (Glasman, 1995). Therefore, this is a position that relies on an external body for its authority and must work locally to meet its responsibilities. There are very few, if at all, interactions between the principal's subordinates and the district supervisors, and most every piece of information, demand or issue that flows up or down is mitigated and filtered by the principal.

Unfortunately, collisions occur between empowered educators attempting to live plotlines of incremental change and seemingly unresponsive and hostile organizations bogged down by social change and by state and national policies. In this work, administrators most obviously bore the brunt of these collisions. (Craig, 2009, p. 133)

The tension of holding this position must be obvious from any observer as the principal deals with demands that flow down from the district office and up from the local workers. Literally, figuratively and symbolically, the principal is caught in the middle.

**The changing role of the principal.** Coupled with the changing norms and culture of United States educational history is the changing role of the principal. From being the principal teacher of a school at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a scientific manager in the 1920s, a more business and industry oriented manager in the 1930s, leaders of democratic schools in the 1940s and 1950s, societal reformers in the 1970s, to instructional leaders in the 1980s and facilitators in the 1990s, the principal's role has been ever-changing in its emphasis and bent (Cunningham, 2000). "We have gone through the phases of principal 'as administrator' and principal as instructional leader. We have begun to entertain the concept of principal as transformative leader" (Fullan & Barth, 1997, p. 6).

Even with these changing roles of the school principal's position, "not until the dawn of the reform and accountability movements of the early 1980s that much empirical attention was paid to school leadership" (Copland, 2001, p. 530). Consider McCarty's (2007) statement: "As noted, the role and responsibilities of the principal have changed dramatically in the past 20 years since *A Nation at Risk* was published" (p. 4). Place McCarty's statement alongside Geocaris's (2004) statements:

The principals with over 20 years of experience recognized that at the beginning of their careers, the term "instructional leader" was not used but began to appear in the mid-1980s...[and] The growing demands for improving education increased as the nation began to tie economic decline to failure of schools. (p. 123)

There is a definite connection between *A Nation at Risk* and the 1980s call for school reform and the increased scrutiny and demands for change on what exactly the principal must do to run a successful school. The increasing concern over what exactly the students are achieving gave rise to looking at the instruction that the students are getting in schools. "The role of the principal transformed into the instructional leader as policymaker seeks to ensure that students are being provided with a rigorous, high-quality academic program" (McCarty, 2007, p. 5). The calls for revising or changing the role of principals have not ceased with the term "instructional leader." Fahey (2013) claims that no matter how daunting and complex the position is, principals must have the skills to teach both students and adults. "Demands and expectations have increased, with the position having evolved significantly even within the last decade" (McCarty, 2007, p. 4). Demands for transformative leadership (Fullan & Barth, 1997; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), moral leadership, and collaborative, participative or shared leadership (Buffum, 2008; Copland, 2001) have surfaced. As one role comes after another, principals once more change their behaviors to conform to the newest requirement. Even more complex and chaotic, principals are expected to adopt a new system of leadership practice as added characteristics without dropping the old set,

whether they conflict or not. The ever increasing sets and systems of expectations that principals are expected to meet lead us to the question of complexity and chaos management.

**The principal is on the edge of order and chaos.** The third and last perspective moves from the static (hierarchical position), the linear (progression of roles through time), to the chaotic and complex. Chaos Theory and Complexity Theory have much to contribute to the study of human organizations and complex adaptive systems. Schools are both human organizations and complex adaptive systems. As this study is about the inner leadership of principals, it would be useful to point out certain characteristics of schools being complex adaptive systems for it describes the nature of the principal's position and role of leadership.

**Detail complexity.** Senge (1990) distinguishes between two types of complexity: detail and dynamic. Detail complexity has to do with the number of variables, factors and points in any given task, situation or role. Even before the *A Nation at Risk* report, the detail complexity of the principal's daily work is daunting. Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, and Porter-Gehrie (1982) wrote:

Our observations indicate that the principal's workday is very busy and highly unpredictable. The principal's time is typically spent in many activities of very short duration, with considerable variety and sudden shifting of gears throughout the school day). The principalship, we found, is a peripatetic occupation, with much of the working day spent in locations other than the principal's office. (p. 689)

After a couple of decades of school reform initiatives, the role of the principal has become more complicated. "If prompted, veteran principals will tell you that the expectations associated with the 'principalship' have mushroomed over the past 20 years" (Copland, 2001, p. 529). Fullan and Barth (1997) describe:

There are two features of principals' work which present them with aggravation. One is the endless stream of meetings and new policy and program directives, already described. The other is a daily schedule which consists of continual interruptions.... Principals, above all, are "victims of the moment." Because of the immediacy and physical presence of interruptions, principals are constantly dragged into the crises of the moment. These include telephone calls, two students fighting, salespeople, parents wanting to see them,

calls from central office to check into something or to come to an urgent meeting, etc., etc. (pp. 36-37)

The detail demands on the principal's time, energy, and emotional resources are great. The principal is ultimately responsible for everything in the school: facilities, access, health and safety, budgets, purchasing, inventory, technology, food services, calendar and schedules, counseling, attendance tracking, textbooks, instructional programs, orientation, graduation, instructional supervision, staff evaluation, special education, curriculum, state mandated and local assessments, athletics, discipline, communications, activities, and many more (Copland, 2001; see Appendix D for samples of responsibilities). Larger schools usually have assistant principals and coordinators, who take on delegated responsibilities, comprising a layer in between the principal and the rest of staff and students. Most small schools have only one formally assigned administrator, the principal, to handle all these. The smaller size of the school does not reduce the number of basic responsibilities the principal is expected to oversee and perform. Even in larger sized schools with several administrators to share the burden, the principal is still ultimately responsible for all delegated areas. The recent demand for data-driven decision-making puts even more burden on the principal as they go through thousands of statistics and assessment data.

***Dynamic complexity.*** Dynamic complexity are “situations where cause and effect are subtle, and where the effects over time of interventions are not obvious. Conventional forecasting, planning, and analysis methods are not equipped to deal with dynamic complexity” (Senge, 1990, p. 71). Simply put, it means “there is a systematic distance or delay between cause and effect in space or time” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 59). If the situation were dynamically complex, a systems view would be the approach to take.

The following exemplify some dynamic complexity systems archetypes (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994) that principals contend with: (a) no sooner than the school improvement plan is written and the school year starts, needed changes to the plan have to be made; (b) the anticipated enrollment numbers did not materialize and the school loses two teaching positions that necessitated changing major pieces of the Master Schedule of Classes four weeks into the school year, causing much turmoil among staff and students; (c) academic interventions begun at the start of the school year to meet School Program Improvement guidelines will not bear its data until the same time next year, by which time it is too late to do anything for many of the intervention recipients, as they will be tested on different courses at this point; (d) increasing the intervention program by 50% with new funding resulted only in a 5% improvement; (e) a dirty look between two students was ignored by a teacher and resulted in a school-wide organized racial fight a few days later; both instigators were transferred to two different schools; months later, there is another racial fight, this time bigger and between the two schools; (f) a Proposition BB project to prevent erosion stalled and was shelved two principal terms ago due to lack of funding; the recent rains, finally, over time, caused enough erosion so that one of the bungalows is tilting dangerously onto the street; (g) an incentive program designed to promote higher scores ends up with the same students garnering the prizes time and time again while the intended targets actually showed lowered test scores; (h) because of numerous complaints and pressure from teachers, the department chair lowered the benchmarks resulting in no measurable improvement at the end of the term; and (i) in the spirit of competition, each department created an intervention plan to address failing students, resulting in conflict when they each vie for the same students' time after school to implement the plan (many students on the intervention roster have multiple course failures).

A few dynamically complex situations escalate to the point of national affairs. One need only recall the Columbine High School tragedy to see the Butterfly Effect and the Reinforcing Loop in action (Richmond, 2006). The Butterfly Effect describes how small perturbations, given enough enhancement and energy become large-scale disturbances. The Reinforcing Loop is the very mechanics of giving these minute fluctuations the supporting cycles of energy it requires to grow into major catastrophes.

***Social complexity.*** Scharmer (2007) and Kahane (2004) speak about two more types of complexities that bear on the leadership role of principals: social complexity and generative or emergent complexity. “Social complexity is a product of diverse interests and worldviews among stakeholders” (Scharmer, 2007, p. 61). A situation is socially complex when “the people involved see things very differently, and so, the problems become polarized and stuck” (Kahane, 2004, p. 2). This complexity reveals itself in the view of the principal as the middle manager. The principal has to address all the perspectives of the school stakeholders: the teachers, parents, students, community members, board members, higher-ups in the organizational chain, the superintendent, newspaper reporters, custodians, clerks, state educational officers etc. as they converge to advance their causes, biases, needs and wants on every decision made for the school. Each time a stakeholder lobbies to push through a certain initiative, a union issue, a new reading program, or a new grant, the other stakeholders push and pull at the situation in their particular directions, leaving the principal in the middle, to sort it all out, and come to a viable, but always controversial, decision.

***Generative complexity.*** Scharmer (2007) wrote, generative or emergent complexity, ...is characterized by disruptive change. Challenges of this type can usually be recognized by these three characteristics: (a) the solution to the problem is unknown, (b) the problem statement itself is still unfolding, (c) who the key stakeholders are is not clear. (p. 61)

A situation is generatively complex when it is “unfolding in unfamiliar and unpredictable ways” (Kahane, 2004, p. 2). It is futile to impose pre-made solutions to problems that have emergent complexity. It probably will not work because the situation is unprecedented. When the NCLB policy came into effect it became generatively complex for virtually all schools in the United States, for the very reasons just stated. There has never been a time when it was demanded that all of the students reach the proficient level. No one in the beginning knew who the players were and even as it was enacted, the players changed, API formulas were rewritten, safe harbors were drawn, and much debate and discussion went toward changing and reshaping the policy in the next round before it reached its final mandate. No one has solved the problem beyond a certain scale and everyone is still searching for the solution. At the school level, the responsibility for intervening and finding the solution to achieve this new challenge rests on the principal’s shoulders.

### **Inner Experience**

Many definitions exist for the term inner experience. Hurlburt and Heavey (2006) found the following definition as probably the most encompassing:

Some observers have preferred the terms “consciousness,” “conscious experience,” “experience,” or “in awareness” to the term “inner experience,” because “inner experience” seems to favor “inner” experiences such as thoughts and feelings over “outer” experiences such as visual perception and sensation. We believe that there is no best term; all have their advantages and drawbacks. Suffice it to say that by inner experience” we mean anything that emerges, or coalesces, or becomes a phenomenon, or is experienced, out of the welter of inner and outer stimuli that simultaneously impinge on a person. (p. 1)

The preceding may seem unwieldy and ambiguous, but the authors claim that in practice, the definition is practical and useful.

One must note that there is a “person” having the inner experience and that to communicate this inner experience to another, a medium must be used (language, movement,



artistic creation, etc.). For the purposes of this study, the researcher necessarily limits the inner experience to ones that are consciously accessed by the principal participant. Unconscious processes or those too minute to be noticed by the participant during the research process are, by their very nature, inaccessible to the methods utilized in this study.

Inner experience starts out private and can only be directly accessed by the person undergoing the event. A person accesses inner experience through the process of introspection or “looking within.” Critical introspection converts “unitive knowledge to phenomenal knowledge....The outcome is a body of knowledge that can be subjected to rational critique in its expression, but can be intuitively understood only in its allusion” (Hart, Nelson & Puhakka, 2000, p. 147).

**Introspection in Western psychology.** According to Danziger (1980), the use of introspection in Western psychology was conflicted at the end of the 19th century. Both methodological and interpretive differences drove deep schisms between theorists on each side. In terms of methodology, two different schools of thought regarding the nature of introspection: (a) one of German origins and the other, and (b) of British origins, perpetuated the argument. The conflict had to do with the conceptualization of mind and consciousness. The German perspective championed by Wundt (who is credited as one of the fathers of experimental psychology) held that these two concepts were distinct from each other. The British or Scottish school presumed they were one and the same. “The basis for Wundt’s initial discussion of the problem of introspection is provided by his insistence on the distinction between ‘self-observation’ (*Selbstbeobachtung*) and ‘internal perception’ (*innere Wahrnehmung*)” (Danziger, 1980, p. 244). The issue is a matter of translation as the distinctness of the two ideas is lost in English as they are both converted into the term “introspection.” This conversion becomes

problematic as the rising scientific paradigm of the era held that the process of observation should be distinct from the subject of observation. Another conflict, this time of interpretation, lay within the German school around the concept of “imageless thought” (Hurlburt, 1993). Although both sides of the issue collected the same observation that thought without an image does occur, the Titchenerians (followers of the psychologist, Titchener) insisted that there must be an image, even if the image was too ephemeral and vanished before the thought formed.

These unresolvable differences within the introspection camp regarding the phenomena of inner experience coupled with the rising practice and popularity of behaviorism resulted in the demise of “introspectionism,” (a term invented by the behaviorists to emphasize the dissimilarity between the two schools of psychology). Skinner and the behaviorists used the contrast between their unified behavioral psychology approach and the divided camp of introspection psychology approach to further the popularity and use of behaviorist approaches.

In the past 30 years, there has been a revitalization of the interest in inner experience and introspective psychology (Mihelic, 2010). Several new methods of investigating and studying inner experience have sprung. Currently, there are ongoing attempts to combine the study of inner experience and states with neuroscience such as the use of magnetic resonance imagery with inner experience exploration (Price & Barrell, 2012). “Today the topic of consciousness is not implicitly forbidden among scientists as it was in the twentieth century, and there is a burgeoning emergence of the science of consciousness” (p. 269).

**Methods of studying inner experience.** Several methods have been used to examine inner experience. The literature surveyed by the researcher sometimes has them listed with different names. Often, some processes of gathering inner experience have been grouped together inconsistently by different researchers and experts. For the purposes of clarity, the

researcher will cite the source with the most listed and differentiated. Then the researcher will add what was left out.

Eight methods of examining inner experience were identified by Parks and Hollon (1988), namely: (a) Thinking Aloud; (b) Private Speech; (c) Articulated Thoughts in Simulated Situations (ATSS); (d) Production Method; (e) Endorsement; (f) Thought Listing; (g) Event Recording; and (h) Thought Sampling. Not mentioned is the Diary Method (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), which can be regarded as a variant of the Thought listing and Event Recording Method. Interviews and historical realia such as private letters have also been used to examine inner experiences.

For the purposes of reviewing the literature on inner experience, the researcher has organized the above methods into two types: (a) in vivo methods and, (b) retrospective methods. In vivo methods are methods that explore inner experience while they are occurring, or immediately after they have occurred. Retrospective methods, as the term suggests, examine inner experiences that had occurred before the study began. Some methods above can be used both for in vivo and retrospective types of exploration. This study is focused on retrospective methods. However, the next section is a brief overview of in vivo methods to illuminate the contrast between the two groups and to present a valid argument for the use of the interview process in examining retrospective inner experience.

***In vivo methods.*** In vivo methods of examining inner experience have to do with gathering experiences as they occur or immediately thereafter. Looking at the preceding section and the list of methods, the following are in vivo methods of exploring inner experience:

(a) Thinking Aloud; (b) Private Speech; (c) Articulated Thoughts in Simulated Situations

(ATSS); (d) Production Method; (e) Endorsement; (f) Thought Listing; (g) Event Recording; and (h) Thought Sampling

*Thinking Aloud.* This method gained a foothold in the 1970s and has been used to ask subjects to articulate their ongoing thinking processes freely as they perform a certain task (Crutcher, 1994). There is no interaction between the researcher and the subject during the articulation. The researcher does not guide nor ask clarifying questions. Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1993) advanced the term “protocol analysis” to describe the non-reactive, ongoing stream of data coming from the subject as they verbalize their experience while undergoing through processes such as problem-solving or reading a story. The researcher records the data through note-taking, audio and or video. Think Aloud methods are used heavily in education to get information on the learning processes of students under specific conditions. An example is when Van Den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2001) put 9<sup>th</sup> graders through a Think Aloud process while writing essays. The study revealed that the process of writing is both “recursive and dynamic” (p. 381). Students who strategized about the subject and manner of their writing produced better work than those who started without planning. According to Parks and Hollon (1988) Thinking Aloud as a method of examining inner experience may have three disadvantages: (a) some subjects may not naturally take to articulating inner experiences as they occur, making the process stilted and less effective; (b) thoughts that occur simultaneously, or more complex details will not be verbalized; and (c) the subject may not report their thoughts accurately but rather articulate what they think the researcher wants to hear.

*Private speech method.* A very similar method to Thinking Aloud, Private Speech is used mainly with children and also asks the subject to articulate ongoing internal processes (Parks & Hollon, 1988), while undergoing a task such as reading. The researcher records the data through

note-taking, audio and or video. This process was first noted by child psychologists Vygotsky and Piaget when they observed children perform self-regulation and develop executive functioning while they speak to themselves in a barely audible voice (Winsler, Fernyhough, & Montero, 2009). Private Speech shares most of the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of Thinking Aloud.

*Articulated Thoughts in Simulated Situations (ATSS)*. Once more, very similar to Thinking Aloud, ATSS is a protocol analysis approach to exploring and studying participants' cognitive processes as they are verbalized. In this case, however, the situation is simulated (Davison, Robins, & Johnson, 1983). Subjects are asked to listen to a recorded tape of a provocative, naturalistic, yet simulated, situation and imagine being part of the situation while taking note of their inner experience. Immediately after the end of the simulation, subjects are asked to communicate their inner experience of the simulation. An example would be an exploration of a phobia. Instead of subjecting respondents to a live simulation of their fears, they would be asked to view a recording of a snake approaching (ophidiophobia), or a very busy, noisy public place (agoraphobia). Respondents are asked to take note of their inner experiences while viewing. Right after the simulation, researchers ask the respondents to communicate their inner experience during the just ended simulation. Sometimes, the subjects are asked to verbalize inner experience during the simulation, as in this study of adolescents that listened to a recorded situation where an anonymous peer bumps into them in the hallway while at school (DiLiberto, Katz, Beauchamp, & Howells, 2002). The students were asked to start verbalizing as they listened. Though gender differences were not noted in hostile attributions or anger expressions, students with a prior history of aggressive infractions expressed more aggressive intent and less control over their anger.

*Production method.* This method is very similar to the ATSS in most ways except for two factors: (a) the situation is simulated in reality and not presented through recorded audio or video, and (b) like the Think Aloud, the participant is asked to start verbalizing while the situation is being played (Parks & Hollon, 1988). An example is when the researcher and respondent engage in role-play. The respondent is asked to articulate their inner experience during the interchange right after the scene. Arguably, the Production Method is better than ATSS in the fact that the situation, using the Production Method, is played out in vivo, that is, in a created reality. However, the created reality remains contrived, and the participant is aware of the manipulation. The Production Method shares the advantages and disadvantages of the previous methods.

*Endorsement method.* The Endorsement method makes use of questionnaires, surveys, checklists and scales to measure inner experience (Parks & Hollon, 1988). This method does not solely belong to in vivo applications. It can be used for retrospective analysis as well. The questionnaires target a specific condition, a pathology or trait, (e.g., depression, addictions, extraversion, etc.). Respondents reveal in their replies whether they experienced a particular thought and if so, how often. Response forms items can be open-ended, limited to a response length, made up of Likert scales, multiple-choice items, or “fill in the blanks” (Glass & Arnkoff 1997).

This method offers several advantages. Ease of use and convenience top the list of advantages. The questionnaires are standardized. The scoring and evaluation also tend to be standardized and therefore easier to perform than with the other methods. Little training is needed to administer the forms. The forms can be used multiple times for multiple settings. This convenience makes it easier to use in large subject pool populations. Most endorsement methods

tend to be well validated because those that initially aren't well validated are easier to modify in order to develop questions with higher discriminant and criterion-related validity (Haaga, 1997).

Glass and Arnkoff (1997) note that there are distinct disadvantages to the Endorsement method. The first disadvantage lies in the standardization of the forms themselves. There is high possibility that the prototypical items may not match the respondent's unique inner experience. There can be selective memory applied especially with retrospective items. The rigidity of the items and choices creates demand characteristics where the respondents reappraise their own cognitive experience to better fit the questionnaire. There are traits and conditions for which questionnaires or surveys have not been developed. Questionnaires also typically reveal only a few summary scores. For the last two disadvantages, Production methods are better suited. Production methods are more versatile and yield richer data especially when it comes to the internal dialogue of participants.

*Thought listing method.* The Thought Listing method is an open response method for accessing and collecting mental contents (Cacioppo, Von Hippel, & Ernst, 1997). "By *mental contents* we mean the reportable consequences of a person's cognitive processes; these include an individual's thoughts, feelings, ideas, expectations, appraisals, and images" (p. 929). The Thought Listing technique is in vivo because it asks participants to list the thoughts that are in their stream of consciousness at the moment of assessment, not about thought contents from a past event. The event around which thoughts are collected may be a recorded dramatization, a role-play, a problem or any other stimulus around which thoughts needed to be assessed (Parks & Hollon, 1988). Phobias, high anxiety, romantic relationships, depression, career barriers, are but a sample of areas in which Thought Listing was used to understand the cognition of targeted client populations. Thought Listing has also been used in developing structured, self-report

scales such as the Social Interaction Self-Statement Test (SISST), a “30-item scale for the assessment of the cognitive correlates of heterosocial anxiety, with scale items worded in the form of self-statements” (Cacioppo et al., 1997, p. 935).

Limitations of the Thought Listing method include: (a) clients may consciously not list thoughts that are socially inappropriate, and (b) some client populations would do better with Think Alouds to describe inner cognition than the more task oriented Thought Listing (Perlotto, 2001).

*Event recording method.* In this method, thought collection is executed around specific events. The event may also be imagined as the case with ATSS (Parks & Hollon, 1988). Events used with the Event Recording method include smoking, binge eating, drinking, specific social events, life milestones, major achievements, and others. The type of event depends on what the purpose of the study is. What is important in this method is that the inner experience associated with or concurrent with the event is the focus of the exploration. The participant waits for the event to happen and then write down the thoughts and self-experience around it. The disadvantages of this method lie in the events themselves: (a) the event may not occur; and (b) the event may occur too frequently, resulting in time consuming and laborious recording. Other disadvantages common with other methods may also come into play such as: (a) demand characteristics when participants report what they think they should; and (b) researcher bias may come into play when choosing a contrived event (Perlotto, 2001).

*Thought sampling method.* Thought Sampling methods of gathering inner experience is also referred to as Experience Sampling. This type of exploring inner experience happens in situ, in other words, in the natural environment, where it occurs. Thus, all samples have, what is termed, ecological validity (Hormuth, 1986). Two types of thought sampling will be presented,



namely: (a) Experience Sampling Method (ESM), and (b) Descriptive Experience Sampling (DSM).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and his colleagues developed ESM as a way to be able to get information about the subjective experiences of individuals, including thinking, in their natural environment. As the developers claim, ESM is particularly used to gather: “a) frequency and patterning of daily activity, social interaction, and changes in location; b) frequency, intensity, and patterning of psychological states, i.e., emotional, cognitive, and conative dimensions of experience; c) frequency and patterning of thoughts, including quality and intensity of thought disturbance” (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987, p. 526). The process requires participants to wear a beeping device that is programmed to signal the participants during the course of their normal day. At the moment the participant perceives the signal, they are directed to examine their inner state at the moment prior to the signal and record the details on a structured form. The form is generally made up of approximately 40 self-report questions (e.g., short, open-ended questions; Likert-scale type questions; location questions; activity questions; etc.) including emotional states (e.g., general mood), cognitive processes, what they are thinking about, motivational states and how they perceive the current situation to be. The details on the form depend on what conditions the study is attempting to gather. The process is applicable to many applications such as mental disorders, urban relocation, interpersonal relationships, emotions across cultures, risk perception, happiness, among others (Perlotto, 2001).

A major disadvantage with using ESM is the nature of the forms the participants need to fill out. Well-constructed forms have to be inclusive if they are not miss important data, however, longer forms can result in high attrition or high omissions of participants and their responses. Even with longer forms, it is not possible to capture the myriad inner experience of participants

that are not asked for in the questions, thus eliminating rich data. Since the forms are given to the participants prior to the actual reporting, they cue the participants on what the researcher is trying to access and serve to filter out other responses that may actually be important (Stone, Kessler, & Haythornthwaite, 1991). Also, “some research designs involving ESM do not actually investigate the participant’s thinking, but rather measure the participant’s mood, quality of life, and physical concerns” (Gunter, 2011, p. 41).

Hurlburt and Sippelle (1978) first published a study using their modification of the Thought Sampling method and later named the method as Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES). Like ESM, an electronic device signals the participants. Unlike ESM, instead of responding to a form, the participants have a notebook and write down the inner experience they were undergoing before they perceived the signal. “DES differs from all other sampling methods in that it is descriptive, not quantitative” (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 192). In response to criticisms that it is not possible to record inner experience without contamination of the signal and the cognition that comes with it (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), Hurlburt and Heavey (2006) contend that with proper training, participants can answer the DES question with ease and with substantial accuracy. Hurlburt (2009) refers to the inner experience a participant is undergoing right before the signal as pristine experience: “Pristine experience is inner experience that is directly ongoing before it is disturbed by any attempt at apprehension” (Hurlburt, 2009, p. 156). Originally done over six phases (Hurlburt, 1990), the DES method has evolved and has been refined into four phases: (a) the signaling, sometimes as many as 30 a day; (b) recording the experience; (c) the researcher and participant, acting as co-researchers going over the sample narratives, refining for accuracy and integrity; and (d) iterations of the previous phases (Hurlburt, & Akhter, 2006). The iterations are important because: “This iterative training procedure is

integral to DES. The faithful apprehension of pristine experience requires that the subject acquire the skills to observe accurately, and that takes time: observation, feedback, new observations, more feedback, and so on” (p. 281).

***Retrospective methods.*** Some of the previously mentioned in vivo methods in the preceding section may also be utilized by researchers for examining inner experience with a retrospective situation, namely: (a) ATSS, (b) Production Method, and (c) Endorsement. In order to apply for a retrospective study, the methods must be applied with a past experience. The simulation in both the ATSS and Production Method must be modeled on a past event, and the questionnaire used in the Endorsement method would be querying about inner states regarding a past event.

In addition to the above, other retrospective methods of collecting inner experience would be through: (a) diaries; (b) historical artifacts (e.g., private letters, paintings, music, etc.); and (c) interviews.

***Diaries.*** Diary research methods are used to answer questions regarding “aggregates of experiences over time, temporal patterns of experiences, and the factors affecting changes in these experiences” (Bolger et al., 2003, p. 588). It is a very flexible research tool that can be used to measure hourly, daily and most periodic fluctuations pertinent to the research question. It can be used to measure within-person processes, between-person variability and the determinants and predictors of the variability in question. Diary entries can be at set intervals, upon a given signal (which are either random or fixed), or at the occurrence of an event. While the diary method is most often used to examine experiences as they unfold over time, the method can also be used to key in on a specific phenomena (Bolger et al., 2003).

*Historical artifacts.* Artifacts can be used to explore the inner experience of its creator.

However, as a caveat, Hodges (1969) wrote:

The consequence of all this is that the past is not only relative to the present, but the very being of the historical object is dependent upon its “being meant” or being presently experienced. The contemporary experience of the subject is here one with the object of historical understanding, and the entire past of human life is meaningful only in the present act of understanding it....The “inner” world of the historical object is presently supplied to the past by the historian....The “inner” life of present understanding is transposed into the “dead” artifacts of the past; indeed, we understand by means of the transfer of our inner experience to a dead outer factuality. (p. 34)

An example of how diaries and private letters were used to examine inner experience was in Bühler’s (1935) study of the curve of life. The study investigated whether there was a complementary career and spiritual curve to the biological curve observed in life trajectories. Inner experiences such as, “expressions of well-being, complaint, hope, desire or resignation, ambition, or plans” (p. 405), were collected and tracked for each 300 cases and then were compared with others for common themes and patterns.

*Interviews.* Interviews have long been a qualitative research tool to gather data from individual respondents or number of participants (focus groups). This method ranges from the highly structured format, with a set of standardized questions to the open-ended format (Creswell, 2009). The interview method as a phenomenological data collection method is apt for retrospective inner experience exploration because the researcher is unable to gather inner experience from a past event without querying the respondent (Merriam, 1998). “It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72).

***Issues with introspection in retrospective inner experience examination.*** As mentioned earlier in this chapter, introspection is the process by which a person can access inner experience. Introspection as a method, however, has many issues as pointed out by several critics.

*The separation between stimulus and report on experience.* The effect of stimulus perception error labeled as inattentional blindness or change blindness is well documented. An example is Simons and Chalbris's (1999) experiment where 46% of respondents did not perceive the person in a full gorilla suit walking in the midst of a group of ball players when the respondents were prompted to concentrate on the passing of the ball. The issue here is the validity of introspective reports for events that have happened retrospectively. If a typical respondent cannot even be counted on to fully describe the outer event stimuli, how valid is their description of inner experience?

*The observer and observed are one and the same.* The fact that in the process of introspection involves a respondent observing the self is seen as problematic (Petitmengin, 2009). Ten Hoor (1932) likens this to an infinity mirror where the self, observing the self, splits into two more selves to observe the self, observing the self. "Moreover, suppose a particularly persistent introspectionist should desire to introspect the reporting or secondary series, would he not have to assume a third series, and so on, ad infinitum and ad nauseam?" (p. 324).

*The passage of time alters memory.* Sully (1881) insisted, "It may be contended with some show of reason that, strictly speaking, all introspection is retrospection" (p. 3). Memory of past events are usually not accurate and prone to errors. Dennett (1991) describes two ways the mind alters history: (a) the Orwellian process, in which the person regarding the memory changes mind about the event as the persons learns more details about the event itself; and (b) the Stalinesque process, in which the memory of the event is not passed on to conscious attention until called upon to do so and assembled right then from available evidence. He further states that it is hard to distinguish one process from the other as it occurs in the infinitesimal measure of brain processes.

*Preconceptions about an experience distorts the experience.* There are at least two ways in which preconceptions can affect a person's experience: (a) the preconceptions and expectations take the place of the experience itself, and (b) the respondent may ignore experience that does not match up with expectations or preconceptions (Petitmengin, 2009).

*Language limitations and distortion.* Many inner experiences are difficult to put into words. The fact that language is used to communicate the experience limits the communication of that experience to the language capacity of the respondent to describe the particular experience being explored. "We almost completely lack the concepts and competencies that would allow us to parse, think about, talk about, and remember the complexity of experience" (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 51).

*Lack of access to our cognitive processes.* Nisbett and Wilson (1977) conclude from their experiments and from other researchers' work that "we may have no direct access to higher order mental processes such as those involved in evaluation, judgment, problem solving, and the initiation of behavior" (p. 232). They claim that the mind wanders without knowing it wanders, that most behaviors are enacted without any reflective consciousness, and that we are able to recognize the result of our decisions without knowing how we got there.

*Lack of means to verify results.* Many critics of introspection point out that the results of introspection are non-repeatable as the experience that produced them is unique and past. Critics also point out that the very private nature of introspection makes it inaccessible for verification from a third person. Both preceding points have been cited and brought to bear against the scientific validity of introspection and the study of inner experience itself (Petitmengin, 2009).

*The case for introspection and examining inner experience.* Most of the issues mentioned in the preceding section are indicative of a lack of proper perspective when

considering introspection and its use in accessing inner experience. They reveal a persistent behaviorist, third-person objective bias that does not apply to the process and exploration of introspection and inner experience (Petitmengin, 2009). This section addresses the preceding section's issues with the study of inner experience.

*Stimulus error.* The first issue brought to bear on introspection and accessing inner experience contend that respondents are not capable of being fully faithful to the details of their experience. If the researcher was not even aware that the person in the gorilla suit wandered into the scene, how can the researcher count on the rest of the scene's reportage? In actuality, the details around which the inner experience occurred are not the purpose of the exploration. The purpose is the experience itself of whatever details were perceived. It is almost irrelevant that the person in the gorilla suit emerged. It wasn't perceived. Therefore any inner experience could not have addressed it. What is important is "the inner world of conscious experience," and this field has not been studied enough (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007).

*Self-splitting.* According to Petitmengin and Bitbol (2009) the most recent descriptions of using introspection in exploring inner experience reveals that the process is not one of self-splitting in order to distance oneself and objectify the experience but "on the contrary in reducing the distance, in coming closer to it. It is not a matter of splitting into two in order to look at one's experience, but of coming to contact with it" (p. 378). According to Zahavi (2006) Heidegger refers to the process of the phenomenological understanding of life as neither a grasping nor a freezing of the life stream but of going along with it. The process requires an open and receptive disposition. Instead of focusing on a single instant, the attention is panoramic and allows for subtle changes to be perceived.

*Distortions through time and lack of access to cognitive processes.* Petitmenger and Bitbol (2009) contend that with the proper evocation, much of the pre-reflective dimension of experience can be accessed. This state of evocation has some very specific properties that bring up both the synchronic and diachronic elements of inner experience. They proved this by modifying a highly cited experiment by Nisbett and Wilson (1977). The original experiment concluded that respondents had little or no access to their cognitive processes, more specifically, their decision making process. The original experiment queried the respondents on their behavior after manipulating the cause of their behavior. Only 33% of the respondents detected the manipulation. The modification (Petitmengin, Remillieux, Cahour, & Carter-Thomas, 2013) involved using an evocation protocol:

Whenever the subject contributes new information, the interviewer helps him to deepen his description, through questions that draw his attention to the different—sensorial, attentional and emotional—dimensions of his experience at that particular moment, thus leading him to give a synchronic description, again without inducing the content of the responses. For example, if the subject says “I started by looking at her eyes,” the interviewer draws his attention to his mode of observation: “At that time, when you are looking at her eyes, how do you do this? Are you only focused on the eyes, or do you perhaps see the whole face?” Throughout the interview, it is the question “how” which guides the subject towards the description of more and more detailed elements of his evoked choice process. (p. 658)

The result of the experiment with the added modification showed that over 80% of the respondents detected the manipulation. Acknowledging that the original experiences of the respondents cannot be replicated, and some time has passed, they contend these can still be accessed for exploration with proper evocation.

*Distortions through preconceptions about an experience.* Phenomenological reduction, the practice of bracketing, is a standard procedure for researchers performing phenomenological studies (Van Manen, 2011). This practice prevents the researcher’s preconceptions and theories from interfering with the access of the concrete experiences of the information encountered in



the study. In order to prevent the respondent's preconception distortions of inner experience, the researcher must also guide and assist the respondent through the same process of letting go of the conceptual level and step into the level of concrete experience. The experience is looser, receptive, and often the respondent is surprised at new discoveries that had not been conceptualized before (Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel, 2007). Therefore, the proper use of bracketing and guiding the respondent to release preconceptions prevents distortion of inner experience.

*Limitations and distortions introduced by language.* Petitmengin and Bitbol (2009) contend that this argument has no meaning. Language is not expected to take the place of inner experience but to indicate it, to contact it, to amplify and unfold it. The researcher should not seek an exact correspondence of language to experience. The researcher needs to explore how the respondent uses language to become aware of inner experience. The researcher's task is to assist in the unfolding of inner experience through language as a process and not as a substitute. This is akin to the stimulus error argument. The point of the exploration is primarily the experience and not in the objects that attend to it.

*Verification of inner experience.* Claiming that first person experiences are non-repeatable and therefore invalid (as they are not accessible for verification) is moot (Petitmengin & Bitbol, 2009). One can claim the same for every objective scientific experiment. All occur at a point in time that is singular and non-reproducible. The important thing is "a given type of event is reproducible, as well as the corresponding measurements, if the researcher knows the operating mode enabling him to make these measurements" (p. 391). It is not the event but the type of event that matters in issues of reproducibility.

In the claim that inner experiences are private and therefore not verifiable, Piccinini (2009) argued that data gathered from first-person reports are as public as any scientific data can

be. Instead of machines serving as instruments reporting the data, the instruments in subjective first-person reports are the subjects themselves. Many accepted behavioral experiments claiming to be rigorously scientific and verifiable depend on first person reports. An example would be experiments on color perception or blindness where a respondent communicates the colors perceived. No one but the respondents can know the veracity of their own reports. They could be color blind and guessing at the color perceived. The respondents play the role of self-measuring instruments:

Gathering data from first-person reports becomes a special case of gathering data from first-person behaviors, which becomes a special case of gathering data from a measuring instrument. The resulting data are no less public than data obtained from other measurement instruments. First-person data can be fruitfully seen as the outcome of a process of self-measurement. When seen in this light, the problems of purported privacy and lack of public validation of first-person data evaporate. Data from measuring instruments, including first-person data, are public, and the degree to which they are valid can be established by public methods. (p. 14)

***Some applications of inner experience research.*** More and more research is being done on inner experience across many interests and purpose (Mihelic, 2010). Both in vivo and retrospective methods are applied. Inner experience research has been done on adolescents (Akhter, 2008; Freeman, Csikszentmihalyi, & Larson, 1986) and older individuals (Seibert, 2009). In one of the adolescent studies that took two batches of inner experience samples (from the same group of adolescents) spaced two years apart (the former in vivo and the latter a retrospective sample on the first in vivo sample timeframe), Freeman and his co-researchers (1986) found that developmental growth can be seen in the adolescent respondents' significantly more positive contextualization of their inner experiences two years earlier. Akhter's (2008) adolescent study revealed the formative development of inner awareness in adolescents as manifested in the: (a) wide disparity in the complexity of inner experience across subjects, and (b) a surprisingly low report of inner emotions, even though they frequently, outwardly,

exhibited emotional behavior. Seibert's (2009) study on older individuals found that cognitive impairment also resulted in an increased inability to access inner experience.

Inner experience research has been performed to understand certain pathology like depression. Gunter's (2011) study on depression revealed that though the severely depressed group reported more negative inner experience, it was not statistically significant over the non-depressed control group. This led Gunter (2011) to suggest the idea that the research procedures, asking the severely depressed individuals to access inner experience, may have a healing effect: "Although we cannot know for sure why the self-reported depressive symptomatology of these participants declined so rapidly, the two most likely explanations are something about the nature of the sample or something about the nature of the procedure" (p. 82).

Inner experience research has been used to clarify, corroborate, and validate certain known conditions. An example would be left-handedness. Left-handedness has been connected to a host of physical and psychological issues. In Mizrachi's (2010) research on the inner experience of left-handed subjects found many of the known issues that deal with a different brain hemisphere emphasis from the majority of the population. Some of these include: (a) higher sensory awareness, (b) more emotionally valenced thoughts, and (c) support for right-hemispheric engagement in utilizing language.

*Organizational transformation and inner leadership capacity.* A closer application of inner experience research to the subject of this dissertation is the issue of learning, decision-making, choices, and self-transformation. As stated in Chapter I, Halal (1998) stated that instead of focusing on skills, behavior and styles of leadership, what needs to be explored and studied are the inner realities of leaders. He states that these inner realities are the sources of the decisions, and the outward manifestations of their leadership. In terms of transforming failing

organizations, Scharmer (2000) quoted William O'Brien (an expert in leading change), as stating that the favorable outcome of an organizational intervention depends on the highly intangible internal condition of the leader leading the intervention. Leadership development must then focus on developing inner capacities and capabilities. Inner experience research has much to offer this effort.

A study (Linden, 2005) on the inner experience of addicted mothers who gave up their children to be raised by others explored the harrowing inner realities of their yearning, torments and choices. The study was important in that it laid out the inner struggles each mother went through "This study was an important step in humanizing the struggle of mothers who are addicted" (p. 2).

A study on the inner experience of mothering (Clipsham, 2006), showed the dynamic interior processes mothers go through as they internally take in their children's actions. The succeeding internal weighing, coordinating and dialoguing was revealed to manifest into development and change in their outward behavior towards their children, leading to more effective and responsive actions. The process was shown to spiral and be cyclical, with each iterative round leading to more effective care.

A study on how inner experience determines career decision choices (Gouse, 2011) is an example of how to use an evocation tool (Petitmingen et al., 2013) in an interview. Gouse (2011) used Branson's (2007a, 2007b) "model of the self" visual display and some reflection tools to be used by the respondents in between two structured interviews. The model of the self is made up of six concentric, nested circles. The smallest circle at the center is labeled, "Self-concept." The next larger circle encompassing the self-concept circle is labeled, "Self-esteem." The next larger is labeled, "Motives," then, "Values," then, "Beliefs." The preceding five circles symbolized the

inner self. The largest circle encompassing the previous five is the Outer self. This circle is labeled, “Behavior.” This is drawn with a different border. The study concludes that the self-reflection experience using the reflection tools had a positive impact in helping respondents (a) access their inner selves, (b) be more authentic in their actions and decisions, and (c) be empowered in making career decisions that is right for them.

Branson (2007a) studied how the development of self-reflection practices affected the leadership practices of primary school principals in Australia. He concludes:

This research adds support to the view that authentic leaders have to be able to fully understand their inner Self before they can really look outward and accurately interpret their reality. They need to be able to engage in a self-reflective process in order to cultivate self-awareness and self-knowledge so as to discover their inner world and, thereby, reach greater authenticity as a leader. To be able to develop authentic leadership, the leader needs to reflect inwardly, to become aware of the influence of their self-concept on all of the inner dimensions of their Self and, thereby, become more aware of the tacit “truths” that they take for granted with respect to the motives, values and beliefs that govern what they choose to do as a leader. (p. 238)

Another study on self-transformation through the development of inner capacities (Kies, 2013) concluded that in time, work on inner awareness, experiences and processes is an important tool in “individual, community and global well-being” (p. iii).

### **Organizational and Leadership Theories**

Organization and leadership theories have been substantially altered by the 21st Century. Drucker, in 1998, came forth with the statement that “much of what is now taught and believed about the practice of management is either wrong or seriously out of date” (p. 152). He described the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a period of deep transition that he believes can be more extreme than the changes that occurred in the industrial revolution, Great Depression, or World War II (Drucker, 1999).

It is no longer enough to describe organizations simply as Newtonian, hierarchical entities. The current view has expanded from the preceding because in a highly connected, interdependent world, the rules for isolated, tightly regulated organizations, no longer apply as effectively (Eoyang, 1997). Seeing our organizations from a mechanical, “parts-make-a-whole,” “head-directs-the-body,” stance will not address most of the issues that beleaguer our organizations: they are not machines. They work and behave like living systems (Pascale, Millemann, & Gioja, 2000). Hock (1999) describes this shift in reality and perception well in the following quote:

The Industrial Age, hierarchical, command-and-control institutions that, over the past four hundred years, have grown to dominate our commercial, political, and social lives are increasingly irrelevant in the face of the exploding diversity and complexity of society worldwide. They are failing, not only in the sense of collapse, but in the more common and pernicious form-organizations increasingly unable to achieve the purpose for which they were created, yet continuing to expand as they devour resources, decimate the earth, and demean humanity. (pp. 5-6)

Hock (1999, 2005) calls the new organization, the “chaordic organization.” As such, the fields of systems thinking, chaos, and complexity theories, expanded to include complex adaptive systems, not from nature, but from human organizations, as is discussed in detail in the rest of this chapter.

**Systems thinking.** In 1990, Peter Senge popularized the naming of human organizations as “learning organizations” (p. 3). His work is important in this study not only for applying the concept of learning organizations to schools (Senge, 2000), but also in making the connection between the inner worlds of leaders and for that matter, followers in any organization and the external world of results and measurable success. As one of the five disciplines of learning organizations Senge (1990) outlined, Systems Thinking is the discipline he contends to be the integrating discipline without which the other four disciplines, namely: (a) Personal Mastery, (b) Mental Models, (c) Building Shared Vision, and (d) Team Learning, will not work to an

effective degree. The relationship between the disciplines is symbiotic, meaning their practice and concepts are intimately intertwined and dependent on each other. His work proved seminal in that many of the major work on organizations and leadership that followed could be pinned on one of the five disciplines.

***Personal mastery.*** This learning organization discipline most directly addresses the leadership, if not the inner leadership, of any nominal organizational head. Though an organization does learn, it does so “only through individuals who learn” (Senge, 1990, p. 139). This discipline goes beyond skills, traits, character, behaviors, but actually involves the inner experience of a leader. Spiritual development is necessary as it contributes to Personal Mastery as a creative endeavor in shaping one’s life (Senge, 1990), making individuals the architects of their experience rather than victims of circumstance.

Senge (1990) further articulates that two processes are at the root of personal mastery: (a) Continually clarifying what is important to oneself, and (b) Continually learning how to see current reality more clearly. These two create what he calls “creative tension” (p. 142) as the individual sees the disparity between current reality and what is desired or truly important. The wider the gap, the greater the tension there is. Individuals with well developed Personal Mastery sees current reality as a tool and a partner in creating what is important, a value they see meshed in their lives as a mission, a calling, a personal vision (Senge, 1990).

Personal Mastery requires the meshing of intuition and reason: “Now numerous studies show that experienced managers and leaders rely heavily on intuition—that they do not figure out complex problems entirely rationally” (Senge, 1990, p. 168). Senge continues to make a case that intuition is becoming more important in an increasingly complex world where many issues do not lend themselves solutions by pursuing a linear process through reason alone. He clarifies,

however, that reason and intuition are not oppositional tools, rather, they should complement and support each other. Finally, Senge (1990) adds that a high level of Personal Mastery includes: (a) Seeing our connectedness to the world; (b) Compassion; and (c) Commitment to the whole.

Leaders must appreciate more and more that one's individual actions are always interdependent on the context in which it takes place. Each influences the other. Becoming more aware of this connectedness should lead to more compassion as we participate in relationships we have and reduce attitudes of blame and guilt. This enables all individuals to sense that we are all part of something greater than ourselves. This results in a greater sense of responsibility and awareness.

***Mental models.*** Another learning organization discipline that relates directly to inner experience and how it interacts with and affects outward organizational behavior are Mental Models. Largely unconscious, Mental Models are “deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action” (Senge, 1990, p. 8). This has a direct connection to how an inner experience of an outward event influences a person's outward behavior in response. It makes up for governing values that turn into an arsenal of strategies and actions. Many issues in organizations can be traced to the unconscious reenactment of these worldviews or master programs. Chris Argyris (1986) asserts that the cause is skilled incompetence, that “people have to learn new skills—to ask the question behind the question” (p. 79). He further contends that organizations engage in systemic defensive routines and multiple layers of cover ups that for the most part hide the true cause of the problem and are “undiscussable” (p. 79). The organization does not get to the real issue unless something occurs that blow things open and becomes impossible to conceal.

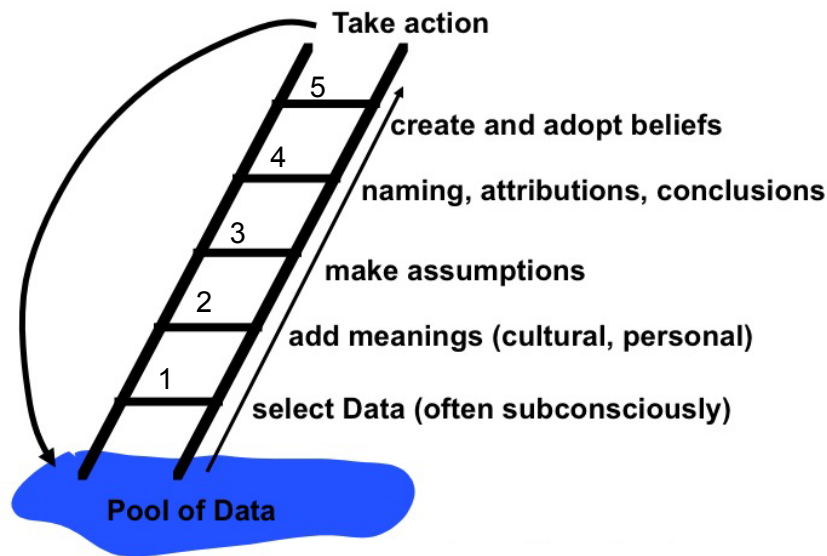
Skilled incompetence has roots in “Theory in Use” (Argyris, 1990) a master program that individuals cling to and “instructs individuals to seek to be in unilateral control, to win, and not



to upset people. It recommends action strategies that are primarily selling and persuading and, when necessary, strategies that save their own and others' face" (p. 13). The point is to advocate, to maximize winning, and to minimize losing, to suppress negative feelings, and to behave in what one considers rational. However, this leads to a cover up and a white lie, as one cannot be explicit regarding the intent of this theory in use. It leads to a paradoxical situation where the recipient must tacitly agree to being the dependent party which goes against the theory in use in the first place as it takes away the effectiveness of both parties: "If you were to act toward me in the way I act toward you, then I could not act in the way I intend. My theory of effectiveness will ultimately make me and other people ineffective" (p. 13). Being enacted automatically and spontaneously in organizations makes this a skill, and the incompetence it produces, a skilled incompetence. The message is basically inconsistent; however, people act as if it were not. To remain true to its mixed ambiguity, it becomes an "undiscussable" (Argyris, 1986, p. 5) item since no one points out the message's discrepancy. Soon enough, even undiscussables cannot be discussed and therefore creates layers of undiscussable items. This makes for an unmanageable situation and the people caught up in it develop cynical and pessimistic attitudes.

The core machination of this process can be brought to surface by using the "left-hand column exercise" (Senge, 1990, p. 195). This is a reflective tool that brings up inner hidden assumptions that influence the way a leader or a participant handles a situation to the surface. This exercise is performed by having a transcript of the verbal transaction on the right hand column of a paper divided into two columns. On the left hand side, one records the assumptions and beliefs that lead to one's response or handling of the situation as it occurred. It is revealing to note down why the particular response was chosen rather than another one. The hidden assumptions, also called "theory-in-use," (Argyris, 2000, p. 4) are dramatically revealed as

participants see themselves dance around the difficult issues and conceal their real thoughts and motives, and externally cloak and couch them in strategies designed to avoid open conflict, making the entire transaction ineffective in dealing with and solving the difficult and real issues. At the same time, in order to avoid shutting down the process of truly coming to an effective action regarding any difficult organizational issue, the assumptions on the left hand column must be at least acknowledged and its source, traced. Tracing to the source can be achieved by using the ladder of inference, “a hypothetical model of how individuals make inferences” (Argyris, 1993, p. 57). The ladder of inference is depicted in Figure 1.

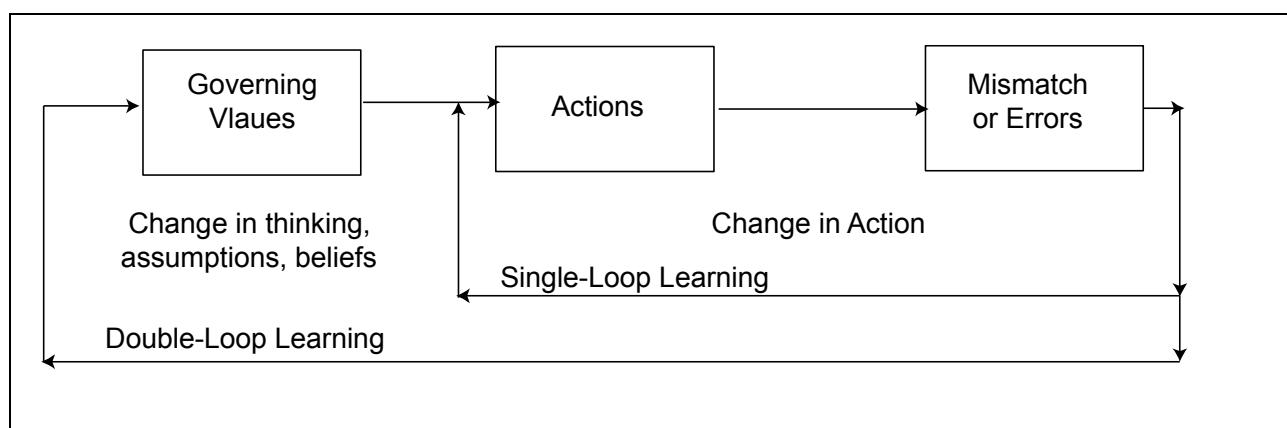


*Figure 1.* The ladder of inference.

Figure 1 pictorializes the usually hidden process of how theories-in-use on the left-hand column influence and even determine the actual actions a leader takes (as written on the right-hand column). Argyris (1993), states that there is always a pool of observable data available to anyone at any given point in time. Individuals select data from this pool, often subconsciously, and step up to the first rung of the ladder. Going up to rung two, they then add their own personal

meanings, often embedded in their own culture, regarding the data they select. Then rung three follows as they quickly make assumptions and conclusions. The next rung occurs when the individuals impose attributions and conclusions about the other person or situation from their assumptions. The last rung before going off the ladder is creating and adopting beliefs leading to an action (or reaction). This action then joins the pool of observable data and becomes a key component in how the transaction progresses. This going up and off the ladder of inference occurs rapidly and without check, forming into a self-reinforcing and referencing world view, resulting in actions that perpetuate the cycle (also known as single-loop learning) until someone uses the ladder diagram to inquire into the assumptions and reveal the process, leading into a “question behind the question” and the possibility for double-loop learning.

Double-loop learning goes beyond single-loop in which the very basic governing values of the process are questioned. It invites the question: Why? Unlike single-loop learning where decisions are reactive and automatic, double-loop learning uses reflection in the very process itself to question into whether the relationship between stimulus and response is a necessary one (Argyris, 1990). The process goes on very much like Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* Single and double-loop learning.

The preceding characterizes what is meant by mental models and the discipline it takes to change organizational thinking so as to learn new theories in use and create a more effective and successful organization.

Applying this discipline to schools, it becomes obligatory to think about what mental models hold back the stakeholders? This speaks to the inner leadership of the principal and certainly influences the inner experience of leading a school from failure to success. What beliefs and assumptions are at work? How are they surfaced, much less examined? Is there a practice of double loop learning? Sarason (1990) contends that until educational stakeholders go beyond the superficial conceptualizations and become aware of the unseen values, attitudes about power, knowledge, and privilege, resulting in fundamental governing values shifts in how they think and interact, including how they explore new ideas, then all the reorganizing, fads and strategies will have marginal, if any, effect. In fact (as is described in systems thinking archetypes) these fixes, rooted in superficial reactive understandings, well intentioned or not, have made problems worse.

***Building shared vision.*** In order to clarify what shared vision is, from the many definitions available, this study presents the following quote to specify how the concept is regarded in this research paper as defined by Senge (1990):

A shared vision is not an idea. It is not even an important idea such as freedom. It is, rather, a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. It may be inspired by an idea, but once it goes further—if it is compelling enough to acquire the support of more than one person—then it is no longer an abstraction. It is palpable. People begin to see it as if it exists. Few, if any, forces in human affairs are as powerful as shared vision. At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, “What do we want to create?” (p. 206)

Senge (1990) further explains that the learning organization discipline of Shared Vision emerges from the personal visions of the members of the organization. This speaks directly to inner leadership. Being “personal” does not mean only self-interest, as the personal visions

individuals have necessarily include the family, community, and even the world. This being the case, Senge cautions against handing down the vision from the top of the organizational chart down to the base level of line workers. It will not work. Even if these “shared visions” are products from any sort of institutionalized planning process, they will still be seen as marching orders. Individuals may look like they are acting according to the vision and may even see the benefits of the vision but their heart is not in it. They are not enrolled as if they made the effort to sign up and be committed to the vision. Rather, they are “sold” and persuaded to follow along and comply through supervisory or peer pressure. This is because there is a real difference between commitment and compliance. However, organizations have gotten so used to compliance and had not seen real commitment in such a long time that certain compliant behaviors are mistaken for actual commitment (Senge, 1990).

Fullan (1993) supports this and warns that though shared visions are essential to a learning organization’s success, rushing to it can debilitate rather than aid. This is because the process of merging personal vision with shared vision takes time and requires reflective experience and an open-ended process to be plausible. It must be ongoing and never ending.

Though a vision may take root and actually evolve into a shared status and commitment, it is not sustained because of certain dynamics described in a systems archetype called “limits to growth” (Senge et al., 1994). Factors that become limiters include: polarization due to diversity, dissipation due to lack of time and energy, discouragement due to the disparity of the vision of and current reality, and loss of connection amongst the individuals in the organization.

Collins (2001) reiterates that what the members of the organization is passionate about should consistently and constantly correlate with the core values and purpose of the organization in order for the organization not only to transform into greatness but to last in its greatness.

DuFour and Eaker (1998) noted that one of the characteristics of professional learning communities such as schools, are shared mission, vision and values. At the same time, what is such a simple question as “What do we want to create together?” may be fraught with more complications beyond the first identification of the “what?” Calling it the second building block of professional communities, DuFour and Eaker (1998) state that “the development of shared vision has been particularly troublesome for educators. Reformers and critics of education have bombarded teachers and principals with countless (and often conflicting) images and ideas about how schools should function and the purposes they should serve” (p. 63). This results in vision statements full of sweeping generalities as educators try to respond to all these varied expectations of what schools should be. The authors contend that effective vision statements are: (a) based on relevant background information and research; (b) desirable, feasible, and credible; (c) focused on clarifying direction and priorities; (d) easy to communicate; and (e) developed through a collective process that promotes widespread ownership (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

***Team learning.*** Team learning is defined by Senge (1990) as:

The process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members, truly desire. It builds on the discipline of developing shared vision. It also builds on personal mastery, for talented teams are made up of talented individuals. But shared vision and talent are not enough. (p. 236)

Senge (1990) further described three critical dimensions for learning organization discipline of Team Learning: (a) Thinking insightfully about complex issues; (b) Innovative, coordinated action; and (c) Role of team members on other teams. In order to fulfill these dimensions, teams must engage in two complementary functions: Dialogue and Discussion. Dialogue and discussion, as can be seen by the next subsection are not simple concepts.

*Dialogue and discussion.* Physicist David Bohm (1981) applied quantum theory to human consciousness and experience and described a holistic view of nature: that the universe,

even though at various scales and measurements is seemingly made up of separate, divisible objects, is an indivisible whole and that the observing instrument and the observed object participate in each other in an irreducible way and are inextricably bound. Bohm and Factor (1985) described separate and manifest reality as being enfolded in each other to create a deeper implicate order where everything is woven together in wholeness:

Modern physics has already shown that matter and energy are two aspects of one reality. Energy acts within matter, and even further, energy and matter can be converted into each other, as we all know. From the point of view of the implicate order, energy and matter are imbued with a certain kind of significance which gives form to their over-all activity and to the matter which arises in that activity. The energy of mind and of the material substance of the brain are also imbued with a kind of significance which gives form to their over-all activity. So quite generally, energy enfolds matter and meaning, while matter enfolds energy and meaning. (p. 90)

This speaks to this study in inner leadership where the inner experience is participatory in outer experience and results. The meaning and energy of the inner experience is inextricably enfolded in the resulting outward, palpable, and measurable results. Much of the energy and meaning in our inner experiences can only be made visible through the medium of dialogue and discussion. Using dialogue and discussion organizational leaders and members can access the relationship between meaning and the resulting outward actions. Dialogue and discussion, however, are two very different processes.

Bohm and Nichol (1996) stated that the root of the word, dialogue, is a combination of dia, meaning, through, (not two) and logos, meaning, the word. There is no requirement to have two participants in a dialogue. Inner voice or talk, an aspect of inner leadership, is dialogue. Beyond the intrapersonal and a two-person interchange, a team can also have dialogue. Bohm and Nichol wrote:

The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which many not have been in the starting point at all. It's something

creative. And this shared meaning is the “glue” or “cement” that holds people and societies together. (p. 29)

Bohm and Nichol (1996) distinguished dialogue from discussion. The root of the word discussion is the same as concussion and percussion both of which means to clash. Division into parts is the result. Discussion emphasizes analysis and a clash of opposing points of view. Though both are needed, people are much more prone to engage in discussion than dialogue. Dialogue aspires to wholeness while discussion breaks down into parts. Other than the indivisibility of everything, Bohm and Factor (1985) recognizes the dual nature of a reality that can behave either as a particle or as energy and motion. “I could summarize this in the principle: The wholeness of the whole and the parts. And the opposite principle: The partiality of the parts and the whole. Both principles have their place” (p. 22). Bohm goes on to emphasize however, that the wholeness of the whole, which is the end product of dialogue, is the more important of the two. Collective learning that happens in dialogue is not only important but vital to realize the potentials of human intelligence. This is because it exposes hidden conflicts in our thoughts.

Senge (1990) recalls Bohm’s suggestion that the purpose of dialogue is to reveal the incoherence in our thoughts. An incoherence which is the result of the following dynamic process: (a) Thought denies that it is participative; (b) Thought stops tracking reality and goes on interminably like a program; and (c) “Thought establishes its own standard of reference for fixing problems, problems which it contributed to creating in the first place” (p. 241).

An example of this dynamic is prejudice. When a person begins to accept the stereotype of a particular group, that thought becomes an active performer participating in shaping how this person acts toward members of this stereotype. Corollary to this, the quality of their interaction influences, if not determines, the stereotyped person’s behavior. The person with the prejudice cannot see how his prejudice influences his perceptions and actions. This is so that to be able to



continue to exist (going on and on), the prejudiced thought must be hidden to its holder and pretends that it is not playing a role. The stereotyped person, perceiving this negative attitude, is more prone to act in a way that validates the prejudice, creating a vicious cycle. Even if the stereotyped person acts in a way contrary to the prejudicial characteristic, it is usually seen as an exception rather than a rule so as to continue holding on to the prejudicial thought. In order for this cycle to stop, the incoherent thought (prejudice) must be surfaced and seen for what it is, a participating, active agent that perpetuates itself. Dialogue enables us to see the representative and participatory nature of our thoughts. Senge (1990) noted that Bohm identifies three necessary basic conditions for dialogue: (a) All participants must “suspend” their assumptions; (b) All participants must regard one another as colleagues; and (c) There must be a facilitator whose primary function is to pay attention to the context of the dialogue.

Yankelovich (1999), another authority on dialogue and team learning, distinguishes dialogue from debate or discussion by drawing numerous distinctions. Debate is about assuming there is one right defensible answer, that one party has it, and the task is to prove the other person wrong in order to win. Participants listen only so much as to find flaws in the other person’s argument that can be critiqued and countered. Dialogue, on the other hand, involves the assumption that there may not be one right answer, but several viable ones, the pieces of which are held by all the participants and can be surfaced by collaboratively working toward a common understanding and ground while revealing one’s assumptions and actively searching for strengths and a value in others’ positions through empathy and suspension of judgments. He distinguishes three key elements of dialogue as having: “(a) Equality and the absence of coercive influences; (b) Listening with empathy; and (c) Bringing assumptions into the open” (pp. 41–45). Discussion, he clarifies, is when at least one of the three key elements is missing.

Isaacs (1999) builds on the work of David Bohm that differentiates between dialogue as coming into wholeness within teams and discussion as breaking things down. He describes four fields of conversation and team exchange as a motion that can be tracked within these fields comprised of: (a) Politeness, (b) Breakdown, (c) Inquiry and Reflection, and (d) Flow. Isaac's research reveals that at first, participants engage in non-reflective interactions where they hold on to their assumptions, not communicate them. This manifests in arguments and criticisms. Participants unconsciously follow Argyris' (2000) Model I, "theory-in-use" behavior, following the tacit rule of defensive maneuvers, leading to unenlightened frustration. A critical turning point happens when one participant or more dares to reflect on the undiscussable impotence of the process. What the group does with that step determines whether they start moving into Field two, "characterized by move-oppose sequences" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 265), where "people try negotiating, compromise, or unilateral control, but they fail to move collectively into the space of reflection" (p. 266). At this point the group moves back to field one when it gets too heated up or they may make a leap to field three which happens when participants start entertaining the possibility of a wider field of possibilities and loosen their grip on their own assumptions. Field three lets in the spirit of curiosity. Participants open up, slow down and start reflective thinking. They explore their own assumptions and inquire into others. New meaning unfolds as they reveal their own assumptions and the requirement that other participants agree with each other dissipates. The rarest of all fields, number four, happens when "people cross over into an awareness of the primacy of the whole" (p. 279). New possibilities, that were hidden prior, come into existence as established positions are loosened enough to let them in. Figure 3 illustrates the four fields and the movement of dialogue.

Ellinor and Gerard (1998) offer more insight into team learning and the role of dialogue and discussion. They describe two kinds of conversation ascribed to dialogue and discussion. Dialogue is a divergent type of conversation as it opens up many different perspectives. It expands what is being communicated. Participants see the whole among the parts, as they connect them and inquire into their own assumptions and reveal them, thereby creating shared meaning amongst everyone. Discussion on the other hand is a convergent type of conversation. This is achieved by breaking wholes into parts, seeing differences and distinctions, justifying and defending assumptions and trying to persuade or even direct others to see the superiority of one's viewpoint and coming into one meaning for all participants to agree on. Discussion narrows down the field to one end result.

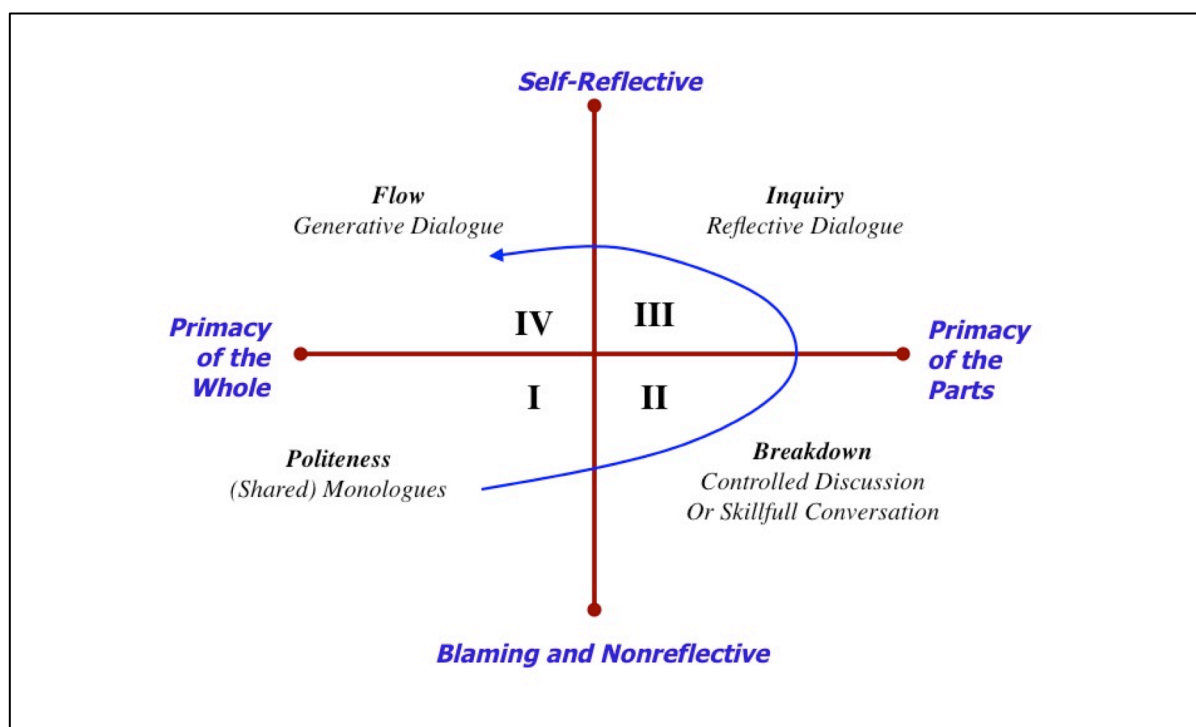


Figure 3. The fields of conversation by David Isaacs (1999).

*Advocacy and inquiry in dialogue.* Advocacy plays a role in both discussion and dialogue as it reveals one's perspective for the purpose of shared learning in dialogue or it tries to

convince others that one's viewpoint is the superior one in discussion. Inquiry is equally as flexible as it is used to dig deeper to reveal assumptions and underlying thinking in dialogue, while in discussion, it used to "gather enough ammunition to shoot down the other's opinion while elevating our own" (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998, p. 26).

Argyris and Schon (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008) propose Model II where participants practice a high degree of balanced advocacy and inquiry. In this case, each one openly reveals what they think and feel. At the same time, they actively seek to understand other participants' thoughts and feelings. A high degree of empathy is required from all to make this work.

**Organizational change theories.** The problem statement and purpose of this study as stated in Chapter I, has to do with exploring the inner leadership of principals who have successfully changed their schools around when most of the others have not. An understanding of organizational change is an important foundation in this exploration. The issue in this case may have to do more with the resistance and failure of change in most schools even after almost three decades since the 1984 report. There has been no lack of expertise of organizational change in the countless programs, innovations, and experiments, since the 1980's. "There are countless books about personal change and leadership for organizational change" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 6). This section will provide an outline of important organizational change theories and processes that relates to inner experiences.

***Change theories frameworks and processes.*** Building on Kübler-Ross's (1969) work that describes the stages individuals go through after a traumatic event such as death and terminal illness, another organizational change process theory looks at what happens to members of an organization and the stages of their reactions to change that is forced upon them (Jick,

1993; Woodward, Buchholz, & Hess, 1987). It describes four stages that speak to inner experience: (a) denial, (b) anger, (c) mourning, and (d) adaptation. After repeated, intense change episodes with little or no rest in between, some individuals become more resilient and others more brittle and dysfunctional. Members may also go back and forth several times over the process as they struggle to adapt to the changes at work. The awareness of these stages can certainly aid a school leader in addressing the inner impact of mandated changes on self, the teachers and staff.

Researching organizational change, specifically that of teachers and how they are impacted, Fuller (1969) initiated the development of what will come to be known as Concerns-Based Adoption Model or CBAM. There are seven stages to CBAM: (a) awareness, from lack thereof to first encounters with the change; (b) informational, the fact gathering and assimilation stage regarding the change; (c) personal, where the individual assesses the personal impact of the change; (d) management, where the mechanics and procedures of implementation of the change are considered; (e) consequence, how the change will affect the students; (f) collaboration, bringing together other teachers and practitioners to coordinate efforts in change implementation; and (g) refocusing, where exploration of other ways of improving the change to be even more effective or widespread. Though an understanding and facilitation of CBAM stages and theory can certainly be used in conjunction with mentoring and appropriate intervention strategies to provide a bottom-up systemic change, this approach “requires the understanding that a school does not change until each individual changes throughout the whole system” (Dirksen & Tharp, 1997, p. 1067). Of the above, letter c mostly addresses the interplay of inner experience and outward change.

The 7S model was developed by Waterman, Peters, and Phillips (1980) in the early 1980s. The model asserts that productive change in organization goes beyond the simple interaction of strategy and structure. They posit that it is actually the relationship of six areas in organization and what they call superordinate goals (and later renamed as shared values; Peters & Waterman, 1982) composed of the three hard ones, namely: (a) strategy, the plan to achieve identified goals; (b) structure, basically the hierarchy, the organizational chart, the departments and functions and the relationships within them; and (c) systems, which are the formal and informal procedures and processes underlying structure and strategies, and the three soft ones, namely: (a) style, organizational culture, beliefs, norms, behaviors, etc.; (b) staff, individuals and positions; and (c) skills, capacities, abilities and capabilities of both individuals and organization. The superordinate goals or shared values points to the set of “values and aspirations, often unwritten, that goes beyond the conventional formal statement of corporate objectives” (p. 24). The 7S model heralds the call to seeing the complexity of viewing organizations and change. Any change effort must take into account all these seven factors as changing one will affect and change the others. Differentiating the hard and soft issues in organizational change also lends appreciation to other considerations of leading organizational change that have to do more with the inner experience of beliefs, emotions and motivation. Using this model in carrying out a policy change, the principal needs not only to think about logistics and procedures but also to consider who key players in the organization who are not only considered by many to be credible supporters but who also have the skills and capacity to show others what to do. The support of these key players for the goals driving the policy change converts these goals into values that must be adhered to.

Conner (1998) addresses inner states as he writes about the emotional cycle of change where individuals go through five major stages: (a) uninformed optimism, or certainty; (b) informed pessimism, or doubt; (c) the crucial stage where one decides to use determination and commitment or give up, and the last two stages if the former were chosen; (d) hopeful realism; and (e) informed optimism. Conner (1998) also lists five characteristics of resiliency which can aid an individual through the cycle, namely: (a) being positive, seeing the opportunities in the challenges, (b) being focused and using persistence to advantage, (c) being flexible and willing to try different solutions, (d) staying organized so as to deal with unknowns, and (e) being proactive by seeking out possibilities and working with them. Awareness of these stages and characteristics, however, does not inform the school leader of how to help school stakeholders increase the likelihood that they will remain positive, focused and persistent.

Black and Gregersen (2002) argue that most change theories and processes have it backwards. Instead of concentrating on organizations, strategies, and procedural levers, change should be first focused on individuals within organizations. They posit that resistance to change is biologically hard-wired into humans and should be seen as natural. Unlike other biological organisms, humans do not evolve through random variation and natural selection. Humans are wired to survive and are naturally programmed to hang on to the past. Changing is akin to overcoming the natural forces of gravity and breaking through the barriers of resistance. Black and Gregersen wrote:

Change in organizations follows the same path. The faster a leader tries to force change, the more shock waves of resistance compact together, forming a massive barrier to success. Instead of a sound barrier though, leaders confront a “brain barrier” composed of preexisting and successful mental maps. (p. 6).

They further state that though mental maps are usually used with great success, it can still be the wrong map. Types of wrong mental maps are: (a) distorted maps, (b) central position maps, (c)

strip maps, and (d) upright maps. Distorted maps occur when a person's knowledge takes up bigger spaces than what the person does not know. This map can remain successful as long as the person does not wander off from existing knowledge. Central position maps are those where the user puts oneself in the center and deny the legitimacy of others from taking the same position. This engenders situations where even when the map stops being successful, one still insists on using it as one's central positioning communicate that there seems to be no other logical choice. Strip maps have very restricted and narrow view of the landscape. Their power lies in their sequencing. These maps are very successful as long as one does not stray too far off the beaten path. Unfortunately, new sequences and changes from the environment often make these maps obsolete. Upright maps reinforce a way of seeing the world that discourages other points of view or perspectives. An analogy is how north and south are arbitrarily but permanently assigned and any effort to reverse them would be met with great resistance because this is the way the world has always looked. To overcome brain barriers and enact change, the authors offer the tools of (a) contrast and confrontation, which provides a serious shock to the system as they bring out the very real and obvious but until now, unseen need for change; (b) destination, resources and rewards to address the failure-to-move brain barrier; and (c) champions and charting as the key to overcome brain barriers like getting tired and getting lost. This theory can definitely be used to explore inner leadership when the tool is utilized to uncover what kind of mental map the leader and or key persons in the school are using to guide their decisions.

***Types of change.*** Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2001) describe three types of organizational change: (a) Developmental change, (b) Transitional change, and (c) Transformational change. Of the three types, Transformational change is the most pertinent to this study of inner leadership. Unlike the first two types of change, transformational change



requires a radical shift from one state to another at such a level that it necessitates an overhaul of the culture, behavior and mindset of the members in order to be successful. It requires the adoption of a whole new point of view in everything from perceptions, purpose, motivation and processes in order to respond and survive intense shifts, disruptions, and changes in the environment. Survival of the organization is the primary motivation and unlike the first two types of change, there are little prescriptions, criteria, or standards to go by. Rather, the outcome is at first unknown and only reveals or is created through a continuous process of trial and error and constant course correction. Members are expected to go through concomitant fundamental, thorough and far-reaching personal development. The demand is for high-involvement, conscious creation and facilitation of new and emergent processes. This is because the future state is being discovered at the same time the shifts and changes are occurring. The path is not a clearly defined line, but one that is marked with constant stops, turns and instability, creating a chaotic environment. “The resulting new state is the product of both this chaos and the process that ensues to create a better future” (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2001, p. 40).

Leithwood et al. (2010) presents three stages in school transformation and turnaround:

- (a) Stop the decline and create conditions for early improvement, which includes seriously enlisting teachers’ participation, creating trusting relationships with and between them, often requiring external intervention;
- (b) Ensure survival, and realize early performance improvements, which is about developing both teacher capacity and effectiveness to prove that it can be done;
- and (c) Achieve satisfactory performance, and aspire to much more, which include an awareness of what really works in raising student achievement and a long term commitment for improvement. “A relatively large body of evidence now argues that sustainable improvement can

be achieved only through deeply rooted cultural change that focuses the organization on both individual and collective capacity development” (p. 218).

**Leadership theories.** Perhaps the best way to describe the predicament of attempting to define leadership can be found in the literature. Rost (1993) stated, “I analyzed 221 definitions of leadership that I found in 587 books, book chapters, and journal articles which by title indicated that they were primarily concerned with leadership. These materials were written from 1900 to 1990” (p. 44). Stogdill (1974) stated, “There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (p. 259). Burns (1978) wrote, “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). Wren’s (1995) contributed, “Leadership is one of the most widely talked about subjects and at the same time one of the most elusive and puzzling” (p. 27). Finally Bennis and Nanus (1997) wrote, “Never have so many labored so long to say so little. Multiple interpretations of leadership exist, each providing a sliver of insight but each remaining an incomplete and wholly inadequate explanation” (p. 4).

Fortunately, this study does not seek to define leadership as much as it seeks to inquire into the inner leadership of successful California school principals. Still, it is important to review just what has been posited about the subject matter of leadership, conflicting or not. To aid in this challenging review, only the leadership theories that bear on the subject of inner states and experience will be reviewed. Therefore the following leadership theories will not be discussed: (a) Trait-based theories, (b) Behavior-based theories, and (c) Relationship or contingency-based theories. This section will only present inner, transpersonal-based theories.

***Emotionally intelligent leadership.*** The international bestseller, *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 1995), a work publishing the research on the subject by the author and its

implications inspired several by-products. One of these is on leadership, titled *Primal Leadership* (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In this work, the authors lay out four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence: (a) Self-awareness, (b) Self-management, (c) Social awareness, and (d) Relationship management.

Under self-awareness are capabilities that enable one to read one's own emotions, recognize their effects and make decisions from the gut. Included are the working knowledge of one's own strengths and limits and a realistic sense of self-worth. With self-management comes the capability to control one's limiting impulses and destructive emotions, being able to adapt to changing situations and new obstacles, manifest honesty, integrity and trustworthiness, seizing opportunities and having optimism. Social awareness brings with it abilities such as empathy, political awareness and a sense of service for others. Finally, relationship management pertains to the capacity to inspire and influence others, including interpersonal conflict management, develop other people's capacities, lead change, promote and maintain a network of relationships and collaborate with a team.

***Strengths-based leadership.*** Buckingham and Clifton (2001) put forth a theory of innate individual strengths as the top five of a list of 34 strengths they extracted out of a research containing over two million Gallup interviews. Basically, the theory is, instead of spending money, energy and resources, toward "training" and making up for innate shortcomings of its employees, an organization should discover each person's top strengths and use these to overcome any shortcomings they possess. They came up with the Strengths Finder (Rath, 2007), a book and an online strengths testing protocol that reveals the individual's top five strengths. To get one's 34 traits arranged in sequential order from strongest to weakest entails attending a

weekend seminar offered by the authors. Correlating this to leadership, Rath and Conchie (2008) proceed to propose a process by which great leadership can be obtained through strengths.

20,000 in-depth interviews with senior leaders, studies of more than one million worker teams, and 50 years of Gallup Polls about the world's most admired leaders. Our team initiated a study of more than 10,000 followers to tell us—in their own words—why they follow the most influential leader in their life. (p. 2)

All this gave them three key findings: “1. The most effective leaders are always investing in strengths....2. The most effective leaders surround themselves with the right people and then maximize their team....3. The most effective leaders understand their followers' needs” (Rath & Conchie, 2008, pp. 2–3).

Buckingham (2005) takes the preceding concepts and applies it to a body of prescriptions. He differentiates great leadership from great managing and draws lines between the two. While he exhorts that great managers find out what is unique about each person in their department, great leaders find out what is universal and common to everyone and capitalize on it. He identifies five universal fears and a corollary need to each as follows: (a) “Fear of Death (our own and family's) and the Need for Security.” (p. 137), (b) “Fear of the Outsider and the Need for Community.” (p. 137), (c) “Fear of the Future and the Need for Clarity.” (p. 138), (d) “Fear of Chaos and the Need for Authority.” (p. 139), (e) “Fear of Insignificance and the Need for Respect.” (p. 140). Of these five, he specifies that Fear of the Future and the Need for Clarity are most important. Clarity is identified as answering the questions: (a) who do we serve? (b) what is our core strength? (c) what is our core score? and (d) what actions can we take today (differentiating from systematic and symbolic actions)? He also identifies three leadership disciplines: (a) Take time to reflect, (b) Select your heroes with great care, and (c) Practice.

***Adaptive leadership.*** Some leadership theories are a blend of situational leadership and behavior-based leadership. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) identifies three types of situations: (a)

Type 1, which are historical, well-known problems and for which many solutions have been identified and implemented to great success; (b) Type II, are new situations and problems for which new technical solutions are called for and implemented as soon as it is figured out, requiring experimentation; and (c) Type III or the adaptive situation, which requires changing the hearts and minds of the members of the organization and for which the theory is laid out. Behaviors such as viewing from the balcony and orchestrating conflict are but a couple of methods proposed in order to bring about the necessary shift in culture and beliefs. Parks (2005) builds on this work and documents a curriculum of study in which leadership aspirants go through a program of entrenched leadership and supportive-challenging coaching to achieve effective adaptive leadership.

***Ethical leadership.*** According to Bass and Bass (2008), a British study conducted between 1997 and 2001 stated that “companies with a clear commitment to ethical conduct outperform those with no such commitment” (p. 210). The difficulty with discussing ethics in terms of organizational and leadership behavior is the need to differentiate between ethical process and ethical content as the interplay between these two concepts produce four possible dimensions, ethical process with ethical content, ethical process with unethical content, etc. (Rost, 1993). Rost further describes the complications of using ethics as a definitional term, raising certain questions. In terms of ethics as a process, the questions are centered on the individual freedom, value and integrity of all parties concerned. In terms of ethics as content, the questions are centered on the value-laden rules of what is ethical or not. He enumerates several systems of ethics: (a) utilitarian ethics, (b) rule ethics, (c) social contract ethics, and (d) ethical relativism, including hedonism, emotivism, ethical egoism and ethics of design or of purpose. Yukl (2002), echoes the same difficulty and gives Kohlberg’s levels of moral development (which in itself is a

biased construct) as an example to explain the dilemma of using “ethics” as a point of discussion regarding leadership practices. Stating that this is a relatively new topic in leadership studies, he calls for more studies that would “produce knowledge that strengthens both the theory and practice of ethical conduct in organizations” (p. 410). Rost (1993) gives his own answer to this complication: That both leaders and followers are morally called upon to pronounce ethical judgments, but, at the end of the day, a new language of civic virtue must be exercised and the yardstick for ethical deliberations, process and content, must be the common and public good.

***Servant leadership.*** The seminal book on Servant Leadership elucidating the very same concept of leadership by Greenleaf (1977) became the basis for a whole new concept of leading especially in more spiritual and western religious circles. The formulation of this leadership theory began out of Greenleaf’s reading of Herman Hesse’s perhaps autobiographical book, *Journey to the East*. It is the story of a group of men on a journey sponsored by an organization called the Order. Leo, a servant in the group, sustains and supports the rest of the members through his song and exceptional presence, until he vanished one day on the trek. After this, the group could not sustain itself and falls into shambles. The story’s narrator, who is part of the party, wanders for years after this and ends up in the Order’s grounds where he finds Leo, who he had known as a servant, to find out that he was actually the authority leader of the Order. In Greenleaf’s own words: “the great leader is seen as servant first” (p. 7).

The difference between these and other theories is that the conscious choice of serving and service is the first incentive before the incentive to lead, which is qualitatively and sharply different from one whose first stimulus is to lead first before serving. From this basic premise, Greenleaf (1977) extrapolates a completely new theory of leadership. First and foremost, from Greenleaf’s theory, is the motivational impetus of the individual, as was just stated, and then to

see more clearly the path forward. The second is the leader's intent, the leader's goals and dreams, and the power this vision has to attract followers. The third component is the leader's capacity for listening and understanding. The fourth capacity of servant leaders is the use of language and imagination and the wisdom to know when silence is more eloquent. The fifth ability is one that enables the leader to withdraw and reorient and ensure that the capacity, energy and will to serve and then lead are refreshed. An unlimited motive for acceptance and empathy and disinterest in rejecting others makes up the next characteristic of a servant leader. The most intangible and unmeasurable trait is a "sense for the unknowable and be able to foresee the unforeseeable" (p. 21). This last one has been labeled as prescience, intuition, and foresight. It brings into the discussion, the element of ethic, spirituality and faith; however, Greenleaf sees it more as a naturally occurring phenomenon. He states that "the failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an *ethical* failure" (p. 26). This is because foreseeing enables the leader to ethically act in the present to prevent what would evolve to be catastrophic in the future, requiring serious ethical compromise to resolve.

Framing all the above characteristics is awareness and perception. Greenleaf (1977) posits that awareness must be held extremely wide and open as possible to allow both conscious and unconscious elements in, giving the leader "an armor of confidence in facing the unknown—more than those who accept their leadership" (p. 28).

Autry (2001) takes Greenleaf's concept and explicitly brings it to the next step of spirituality and work. He offers five characteristics any person must consciously adopt to become one whose primary intent is to serve. These five also enables the follower to determine whether the leader is primarily in an attitude of service. The five are: "(a) be authentic, (b) be vulnerable, (c) be accepting, (d) be present, and (e) be useful" (p. 10).

**Stewardship.** Block (1993) extends Greenleaf's concept of Servant Leadership into the realm of stewardship. Block contends that the patriarchal system of hierarchical, top-down control systems that make up every bureaucratic organizational chart have grown outmoded and less meaningful in organizational development and processes.

Stewardship is defined in this book as the choice to preside over the orderly distribution of power. This means giving people at the bottom and the boundaries of the organization choice over how to serve a customer, a citizen, a community. It is the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance. (p. xx)

Block (1993) affirms Greenleaf's position that leadership must first be intending to serve before intending to lead. Further on, Block offers six points that summarizes stewardship as an alternative to traditional leadership. Block's first point echoes Frankl's (1992) statement:

Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning. (p. 105)

Block (1993) states that point one of stewardship is "affirm the spirit" (p. 49). This is something that patriarchy cannot do but can be performed only by each person taking responsibility for their own actions and owning them. The second point is that partnership must exist with true accountability from all parties. Point three deals with empowerment and states that true change and cultivation of culture is the responsibility of each member. The next point is doing away with innate class systems within organizations and to "reintegrate the managing and the doing of the work" (p. 51). The fifth point is that we cannot use patriarchal means to change patriarchal systems. The last point is that we need to reform the system that focuses the ownership and responsibility at the top of organizational structure.



Looking at both Servant Leadership and Stewardship, the next section on leadership theories emphasize the inner lives and experiences of leadership to an even greater degree.

**Inner or transpersonal-based theories of leadership.** Greenleaf's (1977) work and subsequent leadership theories that spring from it open up an inner dimension to leadership theory and practice. No longer is it just a field of talents, strategies, visioning, influencing, partnering, collaborating, and results. According to Peter Senge's introduction in Jaworski's (1998) book, all leadership theories prior to Greenleaf's Servant leadership are superficial and fail to pierce through to the essence of being a leader: service. Service is not a choice but the expression of being.

Zohar and Marshall (2001) describe six paths that anyone can take to gain spiritual intelligence. Anyone can follow one or more paths. The sixth path is the path of servant leadership, which they assert is the ultimate spiritual journey. "Through the gifts endowed by their lives and personalities, these people have the opportunity to serve, heal, and enlighten those whom they lead, but the path calls ultimately for great integrity (wholeness)" (p. 260). This is most difficult especially for the ambitious person as they have to learn to bow down and surrender to this force.

From psychology to spirituality, leadership theorists have recently begun looking into the inner world of leaders and how this affects the outward traits and behaviors they exhibit.

Halal (1998) writes about how the inner realities of leaders are more important to study because that is where their behaviors, decisions and motivation arises from. He describes leadership as an agonizing creative process that calls upon the limits of each leader's skills and fortitude. True leadership is true listening to the other's inner truths and realities and obtain wisdom by the interplay of the inner worlds, a process that is exacting as it is potentially

rewarding. The author also describes how spirituality, riding along processes of meditation, prayer and quiet reflection, are finding their way into called for practices and competencies for leaders in established corporations such as Lotus, Boeing and AT&T:

My main task increasingly seems to involve paying careful attention to this flood of experience in order to select what seems right at the time. And my best guide is an inner wisdom that I have come to respect. I do not know where it comes from or what it is, and I suppose we all do this without giving it much thought. But, still, I don't know how I would cope without it. Many managers, such as Willow Shire, a vice president at DEC, also rely on their inner voice: "When you need an answer, if you listen to yourself and just trust the process, the answer will come." As I have grown more familiar with this inner wisdom, I find that it is utterly dependable if I listen carefully and interpret it faithfully. (p. 205)

Smith (2000) writes about the inner leadership process as a spiraling four-stage journey. The first stage is recognizing oneself and being aware of one's thoughts, reaction, emotions, beliefs and self-perception. The second stage of the process is exploring the complex components discovered in stage one, their origins and interplay with one another to gain an understanding on how these affect outward leadership manifestations. Stage three is a paradox of self-acceptance and will to change, positing that one cannot change until one truly accepts the reality of the current state. Finally, stage four is outward action with clarity. This is the stage where the leader uses the knowledge, awareness and inner integration and transformation to bring about the same effects in outer reality. This process then spirals back to the first stage in a never-ending evolutionary development.

Cashman (1997, 2001) creates a model describing seven pathways to develop leadership from the "inside out." The seven pathways are: (a) Personal Mastery, in which one learns to distinguish between character and persona; (b) Purpose Mastery, where the leader goes beyond goals into true purpose and service; (c) Change Mastery; (d) Interpersonal Mastery; (e) Being Mastery, opening awareness to our true potentiality in the eternal present; (f) Balance Mastery;

and (g) Action Mastery with the three components of: (1) authenticity, (2) self-expression and (3) value. Surprisingly, all of the preceding can be distilled into one single statement by Cashman (2001) that is contained in the last step of the pathway to inner leadership: “Leadership is authentic self-expression that creates value” (p. 20). To illustrate this development in his book, the author tells a fictional tale of a leader who goes through each of these stages.

Sidle (2005) contended that: “Leadership is a result, not a cause. It is an inside job” (p. 7). He introduces the five archetypes and sets them in a wheel pointing to different directions: (a) to the East is the Teacher—knowing the world, (b) to the South is the Nurturer—awakening the heart, (c) to the West is the Visionary—seeing the way, (d) to the North is the Warrior—embodying the way, and (e) to the Center is the Sage—learning to learn. For each of the five directions and archetypes, he offers detailed learning and defensive routines that keep from learning. He then maps the wheel to ancient cultures and how these archetypes are used to teach personal development. He also presents the “spiral of learning” (p. 104). He then takes popular leadership and organizational theories to date and maps them along the leadership wheel and the spiral of learning and draws correlations between his model and their practice.

***Synchronicity, presence and the U-theory.*** Jaworski (1998) writes on his personal leadership journey and his revelations strike deep into the inner world of leaders by revealing the very thoughts, drives, fears, joy and myriad experiences he experienced that touch the universal chord of life. He titled the book *Synchronicity* and explains it thus:

Arthur Koestler, paraphrasing Jung, defines “synchronicity” as “the seemingly accidental meeting of two unrelated causal chains in a coincidental event which appears both highly improbable and highly significant.” The people who come to you are the very people you need in relation to your commitment. Doors open, a sense of flow develops, and you find you are acting in a coherent field of people who may not even be aware of one another. You are not acting individually any longer, but out of the unfolding generative order. This is the unbroken wholeness of the implicate order out of which seemingly discrete

events take place. At this point, your life becomes a series of predictable miracles. (p. 185)

Taking this stance further, Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski and Flowers (2004) clamor for outright recognition of the inner workings of leaders and the spiritual connection. According to them, seeing from the whole as opposed to seeing from parts implies a different kind of leadership skill they call mindfulness. “Mindfulness makes it possible to see connections that may not have been visible before. But seeing these connections doesn’t happen as a result of trying—it simply comes out of the stillness” (p. 50). They call for a second type of learning that is not based on lessons from experience. Experience becomes a less effective tool when the conditions that one currently faces are new and unprecedented. What is then called for is a “process where we learn instead from a future that has not yet happened and from continually discovering our part in bringing that future to pass” (p. 86).

The above quotes were provided to make sure the reader does not misunderstand the message of these theories. The theories state explicitly that leaders must learn from the future by utilizing their inner lives and experience. How that comes about is explained in the next section.

Scharmer (2009), one of the authors of the above, proposed his U-Theory Model of Perception and Change that describe the different depths which people see reality and the different levels of action that are required to work within those perceptions. This theory has then evolved and fully described in his later book, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*. The theory posits three levels and a process by which each level is accessed and then subsequently used to bring about a future that is somehow apt and intended. It describes seven capacities and the activities they enable. The left side of the U is a downward or downloading direction into deeper levels of meaning: (a) downloading and looking at the patterns of the past; (b) suspending, or seeing freshly without judgment; and (c) redirecting, or seeing from the whole.

The process then asks for a “letting go” of experience through total acceptance before it rests at the deepest level at the bottom of the U, called “presencing” or connecting to the source and viewing from it, wherein the field of the future begins to arise. This upward movement from the source on the right side of the U seem to be opposite of the left: there is a letting come, a move that starts from the seeing from the source and accepting the future bringing about the manifestation of the first step: (a) enacting, the crystallization of vision and intention; (b) embodying, prototyping, co-creation of strategic microcosms, being in dialogue with the universe; and (c) performing, the new and embedding it within larger systems, solidifying the future. All through this the message is that “the most important leadership tool is yourself” (Scharmer, 2009). A leader going down the left side of the model encounters three different states and challenges. In order to suspend judgment and see with fresh eyes, the leader must face and shut down the voice of judgment and proceed with an open mind. The next level down, requiring the leader to see from the whole, faces the challenge of the voice of cynicism and must be met with an open heart. Then the leader encounters the need to let go and must confront the voice of fear with an open will. All three challenges must be met and experienced deeply before the leader can get to the source that is the future waiting to emerge.

These latest theories on leadership, specifically describing the inner or transpersonal aspects, are the most useful in studying the inner lives of successful principals. It would be interesting if the data collected hold anything that would correlate with these.

## **Summary**

The preceding literature review presented four sections of different, but related conceptual bodies of knowledge: the recent California context of school reform initiatives; the role of the school principal; inner experience research and theory; leadership and organizational

theory related to inner experience. The literature on all four domains needed to be reviewed in order to prepare for this study of the inner leadership of successful transformative school principals.

This study limits the subject pool of respondents to the state of California for two reasons: (a) control for the variable of standards used to distinguish a school as failing or successful, (b) convenience. The first section reviewed the recent California school reform history and the California state standards for distinguishing a school as failing or successful.

The second section reviewed literature about the working context of the school principal. The review presented the historical changing roles and requirements of the position. The review revealed a very complex and often chaotic set of demands and duties the school principal must perform. Dynamic complexity and systems archetypes literature uncovered patterns of confounding effects resulting from seemingly sensible solutions applied to failing situations the principal must contend. Social complexity studies uncovered the unenviable role of the principal as someone caught in the middle of unrelenting and conflicting interests from all stakeholder sides. Finally, emergent complexity literature revealed that the principal is tasked with transforming a situation that: (a) has no known solutions, (b) is still developing and (c) has no fully clear set of parties involved.

The third section reviewed literature on inner experience research. The review presented the historical practice and use of inner experience as the subject of research. Introspection as the main process for accessing inner experience figured much in this section. Because of its highly subjective nature and disagreement among experts, introspection, and consequently inner experience research, was virtually abandoned by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, giving way to behaviorist, empirical and reductionist research. The past thirty years has seen a resurgence of

interest and groundbreaking work on the study of inner experience. This situation was brought about by new research methods and scientific tools made possible with the advances in technology such as electronic signaling devices, advances in recording and neuroimaging tools. New discoveries and theories such as Chaos, Complexity and Whole Systems theories opened the door to new possibilities of researching complex phenomena as a whole without having to reduce it into parts.

The third section also reviewed the literature on different approaches to researching inner experience and these were presented and categorized into two groups: (a) in vivo, and (b) retrospective methods. In order to examine the viability of this study, this section also examined the literature on issues with inner experience research and the refutation to these issues. Most of the reviewed issues were found to be misplaced and inappropriate applications of behavioristic and reductionist paradigms to inner experience research. Experiments that refuted the viability of inner experience research were later reproduced with modifications that addressed the uniqueness of inner experience and resulted in proving the viability of inner experience research. This section ended with presenting a variety of applications of inner experience research.

The fourth section of this literature review examined organizational and leadership theory that touch on inner experience and inner states. In a highly interconnected and global setting, it is no longer useful to describe schools in mechanistic Industrial Revolution terms. The field of organizational study has evolved to include systems, chaos and complexity theories, all of which this section reviewed. Since this study also involves looking at schools that transform from failure to success on defined criteria, literature on organizational change theory was reviewed. Most of the trait-based leadership theories have little to contribute to the study of inner leadership except for Emotionally Intelligent Leadership Theory and Strengths-based Leadership

Theory. Mixed-based leadership theories grew out of attempts to develop the limited success of the preceding stages of leadership theory development. In these theories, we see the emergence of concepts that better address the 21<sup>st</sup> century global issues that organizations face. These concepts include the increasing focus on the inner experience of leaders and members. The Adaptive Leadership Theory grew out of concern for organizational change that requires not only technical, but adaptive solutions. Adaptive solutions are those that require the leaders and the members to go through a change of hearts and minds to be implemented. Ethical Leadership calls for the outward proclamation of inner held values and the setting of ethics with the common and public good as the base value. Servant Leadership goes a step further by requiring that leaders must have the value of service as their top priority before attempting to lead or direct the organization. This service requires the leader to have qualities of the right intentions, empathy, vision, and an intuitive, prophetic sense. Servant Leadership has proven to be a milestone in leadership theory that important work on leadership following it, especially inner leadership, are based on, or draw heavily from its concepts. More theorists now regard Inner leadership now as a valuable branch of study. The idea that everything a leader does is an expression of the leader's inner nature and experience has taken a foothold. This literature review ends with the latest theories on inner leadership such as synchronicity, prescience, mindfulness, inside-out leadership, and Theory U—leading from the future. These latest theories would prove to be very useful in framing the analysis of the data collected in this study.

There is a definite need to study the leadership of principals not just as leadership per se, but as the leadership tied to the achievement and success of schools defined by the measures that are imposed on them. There is a need to go beyond traditional quantitative measures (such as filled-in questionnaires on observable traits and behaviors) into the inner world of principals



because this influences, if not determines, the traits and behaviors they exhibit when they interact dynamically with the complex external environment. The researcher has not found any study that has examined the inner experiences of principals who led their schools from failure to success.

The task of exploring this inner state is important if one is to understand the source of external actions, decisions, communication and effectiveness manifested by successful transformative school leaders. Studying the inner experience of principals becomes imperative to the efforts to save our schools from failure. These studies may give schools a better chance at delivering the learning and achievement for all students.

### **Chapter III: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter discusses the research approach and methodology that was utilized to inquire into the inner experience of principals while leading their schools from Program Improvement status to a clear exit from Program Improvement status. Most, if not all, of the studies and inquiry into school turnaround success, particularly those that have examined the effect of school leaders, have focused on observable statistics, behaviors and external characteristics and traits. No studies were found that examined school leaders' inner lived experiences during a successful turnaround.

This chapter will present: (a) the focus and purpose of the study, (b) a description and discussion of the research design and its aptness to the focus and purpose, (c) a discussion on the formulation of inquiry from specific interview questions to methods of addressing new and emergent factors, (d) a discussion on trustworthiness which deals with the validity and reliability of the procedures in achieving the intent of the inquiry, (e) a description of the criteria and process by which participants were chosen and invited to participate, (f) a discussion on proper and legal procedures for conducting studies involving human subjects, (g) a description of the procedures for data protection, analysis and the design for drawing conclusions, and (h) other important considerations such as researcher role and bias.

#### **Restatement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the inner experiences of California school principals during the process of leading their schools from a Program Improvement status to a clear exit from P.I. The definition of inner experience used for this study is found in the Definition of Key Terms section of Chapter I of this study.

## **Restatement of Research Questions**

The main questions of this research are the following:

1. What are the inner experiences of the principal in schools that are able to transform from failing (program improvement) to successful (clear status) at critical points of this transformation?
2. What inner experiences are common among these principals at each critical point?
3. What inner experience does the principal consider to be the most important in the transformation process?

Critical points, as used in these questions, are defined in Chapter I as delineated by the three stages of a school turnaround process described in Leithwood et al. (2010) as follows:

“Stage 1: Stopping the decline and creating conditions for early improvement. Stage 2: Ensuring survival and realizing early performance improvements. Stage 3: Achieving satisfactory performance and aspiring to much more” (pp. 44-45).

## **Research Approach**

As with any study, a choice of three general methods of research needed to be considered: (a) the quantitative, (b) the qualitative, and (c) the mixed method of research (Creswell, 2009). These are not discontinuous designs. They are placed on a range with qualitative design on one end, quantitative on the other and mixed methods in the middle. Of the three general methods, the researcher found the qualitative research design to be the most appropriate approach in answering questions that seek to understand inner experiences. Creswell (2007) narrowed down qualitative research approaches used in different disciplines (e.g., sociology, education, psychology, etc.) from lists as numerous as 28 approaches down to five. Of these five, the phenomenological research approach was most appropriate for this study,

specifically as it “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 57). “The lived world, or the *lived experience*, is critical to phenomenology” (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 45). The phenomenon in this study was the successful turnaround of failing schools. The individuals were the principals, who were leading these schools during the period of turnaround, whose inner lived experiences around this phenomenon were being studied. As a retrospective study of inner experience, the researcher limited the experience to be not more than seven to eight school years prior to the date of the interview.

Since the researcher had found no other study that specifically sought to describe principals’ inner lived experiences of successful school transformation, this research was an exploratory investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Swanson & Holton, 1997). This research broke ground and represented a seminal branch of prospective future studies.

### **Participants**

This was an in-depth exploration of inner lived experiences of a few individuals as appropriate in a qualitative phenomenological research study. It was not a broad sampling of characteristics from numerous subjects. The researcher used purposeful sampling for this study. This choice was appropriate because of the need to “focus in depth on a relatively small sample...purposefully. The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Purposive sampling is necessary in qualitative studies as the concern is the *quality* of the data gathered and not the *quantity* (Erlandson, 1993). As an exploratory study, the sample size was five participants. This sample size is not unusual but rather typical in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007).

The type of purposive sampling used in this study was the criterion type. The criterion utilized for participant selection was that the respondent must have been a principal of a Program Improvement school during its transformation from failure to success. This is a period of at least two years. Using this criterion assured that the data gathered is appropriate to the study.

Critics may argue that this type of sampling also falls under deviant or extreme sampling type because the number of schools successfully transforming from P.I. status to clear exit from P.I. status is comparatively very small compared to the number of schools that remain in P.I. However, criterion and deviant sampling are not mutually exclusive. Criterion sampling ensured the quality of the data gathered. Deviant sampling underscored the importance of this study as giving some enlightenment to the complex issue of school reform and why the number of schools that achieve successful transformation was very small.

The researcher consulted with the California Department of Education for a list of schools that have exited from P.I. status in the last several years. The researcher then contacted the school districts with jurisdiction over the list of schools for validation of the school's clear exit status and for the identity and contact information of the principal who was assigned to the school during its transformation process. The researcher planned to choose participant principals who reside or work in geographical locations most accessible to the researcher (Southern California). Critics may see this as a form of convenience sampling (Creswell, 2007; Erlandson, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002) and be appropriately concerned with the generalizability of data gathered. However, the exploratory nature of the study and the presence of other sampling perspectives preclude this situation. Access to participants, in this case, helped to aid in the research process and made it viable. The researcher was able to compile a list of seven eligible respondents after three months of

searching. The researcher stopped searching, contacting and requesting for respondent participation after the fifth interview was performed.

The participants were invited via any means available to contact each, including phone, email, etc. The invitation for this study included pertinent information such as: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the volunteer nature of the participation, (c) confidentiality, and (d) data use and analysis. An Initial Invitation Letter (see Appendix E) and an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix F) were sent to the participants.

After the participant had agreed to be interviewed and returned the consent form, the researcher sent each participant via email, or post mail (whichever means the participant chose), a confirmation letter that reiterates information regarding the nature and purpose of the study, confidentiality, volunteer nature of the participation, the interview process (including the use of a recording device), use and validation of data. The researcher initiated a follow-up contact by phone or email (whichever means the participant chose to be contacted) and scheduled a meeting for the interview at the participant's preferred time and location. The researcher sent a confirmation letter regarding the interview time and schedule agreed upon.

The researcher conducted the interview according to the interview protocol developed for this study (see Appendix G). It is important to note that in this study of inner experience, the researcher engaged in person-to-person interviews for the first interview. Virtual interviews through different mediums (e.g., Skype, phone interviews, etc.) would not have done the study the due justice it deserved.

At the appointed time and place and before the interview commenced, the researcher ensured he had the participant's informed consent before proceeding with the recording and the interview itself.

### **Data Collection Strategy**

The main strategy for gathering data from the selected participants was an interview with each for approximately an hour around the questions of inner lived experience at certain points of the school turnaround process. Because of the in-depth nature of the questions and responses around inner experiences, the interview situation was face-to-face. To capture the entire exchange, the interview was audio-recorded.

At the end of the interview, the researcher expressed appreciation and gratitude for the participation of each member and reminded them that the interview will be transcribed and analyzed and a follow-up recorded ten-minute phone call going over the themes and categories for validation will be performed.

The researcher then commenced coding for dominant themes and categories. After the analysis process and inter-rater process, the researcher read and presented the dominant themes and categories of the interview back to the participant for the participants' review. This process ensured that researcher bias and misinterpretation did not occur. This was the opportunity for the participant to clarify, modify or change the interpretation and meanings the researcher extracted from the transcript of the interview. This presentation of analysis by the researcher and the validation review by the participant occurred during a follow-up recorded ten-minute phone call.

The interview process followed a blend of the narrative and naturalistic inquiry process (please see the interview protocol in Appendix G). The narrative paradigm was essential to the study as each participant was queried on inner lived experience and one of the most accessible methods of communicating this is through story telling. "The aims of narrative inquiries range from psychological questions focusing on internal emotional or cognitive processes on the one hand, to sociological, anthropological, and historical questions on the other" (Spector-Mersel,

2010, p. 215). This study was most concerned about the internal emotional and cognitive processes of school principals around the phenomenon of school transformation from failure to success. The interview process revealed unplanned discoveries emerging from the inquiry, as they came out of the interaction between inquirer and participant. This emergent design is a hallmark of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and could not be planned for. Flexibility and adaptability of the researcher in shifting and deviating from the interview protocol as discoveries arose was a necessary attribute to the interview process and protocol.

Research on inner experience was a specific process and the researcher needed to guide the respondent in accessing the experience. For this purpose, the researcher enacted an “elicitation interview” to evoke the experience (Petitmengin et al., 2013) using a guide (see Appendix B) which was a list of inner experience components. After the initial question, depending on how and with what the subject responded, the researcher continually helped “the subject to redirect his attention from the content, the ‘what’ of his evoked activity, towards the process, the ‘how’” (p. 658). This deepened and refocused the recall of the experience away from outer and superficial contents and into areas more representative of inner experience and states.

### **Human Subjects Consideration**

The risks to the subjects inherent in qualitative studies were addressed and minimized. The major identifiable risks in this undertaking were those of violations of the privacy of both the subject and the organizations they belong to presently and/or during the historical time the research was studying.

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects, two essential measures were taken up in the carrying out of this research. Firstly, the issue of confidentiality was discussed both orally and in the written agreement with each participant. It was made clear that the raw



data will not be shown to anyone beyond the confines of this study. Secondly, the researcher kept all raw data, study materials, and related analysis secure in a locked file cabinet with restricted access during and after the study. Raw data included digitized interviews and all digital data artifacts, which were kept in an encrypted drive in the secured file cabinet. These will be kept for five years after the publication of the study and then destroyed.

The study came under exempt status based on the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Public Welfare, Department of Health and Human Services, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, subpart A, section 46.101(b)(2).

### **The Researcher's Role (Bias)**

Researcher bias in carrying out the role in any qualitative study must be recognized and taken into account as an unavoidable component (Creswell, 2009; Morse & Richards, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). The qualitative study researcher is both the instrument for data collection and interpretation. The researcher can also influence the subjects in both subtle and complex ways during the data gathering interaction like the interviews in this study. While these conditions bring concerns of bias and reactivity, “the dangers of being insulated from relevant data are greater. The researcher must find ways to control the biases that do not inhibit the flow of pertinent information. Relevance cannot be sacrificed for the sake of rigor” (Erlandson, 1993, p. 15).

The researcher has been employed by the Los Angeles Unified School District for the last 26 years: as teacher for the first 11 years, a specialist for the next three, and as school administrator for the last 12 years. The researcher has been a principal of a continuation high school for the last six years.

In phenomenological research such as this, two strategies, bracketing and an emergent design, help avoid bias issues and enable the researcher to view the data more objectively (Morse & Richards, 2002). Bracketing occurs when the researcher writes down or expresses prior theories and experience regarding the question being researched. This act allows the researcher to acknowledge the presence and be aware of these bias-inducing elements. In so doing, the researcher is able to put them aside when dealing with the research (Giorgi, 1997). Putting them aside allows the researcher to encounter the data freshly and as free of any pre-conceived notions as possible.

An emergent design means that although the researcher has planned the methods for data gathering and analysis, such strategies must be flexible enough to adjust to the reality of the data as they unfold. This does not mean that there is no structure (Erlandson, 1993). Van Manen (1990) empathically states: “the interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place” (p. 66).

### **Analysis of the Data**

This section will discuss the approach the researcher took in analyzing data gathered from the interviews. The analysis method was informed by Creswell’s (2007) approach, “a simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method” (p. 159). This method is outlined in the following procedures planned prior to conducting the research:

1. The researcher performs bracketing by recording his experience of the phenomenon under study, in this instance, inner experience during a successful school turnaround. This allows the researcher to differentiate between his own biases and preconceptions and the new data he will be studying.

2. The data will be fully transcribed. The researcher will extract significant statements. Data from each participant then goes through “horizontalization,” a process by which each significant statement is treated equally and the researcher develops a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements.
3. The researcher will study and group (coding) the statements in each individual interview using the coding methods described in Morse and Richards (2002). The research questions will guide the coding. There is minimal descriptive coding to be done as the context of the study is well defined and the study focuses not on contextual events but on the inner experience of the respondents. Topic and analytic coding will be extensively used for this study.
4. During and after coding of each interview, the researcher will take note of themes that will arise out of the coded topics and categories and map them with each other in a process called abstraction (Morse & Richards, 2002).
5. The researcher will search for themes across the five interviews and will group the entire study into clusters under each theme.
6. The researcher will export the coding and theming results and will solicit the assistance of a doctoral degree holder with knowledge and experience in qualitative studies analysis to review the researcher’s work. The researcher will edit the coding if the ensuing review and discussion reveals that it is necessary. This will provide inter-rater reliability of the coding process.
7. Identification of the most emergent, essential and important themes will occur at this point.

8. The researcher will construct an over-all description of the structure (how it happened), meaning and essence of the experiences around successful school transformation.
9. Researcher will present the inner experiences of the five participants (narrative) as a composite as to “what” they experienced and “how” they experienced the phenomenon.

The researcher transcribed the interviews using the software HyperTRANSCRIBE by Researchware, Inc. HyperRESEARCH, another software by Researchware, Inc. was utilized in the coding, theming and analysis of the data. This computer-aided process helped assure lack of bias in searching for emergent themes and increases intra-rater reliability. At the same time, this did not absolve the researcher the due diligence of studying both the manual and the computerized coding and theming to make sure the results were relevant.

### **Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) reject the notion of applying the quantitative study reliability, validity (both internal and external) and objectivity rules as valid for qualitative research. Instead, they propose to build credibility through the application of prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Prolonged engagement was achieved in this study through the experience of the researcher in California education. The researcher is quite familiar with “educationalese” talk, is at the same administrative level as the respondent was, and this was obvious to the respondent. These conditions, in turn, hindered any intentionality of deceit from the respondents, as deception would have been more difficult to carry out. Persistent observation, like prolonged engagement, stemmed from the researcher’s familiarity with the phenomenon. The researcher

was more able to focus in on the important concepts and sought to explore this further with the subject, at the same time, being able to put aside fluff and distractors.

During the analysis process, the researcher consulted for inter-rater reliability with another researcher who had achieved his doctoral degree and whose research was also both qualitative and phenomenological in nature. The researcher presented the coding, theming and analysis done to the inter-rater for perusal, feedback and revision.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the research methodology used in the study. It restated the research purpose and research questions. It provided the argument for using a qualitative phenomenological research approach including the choice of purposive criterion sampling. Then it described the data collection strategy and protocols before discussing their effect and possible risks to the subjects. It concluded with a description of data analysis procedures and an examination of researcher bias and trustworthiness of the study.

## Chapter IV: Results

### Data Collection

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis for this study of the inner leadership of five transformative California school principals. The study was conducted in strict adherence to the process and protocols outlined in Chapter III of this study. The researcher utilized structured in-depth interviews to obtain phenomenological data from five participants for the purpose of answering the three research questions. The researcher transcribed the interviews using the software HyperTRANSCRIBE by Researchware, Inc. Information that could identify participants was redacted from the original transcriptions to create working transcriptions of the interviews for the study. HyperRESEARCH, another software by Researchware, Inc. was utilized in the coding, theming and analysis of the data. After the preceding process was performed, a doctoral degree holder with knowledge and experience in qualitative studies reviewed the researcher's work, provided feedback, and gave guidance on the coding, theming and analysis of the data. The researcher made modifications of the data analysis in line with the outcome of the preceding inter-rater review. All the study participants were then contacted for a brief, no more than ten minutes, phone call to go over the researcher's findings. The participants validated the analysis and interpretation of the interviews, giving the researcher feedback on accuracy of the results. In this particular study, the inter-rater review yielded a few minor modifications to improve clarity of themes and participant validation yielded no modifications.

**Data gathering.** The data gathering process took a total of three months. The researcher contacted school district offices and county offices of education to gather a list of schools that transformed from P.I. status to clear exit. The school districts and county offices were also requested to provide the name of the principals who were assigned to these schools during the

transformation process. The researcher then validated the schools list by utilizing the Testing and Accountability portion of the California Department of Education website. Web searches for articles and news reports were conducted to validate that the principal identified was indeed the school leader at the time of transformation. If internet searches failed to produce information regarding principal assignment to the school, the researcher placed a direct inquiry of leadership history by phone call to the school. After validation, the researcher contacted the school districts and county offices again for contact information of the principals. The researcher used phone calls and emails to make the initial contact with the participants. As part of this initial contact, the researcher asked the participants to verify that they were the leader of the school identified as undergoing a transformative change from P.I. to clear exit status throughout the transformation process.

**Participants.** This study's Institutional Review Board approval stipulates that the confidentiality of participants and the organizations they belong to presently and/or during the time of school transformation process must be protected. The number of schools that achieve successful transformation from P.I. to clear exit status in any given year is small. Specifying the level (e.g., elementary, middle school, high school), and type (e.g., alternative, etc.) of school produces an even smaller number, often yielding anywhere from zero to a handful.

There is usually a one to one correspondence between any school and the principal at any given point in time. It can be presumed from the small number of schools that transformed, the group of transformative principals is also comprised of a select few. Principals are public figures and their identity publicly accessible. It is therefore quite possible to identify the participants of this study if the presentation of findings specified each participant's distinct characteristics (e.g., race, age, gender). This risk is further increased if this research linked the transformative

principal participants with the characteristics of the schools they led. This makes it imperative that both the transformed schools and transformational principals be described in general terms without linking any characteristics to each or in between each.

Of the five schools involved in this study, one is located in the Northern California region (north of the Central Valley), one is located in the Central Valley region, and three are located in the Southern California region (south of the Central Valley). There is one middle school, one high school, one alternative school, and two elementary schools.

Of the five principal participants, two are male and three are female. One is Hispanic, one is White, one is of mixed race, and two are African-Americans. All participants are middle-aged or over. All participants are currently not assigned to the school they led to transformation. All were promoted to other district locations or other outside school districts after the transformation and one has retired. Two participants were promoted to principal position within the ranks in the schools they led to transformation. The other three participants were assigned to principal position from another school to the school they led to transformation.

**Chapter Structure.** This section, with the introduction of the participants and the summary of the data gathering and analysis process, will be followed by a section reviewing the research questions. The third section will be the presentation of findings organized and presented according to the research question addressed. The final section of this chapter is a brief summary

### **Review of Research Questions**

The main questions of this research are the following:

1. What are the inner experiences of the principal in schools that are able to transform from failing (program improvement) to successful (clear status) at critical points of this transformation?



2. What inner experiences are common among these principals at each critical point?
3. What inner experience does the principal consider to be the most important in the transformation process?

Critical points, as used in these questions, are defined in Chapter I as delineated by the three stages of a school turnaround process described in Leithwood et al. (2010) as follows: “Stage 1: Stopping the decline and creating conditions for early improvement. Stage 2: Ensuring survival and realizing early performance improvements. Stage 3: Achieving satisfactory performance and aspiring to much more” (pp. 44-45). The Stage 1 critical point corresponds to two years prior the successful exit from P.I. status, right before there were sufficient signs of improvement that would meet AYP standards. Stage 2 critical point is one year prior the successful exit from P.I. status, after realizing improvements significant enough to meet AYP standards. Stage 3 critical point is the point of clear exit from P.I. status, as a result of a second full year of meeting AYP standards. Stage 3 critical point is the signal that the school has transformed. The principal participants were asked to identify a fourth critical point called the Tipping Point. This critical point could be anywhere within the transformation process. This critical point, the Tipping Point, is what each of the participants considered the juncture where events turned away from failure and unquestionably toward successful transformation.

## **Findings**

**Research question one.** Research question one asks: “What are the inner experiences of the principal in schools that are able to transform from failing (program improvement) to successful (clear status) at critical points of this transformation?” The following are the inner experiences of the participants at each critical point within each critical point.

***Stage 1 (Critical Point One).*** The Stage 1 critical point corresponds to two years prior the successful exit from P.I. status, right before there were sufficient signs of improvement that would meet AYP standards. At this point the principal participants had the following inner experience.

*Principal 1.* Principal one (P1) experienced extreme stress at this critical point. He described his position as an “all-consuming job.” He felt that the district office and the public at large were ignorant of the true nature of his school and that all they saw was data that showed “we just weren’t meeting the goals.” This ignorance weakened him, and he felt life draining constantly when he encountered this doubt from others. The effort of keeping his emotions under control and implementing self-discipline “in trying to keep them from getting to your soul” weakened him. At this critical point, he began to experience a downturn in his health and body. He started not eating well. He felt he needed to be “always on” and got “little sleep.” He started gaining unwanted pounds.

He realized then that school transformation requires extreme commitment. “Because I was intimately connected to the success of that school. It wasn’t just a job for me. It was a full mind, soul, emotional commitment that you make to that success of that school.” He acknowledged that being well grounded in mind and soul in his inner state controls his emotions and how he reacts.

He had this deep belief that all children can learn and the certainty every student in his school can achieve, and he felt the deep desire to change the outside perception of his school. For him, this belief is a “core value.”

To make this belief a reality, he started strategizing on clear priorities and goals. He also realized that he needed a team of teachers to align with him in reaching these goals. He felt it

was essential to him this team of teachers shares his core value and belief that all children can achieve. He also realized there were teachers who did not share this value and belief. These teachers weakened him. He strategized to either get these teachers on board or “move” them out of the school. “I very deeply wanted to change the hearts and minds of some of our adults in that campus to believe, that our kids could do it. Not through words but through results of their own work.” A part of doing this was to show these teachers the achievement data of every child and the achievement data of the school as a whole. He did this to show these data reveal the school can transform with every child achieving. He also looked closely at teacher actions to ascertain whether these align with this belief. If they did not, he sought to find out what made the teachers “tick” and somehow use that knowledge to realign their beliefs with his and build from there. When these teachers refused to come on board, he sought the alternative of “moving” them. On doing exactly this, he encountered resistance from the very teachers he thought was part of his team, the believers. He could have been emotional about this, but he realized that this was normal human behavior, and he didn’t take it personally.

In working with teachers at this critical point, P1 was very conscious of the school culture as one resting on a “delicate fabric.” He believes this to be true of all schools.

It’s grounded in trust. It’s grounded in honesty, hard work and people believing in one another. And the reason I call it delicate is because this is an underestimated piece for I think, a lot of leaders. Is that it doesn’t take much to lose trust. And when you lose trust, the synergy of the collective team coming together to work towards a common goal is easily lost.

He went to “great lengths” to keep that trust, always focusing on relationship building and making sure his actions matches his words. At the same time he focused on accountability, which made the situation delicate because “with accountability comes fear” for some teachers.

P1 experienced that being reflective and listening are his great strengths and used these skills to empathize and build stronger relationships with his staff.

Though P1 knew that he needed a team of teachers and he excelled in listening, he felt isolated. He is the first to admit to his staff he doesn't know everything and would eventually get answers for them. However, there was really no one in the school he can show his most sensitive vulnerabilities, his uncertainties and fears. Much of the information he was privy to could not be shared with anyone within the school. He enlisted the aid of a retired school superintendent to act as his mentor. He felt he could not ask anyone from the district office because he encountered nothing but disbelief from the personnel there.

*Principal 2.* Principal two (P2), had a vision at this critical point that aligned with what she knew and believed. "I did know that, and I believed that all children can achieve. All children, no matter where." Since her goal was already created with this vision of all children achieving it was just a matter of making it a reality. She felt determination to move the school toward the goal. At the same time, she also felt the need to protect the vision as she did so. Unfortunately, this wasn't what P2 termed as "synergistic" with the fact she was assigned to lead the school from another school, and she felt like an outsider. She could empathize that the staff didn't know her and wondered what she was like. She felt that since the whole staff didn't select her for the principal position they considered her an "intrusion." She felt intense discomfort and stress, always feeling like she was in the "spotlight." She felt "isolated." "I felt at times that I just was not accepted. No matter what I did... It was very lonely." She was outside the circle, not allowed in but having to look constantly into the circle. P2 recalled about a "year's worth of work" went into showing the staff that she was there for the same reason they were. She started the work by learning "my players" and started to strategize on how she can bridge that gap that

existed between them. She noted that she used to be an outgoing person prior to this school assignment and that she became an introvert. Since she felt unable to feel part with most of the staff she enlisted the help of a colleague in another district to “vent” to.

At this point, P2 engaged in “self-talk” around other strategies of what to do to realize her vision. She decided to first focus on establishing a relationship with the parents. She felt very much welcomed by them. She believed in dialogue and listening and used these skills to form relationships with the parents. She felt some comfort for the first time when she did this. She found that staff resented her forming these relationships as they were not included in the interaction between her and the parents. To build a relationship with the staff, she worked on showing the staff the compassion she showed the parents. She didn’t find it easy. It took the better part of the year for some and a couple of years for others.

Starting at this critical point and in later periods of the school transformation, the more she succeeded in building relationships with the staff, the more she started feeling an isolation from her principal colleagues. The principals expressed to her that she gave them the feeling that she “is better than everyone else.” She felt that to be untrue and that she just believed she could make a difference. However, she did acknowledge that she did not feel a part of the principal group any longer. She recalled feeling pressured by colleagues to refrain from exerting much effort, saying, “Why are you doing this? It’s not worth it.” To the point, they would come by her school, knock on her door and say, “We know you’re in there. It’s time to go home.”

P2 felt she couldn’t ask for support from the district office regarding her isolation within the school as they didn’t understand what was going on regarding staff behavior. The district focused on incidents or situations but did not focus in the human aspects of what it takes to transform a school.

P2 started neglecting her health at this point. Starting from this point: “I forgot about my own personal health for the sake of others, some people. I let some things go.” She gained “a lot of weight” and had blood pressure issues.

*Principal 3.* Newly assigned to the school, P3 believed that she could transform it because she believed that all children could achieve. She just needed to figure it out. She perceived that staff morale was very low due to the long-standing, rock-bottom achievement rates. The staff felt that change wasn’t possible. She found it to be a dysfunctional school that stakeholders unconsciously kept dysfunctional with widespread infighting and conflict. Some she felt were delusional. She felt the need to gain the trust of her staff and she did this by intense listening to others. She described this as at least a ninety-day process from the beginning of Critical Point One. She sought to understand her staff and their motivations. She used listening to figure out the patterns and systems of behavior at the school. Listening “with an open heart and mind,” without giving any input, was not easy for her. She refrained from sharing her thoughts and “so biting my tongue a lot till it was bloody.” She used the information she gained by making some changes to address expressed needs from her staff. She started building systems and supports that were non-existent at the school so she can improve staff capacity and quality. She felt these small wins changed the way the staff perceived her. They started seeing her as someone who could change the school for the better.

From the very beginning of Critical Point One, P3 knew that she couldn’t achieve school transformation by doing all the work. P3 strategized to form an instructional leadership team (ILT) to “drive the change at the school.” She used the information she gained from her listening period, reflection and self-talk to figure the key personnel that had the ear of various groups and cliques. She opened up the membership of the ILT to everyone but strategized to make sure these

key people she identified were involved. Though she could not predict at the beginning of Critical Point One how long it would take her to build a team, she achieved the formation of the ILT within the first seven months. She charged the ILT with “creating a vision, a mission, goals, strategies and action plans.” From this, she utilized the team to prioritize and validate the essential changes the school needs to make and act on.

At the start of Critical Point One and on, throughout the six-month process, she felt like she was outside, looking into the school. In interacting with the staff, she felt like she wasn't herself. She felt that she was in perpetual performance art, always “playing this role,” at the same time trying to figure out how to change things. “It's like you get out of the car, and it's like show time folks!” She deliberately performed so she could keep out of the dysfunction (which made her doubt her sanity at times) and allowed herself the distance necessary to make sound judgments. She felt extreme stress at this “because it's pretty lonely, and it's hard.” She alleviated stress by talking with her mentor and; she regrets, sounding off to her family. She also isolated herself from colleagues that were pessimistic and sought colleagues that were more proactive so she could sit and reflect with them about issues she was struggling with currently. “Yeah,” she remarked, “it was very lonely.”

Stress also came with strategizing to build a team and support systems as, to achieve this, she also strategized to remove “at least a third of the staff,” who were incompetent. These strategies eventually included the removal of the entire interview committee who had selected her for the position. Her drive to learn about every student in the school brought her to daily regular classroom visits, review student results and instructional practice. These visits upset teachers who were incompetent and, in turn, created gossip, fear and negative emotions in the school. Beyond extreme discomfort, this caused her to experience “a lot of heart ache and gut

ache and all of that,” and this negatively affected her marriage as well. “I mean it was hell.” She felt empty and exhausted at the end of the day, and she could not find the energy to be present with her family.

Her belief that all children could learn fueled her “relentless pursuit of excellence.” At the same time she had many periods of self-doubt and negative self-talk that questioned whether she was doing the right thing, “am I doing enough, or am I part of the problem?” A part of this, she felt was because principals get very little feedback.

*Principal 4.* Before she was assigned principal, principal four (P4) knew that the school had severe trouble in many areas. However, she didn’t come to know the full depth and extent of trouble until she sat in the principal’s chair in Critical Point One. Instead of discouraging her, the situation gave her a sense of purpose. “The little red engine has always resonated with me. I thought I could.” She had a vision of all the staff engaging positively with all the students and all the students wanting to learn and achieving. She wanted to convene a critical mass of people, “key players,” who shared her vision and worked with her to change the school. Coming into the position on the heels of three principals who each lasted a year, she felt she was selected to lead the school for a reason.

Stress came to P4 from supervisors and the district office that directed the school to be the recipient of a new pilot program that she felt added unnecessary burden to the school’s struggles. She felt that instead of serving the school, she was being asked to serve the program. The program demanded P4 to provide historical data not available or lost by previous principals making the legwork of supplying them even more difficult. To work the program, P4 also had to attend all day meetings at least twice a week offsite, severely undercutting the time she could spend improving the school. This decision to adopt the program was handed down to the school



without consultation with P4. The decision generated feelings of exclusion and isolation for P4 from the supervisors and district office she felt should support her. These feelings intensified when the district office mandated that she resolve years-long school arrears with the current-year school budget, leaving the school practically nothing. Stress also came in the form of another administrator. This person, who has her set of followers, made it publicly known to the school that she, instead of P4 should have been chosen for the principal's position.

Feeling marginalized but undeterred, P4 focused on building a team by focusing on and appreciating the positive features of the school. She brought these to light by a deep study of the school's data. Data study is something she felt she excelled in. She consulted with the long-standing members of the school staff who had institutional knowledge of the school's history. She listened intently to their concerns and their motivation for staying on. She felt the urge to know more about the current conditions and spent much of her day in classrooms, observing teachers and looking at work generated by students. Her observations enabled her to identify and recruit effective teachers (who shared her vision) to form a Professional Development Team. She also used teams to form smaller cohesive groups to make the issues challenging the school more manageable. Her observations also identified teachers she needed to remove, and she spent long weekends at work writing and documenting evidence. She also persisted in using these weekends to flesh out the vision she had for the school. She formed a vision where all school business and processes were as transparent and egalitarian as possible.

P4 recalls feeling very "daunted" and "lonely" at this critical point. She felt she was caught in the middle between the demands of the district supervisory staff and the wariness of the school stakeholders who wondered whether she had what it takes and would remain or leave within a year like her predecessors.

P4 provided the following description that continually came to her mind:

feeling that I was treading water as fast as I could and I was watching the piano in which the character from Titanic was floating, you know, and couldn't get to the piano to hold on and remain afloat although I was treading as vigorously as I could. And there was somebody even pushing me away from the piano.

*Principal 5.* At Critical Point One, Principal five (P5) experienced “a lot of self-talk and conversations with myself.” He isolated himself and engaged in this reflective practice primarily around forming his vision of the transformed school and strategizing plans and actions to achieving it. He felt at that point that it was necessary to do this by himself without any input from anyone else. He had encountered much negativity and naysaying from his staff, and he didn't want that to influence his vision of the transformed school. He knew, though it was espoused, the current culture of the school was not one that emphasized achievement. “We, to be honest, sold our own students short when I first started.” He stayed long hours at the school, getting there earlier and staying later than everyone, always reflecting. He focused on a school that was more in line with his belief. He believed that any student, no matter the circumstances, could be successful. He believed this because he experienced it as a classroom teacher. He was able to get students other teachers had given up on to succeed. He felt isolated since there were no models of transformed schools anywhere in the area. He felt stress at the realization of the enormity of his task. He felt his biggest hurdle was convincing his staff to align with his core beliefs regarding student achievement.

We have to look at what we're doing. We have to reflect on your own “do you believe?” That all kids can learn. And we started from a very basic point. Do you believe that all kids can learn? Do you believe that you can teach any child to become more proficient? That was in the fore front and I kept telling myself constantly. And even then you know you believe that but are you willing to do the work to get it done? And so...it's working. That kind. Working with that, knowing that you have to face that. Again you have the stress pressure because you know it's like I'm going to have to try to make a mind shift. I'm going to have to get them to think differently about their own beliefs.

He was certain he could not do it alone and needed a team of teachers to lead the way. He strategized to emulate the classroom model where he would be the teacher, and his staff would be his students, and he would teach them to achieve. He started holding teachers to higher expectations. He supported by working with the teachers to change instructional practice and modify curriculum to more rigorous standards. He experienced that the students appreciated the preceding strategy more than the teachers did: “Hey it feels like school now.” P5 also refused to be frustrated:

It didn't frustrate me because I knew what the culture was. I think I did. I had faith in everyone. I know I had faith in the kids, let me say it that way. I know it's hard to change an adult. But I had faith that every kid could learn this and be successful.

He continued to cultivate relationships with the students, giving them the prompt and privilege to speak with him about their concerns whenever he would visit classrooms and open up a public dialog.

P5 experienced a couple of teachers as early believers, aligning themselves with him from the start. He then felt the need to get to know the teachers who were not on board immediately, building relationships, asking about their concerns, listening, and at the same time communicating his high expectations. He strongly communicated to these teachers his beliefs that he didn't expect students to do wrong things without reason, and that all students can achieve and learn.

P5 started gaining unwanted weight at this critical point. His long hours resulted in more weight gained with each year resulting in a diabetes diagnosis.

***Stage 2 (Critical Point Two).*** Stage 2 critical point is one year prior the successful exit from P.I. status, after realizing improvements significant enough to meet AYP standards. At this point the principal participants had the following inner experience.

*Principal 1.* P1 felt the shift from uncertainty to certainty at Critical Point Two. He shifted “from not sure if we can do it, to we just did.” He went from self-doubt on whether he can do the job to “ok, not only can I do it, but I’m doing it well.” The school received attention from the press, and the school’s reputation started changing. He felt validated and able to prove to the outside world including his supervisors and the district office that it can be done. What was most important for P1 at this critical point is that now more of the staff will believe that all the students can achieve. He believed that if more of the staff can believe this then their actions will align with their beliefs, and it can only mean more achievement and better outcomes. He felt it’s most rewarding when previous non-believers change their minds. He was not going to take credit for the achievement but only for setting the conditions that enabled it. He knew even before this critical point it takes a team of people to attain the goal of school transformation.

P1 recalls how beliefs can affect action. He had always been careful not to dampen students’ beliefs about what they can achieve. If the student were very low-achieving, he would help the student set attainable goals that would get the student closer to the goals they wanted to achieve, all the time giving them accurate feedback.

Even at this critical point, P1 continued to receive doubt from several factions and felt even more pressured and stressed. The school’s achievement was attributed to luck by confirmed doubters: “Oh you guys got lucky.... Let’s see that over time. That’s the ultimate pressure. You won one, so to speak. Can you win again?” The media asked him for the magic bullet, and P1 was extremely irritated by that question. “There’s no magic bullet. A lot of freaking hard work.” He used the pressure to focus even more on the goals of school transformation.

*Principal 2.* P2 felt celebratory and enthusiastic at Critical Point Two: “And I felt, wow! I can really do this.” At the same time, questions of the next step came to P2’s mind. She started

dialoguing with herself through journaling. She used her journals to record her reflections. She wanted to keep her thoughts and organize them in her journals. Having achieved her school's first AYP success, she felt she needed to be systematic to continue the progress. At this point she was still communicating with the colleague outside the district to bounce ideas off.

P2 received doubt from others at this critical point. She received an award from the district regarding the AYP success, and a colleague came over and whispered: "You know when you make that big jump, you often go back down. So, enjoy it." The colleague's remark niggled at her. She researched California school data achievement and found out that, it was mostly the case that a drop follows the first year of success. She wanted to prove that the trend shouldn't always be the case. She didn't allow doubt to deter her and started making plans: "and every year was a different plan, all working together towards that vision that I had initially." She felt the impetus to learn more about effective classroom instruction. She was certain she had to be a better principal to achieve better results, "because climbing is difficult."

P2 observed during Critical Point Two that staff attrition happened naturally. As she worked to improve the school even further with her staff, teachers who didn't share her beliefs about student achievement elected to move to other schools rather than put in more effort toward the goals. Even two teachers who she thought were good and wanted to hold on to, left. She felt "sad, right? Because my vision is, everyone can achieve." She became even more reflective at that point and "to understand the dynamics of people that year."

*Principal 3.* P3 felt a shift into "first gear, maybe second" at Critical Point Two. It was a "euphoric" point. She felt the focus shift from adult agendas. "People really understand that you're working in tandem. Finally. That this is about the kids, it's not about the adults. And I think that's a huge turning point. It's when you stop talking about the adults' agenda." She saw

her vision starting to emerge. At this point, she had formed a team that shared her beliefs, and she didn't feel as lonely anymore. Her family life improved.

Even with the AYP success, however, school improvement was just as difficult as staff issues always came up. As she looked more into improving the school, previously hidden problems surfaced. She likened it to parenting, "It just never ends." Though the vision and the processes to achieve it were emerging, they weren't institutionalized. She found that the school needed a different kind of work but it's just as difficult, if not even more so.

The new work was focusing more on what the school needs to undertake to address student learning interventions and good "first-teaching." Because of the AYP success, the school received grants and awards. More importantly, for P3, there was less scrutiny and demands from supervisors and the district office as the school proved itself with vastly improved achievement rates. She felt relief.

*Principal 4.* P4 felt validated by the school's first AYP success. It proved the analysis and the strategy she implemented during the year leading up to Critical Point Two were working. Even with this success, P4 still received directives for her school to join those who had not been successful in achieving AYP benchmarks. She experienced stress when she had to take a stand against this. She felt she needed to protect the teachers, parents and students from the continual pressure of the mandates handed down from the district office to all district schools in P.I. status. P4 experienced "a lot of tension" with her act of refusal. She had to consult with outside agencies, her Union leadership and invoked California educational law and policy so she could prevent her supervisors and the district office from strong-arming the school to join the P.I. group. "I wasn't defiant. That's not my character, but it was a true commitment to this course of action. I truly believed in what we were doing."

Believing that all children can achieve, P4 dug into the data and concentrated on supporting and providing intervention for the students who were still not achieving. She felt some relief at this Critical Point Two with the entry two new assistant principals who were quite proficient in many areas. One she described a “renaissance man,” who fully supported her efforts and contributed his considerable training and instructional skills to the effort of transforming the school. Having negative health issues from the stress of the previous year, she was not certain she would have the capacity to do what she did in the first year to bring the school to AYP sufficiency again. It was also the first time in many years for the school that a principal has stayed beyond the first year. She experienced a gain of trust and support from the stockholders with the first AYP. She engaged in much self-talk and “remind myself that I was at this school for a reason.” She likened the experience to a garden:

I had planted the seeds. You know the seeds were being watered. They were being fertilized. I may not see immediate change or growth but the things that would lead to that change or growth had been done and were being done. And you know, sort of just keeping the faith, and keeping...continuing to do what I knew to do. From literature, from my own educational background and experience, would lead to, could lead to, you know, the outcomes that we were hoping for. The challenge was just to keep the people away from digging up our garden or pulling at the seed to see what’s happening before it was time.

She experienced utter conviction and resolution, drawing the line in the sand with her supervisor

I remember one conference with the supervisor saying, ‘I was selected to be principal, please let me be principal. I don’t mind being, when the time comes, if you find that my service lacking, you know, say so, and we’ll deal with it. But until that time comes please just let me do what I feel is my job.’

At this critical point she was experiencing much physical pain due to negative health issues but she struggled onwards to do “what needed to be done.”

*Principal 5.* P5 outwardly showed confidence right before Critical Point Two, but inside he was very nervous. As soon as he received the AYP results from the State he felt very

validated by the successful AYP achievement and he shared them immediately with his staff. He recalls every teacher turning into believers that their students can achieve. He shared the results with students, expressing pride. He noticed a swelling of pride in himself and the students. He experienced that the school received more parent involvement after the news. There was a surge of a sense of pride among the stakeholders. He felt a surge of confidence as well: “And there I had a lot of confidence that second year. Oh man, I had so much confidence that second year!” He experienced the school being regarded in a “different light” by others and “it just snowballed from there.” P5 described the experience as a team effort that he facilitated by being honest and transparent with everyone about his vision and goals. He asked everyone to join him, and it worked. P5 described the feeling as systemic euphoria.

After the initial euphoria, P5 felt trepidation that his staff will drop the ball thinking they already made it and will not sustain their efforts at improvement. He went from certainty and confidence, to stress and worry, and back up again.

I started to worry because you know it’s all great to celebrate but you kind of tend to rest on your laurels a little bit. I’m like, oh we’re doing everything great but we have to keep that up, we have to keep that momentum up. So again you kind of go through...it’s like a rollercoaster of emotions like you’re very happy. But it’s almost like it’s almost more stressful because you’re so close. And it’s so rare for people to get out of PI in two years.

***Stage 3 (Critical Point Three).*** Stage 3 critical point is the point of clear exit from P.I. status, as a result of a second full year of meeting AYP benchmarks. Arriving at Stage 3 (Critical Point Three) is the signal that the school has transformed.

*Principal 1.* By this critical point, P1 has felt that the school transformation process was a truly collaborative effort: “I never felt like, yay, I did this. It was always we. Yay, we did this. And we were you know all in a room waiting for the state to release its data.” When the news of the school achieving the second consecutive year of AYP benchmarks came down, he went from



“feeling the loser school to a winning school.” Though he was the principal, he had modest feelings regarding his contribution to the school transformation process. “My greatest pride was in gaining the teacher’s capacity built up to be the real owners of it. Because they’re in the class teaching the kids each day.” He gave himself credit for hiring excellent teachers, never settling for an applicant that would be “just ok.”

But he wasn’t satisfied. Knowing the data deeply, he felt: “This wasn’t the end. This is a significant piece, but we still have a lot of kids that are underperforming relative to others in the state.” He felt the school still had a long way to go. As the principal, he still felt the stress and pressure of unpredictable things, such as a sudden serious altercation, that could throw a wrench into all this achievement. “You’re one incident from having it all go downhill.” He still felt that the school culture was a delicate fabric that needed constant attention and care. He still had a couple of highly problematic teachers, and he was regularly dealing with their issues. He experienced the preceding as obstacles to maintaining his focus and keeping his emotions manageable and in control. “So all of that can pull you away from doing the work that keeps all of these inner experiences positive, and it can suck you into a whole world of negativity.” P1 thought many times that being a principal is just:

An impossible job...just when you are succeeding, you get thrown curve balls left and right, left and right. There are many times when you sit there and you wonder whether you can bounce them all or you know carry the school forward. So it’s hard even when things are getting better.

The exit from P.I. status gave him the confidence to push back at district policies and people who had agendas that he felt weren’t in line with what the school was trying to accomplish. He admitted to challenging his supervisors many times and he “got slapped around for it a few times.” He said he had enough faith that at the end of the day, if you acted according to your beliefs, things will turn out well. He put faith in the hands of a “higher being,”

acknowledging that he can't control everything. He did what he thought was right according to a higher purpose, and he surrendered to the will of a higher power for the outcome. His faith had kept him steady through many self-doubts, and battles he had to fight for the school, particularly the students. He believed that adult needs are important, however, student needs take precedence.

P1 recalled that most for most of his life as a student he always faced teachers who didn't believe in him and he bought into their expectations, thinking that his teachers were right and he struggled. One day, he challenged himself and saw proof that he can excel. His mantra to non-believers was "just give me time and you will see." That mantra held him up from that moment on into success as a student, a teacher and a principal.

*Principal 2.* P2 didn't know what to feel at this critical point. If anything, she felt scared. She received the accolades and congratulations from numerous agencies and offices and recalled being very humble about the school transformation. She felt the excitement of their greeting, but she couldn't make herself feel their excitement. She worried that she would not be able to sustain this transformation. She felt more isolated from her principal colleagues since her school was the only one that achieved clear status. She keenly felt the challenge of coming up with even more improvements. By this time, she sought support from her staff. She felt this moment was when everyone in her school felt they could collaborate and achieve even more improvements. The students and their parents also exhibited their pride and greater motivation to achieve and support the school. For the first time since she arrived at that school, she no longer felt an outsider.

P2 didn't feel that the exit to clear status was the end goal:

People say we've arrived. But that's really the bottom floor. What have you really arrived to? You have arrived to continuing on that work and on that journey. And I think that's what that year was, right. With there everyone's working together, really, the work began that year. That's when the work began actually.

Even at this point P2 didn't have much of an appreciation for her capacity as a leader. When she received praise for her school's achievements and her leadership, she would actually attribute her achievements to it's just the way she did things. Now, while she is in a position to help and mentor principals, she feels that it takes a special leader to transform a school and what she did was rare. Having the title of principal does not mean much until the person makes the title mean something. She stated that most principals look for scripts, activity lists, and behaviors without understanding what it takes inside their selves to actually execute those behaviors effectively and to "own it."

*Principal 3.* P3 felt "great" at Critical Point Three. She welcomed the extra funds that were sent to her school for its achievement. She welcomed the accolades, greetings and awards. P3 also felt that the work was just beginning. School data revealed that there were still kids who weren't achieving to standards. However, she felt encouraged to work harder, re-evaluate the school's strategic plans and collaborate with her teams. "It's a labor of love."

At this point, she was still working as hard as ever on professional development and on removing teachers who did not share the belief that all children can achieve. "I did believe not everybody believed the kids could learn. So definitely 'weeded those folks out.'" Even the high-performing teachers told her "you want more all the time." She questioned herself at this point if she was pushing the teachers too hard or not.

I do drive a hard (laugh), yeah, but every year I was getting rid of more people too, and pushing them. And you know it's hard because it does eat at you that it's that constant quest for the best. Our kids deserve the best, so.

She admits to a drive like an energizer bunny. It never stops. Most of the teachers that stayed at this critical point, and teachers she chose to replace those removed, exhibited the same quality of never-ending drive for excellence.

At this point, P3 reported maintenance of positive health. She regularly worked out and during those workouts she would be “planning ahead, living in the future...reflecting and thinking about that next step and that next strategy.”

*Principal 4.* P4 felt elated at Critical Point Three. She valued the long hours spent by her assistant administrators into the school programs, professional development and supporting students who were underachieving. She felt validated the “garden” she protected was indeed growing and thriving. Had she not been having very negative physical health she would have done a happy dance. She noted that the students and parents were even more motivated to participate in the school’s progress. She hoped at that point in time that the naysayers and nonbelieving staff would come on board and lend their effort in a continual upward progress. She noted that this indeed took place in the school year. She felt that the work was just beginning. The school can improve more and achieve a better reputation in the eyes of outsiders.

*Principal 5.* At this critical point, P5 felt as if a thousand pounds came off his back. He realized for the first time in two years how hard he was driving himself towards the goal of school transformation. He felt validated because he set the performance bars higher than what was expected, and it paid off. He was appreciative of the contributions from everyone at the school, particularly the parents. His was the only school in the area that achieved a clear exit status. He felt he proved to everyone that it could be done if you focus on the students. Other schools invested in programs and technology.

I just invested in my students. I invested all I had in my students. I don’t need no smart boards. I need you guys to do the best that you can and I’m going to push my teachers to teach you what you need to know and you’re going to be successful.

P5 had a difficult time attributing the successful transformation of the school to his leadership. He felt it was more a collaborative effort. The interview conducted for this research

was the first time he acknowledged that his leadership was probably the determining factor as no one in the area could replicate his success in any school in the same communities.

***The Tipping Point.*** The principal participants were asked to identify a fourth critical point called the Tipping Point. This critical point could be anywhere within the transformation process. The Tipping Point, is what each of the participants considered to be the juncture where events turned away from failure and unquestionably toward successful transformation.

*Principal 1.* P1 states the Tipping Point for his school's transformation was the change in leadership from the previous principal to his. He posited that he built on the accomplishments of the previous principal:

To me the ultimate success is not what happens when you're in the role, it's what happens when you leave. If the school continues to improve, that's a sign that you did something right. If it falls apart, that's not good, because it can't be contingent on one person being there, because that's not ever going to happen. So those tipping points to me were change in the leadership.

*Principal 2.* P2 shared that the Tipping Point was the moment of clear exit from P.I. status. She experienced the transformation as just the beginning and not the end goal. She felt she needed to continue the improvement of the school and used the new success as a springboard to even greater accomplishments. She reprioritized her energy to be spent not only in setting the bar higher but in valuing and celebrating the accomplishments of her staff on a constant basis. She built a "culture of appreciation." She reported feeling very happy that year, "and I love coming to work too.... This is a great place to work and be. Really and truly."

*Principal 3.* P3 felt that the Tipping Point in her school's transformation occurred when she was able to remove enough staff whose beliefs were not aligned to the achievement of all children. This process created a critical mass and made staff aligned with her vision comprise the majority of the school. She always felt she was treading the delicate balance of "when to push

and when to praise.” Once she had enough people on her side, it was easier to walk that line and the path to transformation went faster. This point occurred right before the beginning of Critical Point 2.

*Principal 4.* P4 refrained from identifying one single Tipping Point. In response to this inquiry, she stated that in her experience, there were three factors that created a “perfect positive storm.” All three occurred almost simultaneously. The first was receiving grant monies that enabled the school to move forward in spite of having to account for years-long arrears. The second was the hiring of two key assistant administrators who shared her vision of school transformation. She regarded these administrators as skilled and having integrity. These administrators worked on professional development, targeting and supporting students needing intervention and creating a school climate that valued achievement and equity. The third factor was the achievement of an inner state where she felt totally committed to school transformation enough to defy the district leadership. The three previous principals in the school didn’t last more than a year.

I truly felt that I was in this school, and I was sort of in it to win it in terms of this particular course, in terms of taking this particular course of action. And I no longer was concerned about or feared what they could do to me. Previous administrators had been demoted or transferred or this or that and the other.

She felt she had nothing to lose.

*Principal 5.* P5 felt that the most critical point, the Tipping Point of his school’s transformation was in the beginning, when he created his personal vision of what a transformed school looks like manifested. All his decisions and actions stem from this inner belief and vision of all his students making unheard-of achievements. He came to the realization then that he needed to concentrate his efforts on the staff that did not share this belief or vision. He decided to call the District Human Resources office to inform them that he was changing the five-year

teacher evaluation cycle. The five-year cycle required that teachers who receive a satisfactory evaluation are not to be evaluated again for five years. He planned on and started evaluating each of his teachers, every year, for the next two years.

**Research question two.** Research question two asks: “What inner experiences are common among these principals at each critical point?” This section will list and describe the common inner experiences all five principals had around each critical point. The following are the common inner experiences shared by the principals at each critical point.

***Common inner experiences at Stage 1 (Critical Point One).***

*Stress.* All principals went through profound stress in their inner experience at Critical Point One. P1 described his position at that point as an “all-consuming job.” The public, the district office, and many members of his staff were ignorant of his school’s potential. This ignorance caused him the anxiety and stress of having to prove to the outside world what he knew through deep examination of student data. The constant effort at self-discipline in his thoughts and behaviors, combined with controlling his emotions caused much inner stress and negative health experience.

P2 experienced profound stress from the reaction of the school staff to her assignment as incoming principal. She felt she was always in the spotlight. Her every move recorded, analyzed and judged negatively. P2’s stress caused negative health experiences as well, which added to her stress in a vicious cycle. She had developed hypertension and gained much unwanted weight.

For P3, stress came from the very commitment and perseverance that kept her going through daunting periods. She experienced stress from the extreme highs and lows of feelings she had during Critical Point One. From the euphoria of small gains to debilitating periods of self-doubt, she scaled the gamut. “It was hell.” Her inability to balance work and family life

caused much stress for her. Stress also came from the negative feelings she experienced as she worked to remove staff members who were unwilling to work to move the school to positive transformation.

P4 experienced stress as she encountered the seeming impossibility of her task during Critical Point One. The huge arrears she inherited and must be responsible for, the ineffective programs imposed by district office that took away a significant portion of her time from the real work of transforming the school, and the low staff morale resulting from recent rapid changes of leadership, all contributed to the image of treading water and not being able to reach land. She was the little engine that could, but she can't go on forever. Her stress resulted in negative health consequences grave enough she had to be hospitalized in between Critical Point Two and Critical Point Three.

P5 experienced stress when he faced the inertia of a culture of low-expectations all around him. Not only was this at his school site, but it was also everywhere in the schools in his local area. Stress came in the long hours of strategizing and working to change an entire community's culture of low-achievement and complacency. Stress caused P5 to have health issues.

*Profound Belief.* All five principals had the inner experience of the deep belief that all children can learn and achieve. P1 described this belief as fundamental to his core, where everything he thought, felt and believed originated. The data he had of the school confirmed it, and he strove to make others believe and see it as well. P2 described it as more than a belief; it went beyond faith to a certainty. P3 wouldn't have taken the position at the school she transformed if she did not have this belief. It would have been impossible to achieve what she did if this belief did not drive her. P4 went beyond believing that all children can learn and



achieve into believing that all of them can be good people and productive citizens. P5 said: “I had faith that every kid could learn and be successful.” How to create a school that would make that into reality was going to be the challenge of his next two years.

The commitment experienced by all the principals toward school transformation and the perseverance they exhibited revealed the intensity of this belief. All were extremely stressed by their efforts. All worked very long hours and weekends. P1 described it as a “full mind, soul, emotional commitment.” P2 endured the loneliness and isolation she felt from both the staff and her principal colleagues. P3 forced herself to perform acts that didn’t come naturally, feeling inauthentic and isolated. P4 kept treading the metaphorical waters of the Titanic as waves kept her from reaching her goal. The arrears, the ineffective mandated programs, long hours taken away from the site, each was daunting in and of itself. P5 faced an entire community with opposite beliefs, and he still strove to move forward.

*Envisioning the future.* All the participants experienced envisioning the future. This inner vision was a future manifestation of their profound belief that all children can learn and achieve. P1 saw it as the realization from the district and the outside world that his school was a winner. P2, P3 and P4 saw it as a group of collaborative teachers engaging the students and pushing them to higher and higher achievement. P5 saw it as motivated, happy students with the self-expectation that they can achieve anything they set their hearts to attain.

When I had my vision of what I thought a successful school was, I didn’t let anything deter me, I didn’t let anything knock me off track. So whatever obstacle came my way, I met it head on. I didn’t show any um, I didn’t try to dance around, I didn’t try to make up, I didn’t try to water it down. I kept it transparent about what we can, can’t do. And let’s just do the best that we can.

*Strategizing to create the envisioned future.* During Critical Point One, the five principals experienced constant reflecting and strategizing to achieve their vision of the transformed school.

All spent long weekday hours and weekends in this endeavor. The strategies to achieve school transformation include: (a) Building relationships with stakeholders, (b) Creating a team of teachers that shared the same vision, (c) Removing teachers who do not share the same belief in students, and (d) Maintaining a balance between driving forward and inertia.

All five principals used empathy and listening to build relationships with stakeholders. P1 listened for what makes people “tick,” what motivates them. He would continue listening to those who he discovered shared his beliefs about students. He started building relationships based on the shared beliefs. He would dismiss those who didn’t share his beliefs. He made sure that his actions matched his words so he could build trust. P2, finding the teachers largely unresponsive at first, focused on listening to the parents, and built from there. Realizing that she has achieved successful relationships with the parents, teachers slowly came on board, and she used her listening strategy to involve them in the goals she had for the school. P3 wasn’t a natural listener, but she forced herself to do it so she can learn about the power networks in the school. She wanted to find out what motivated each of the staff and why they chose to be at that site even if it was perpetually low performing. She used the information she obtained to gain small wins and to reflect back to the school the issues that surfaced while listening. This process slowly gained her the trust of the teachers who truly wanted the school to change. P4 listened to the veteran teachers of the school for their shared history and aspirations. She focused on appreciative inquiry, bringing out the positive qualities of the school and focusing on them. This focus on what’s working in the school softened the naysayers. P5 circumvented the teachers at first because he found their low expectations of students hard to take. He went straight to listening to the students. He structured these listening sessions during his classroom visits and gave students who wanted to sound off a pass to see him.

All the participants felt inner certainty that they alone could not transform the school. They needed a team of teachers, students, and parents to transform the school. They utilized the relationships they built to create these teams. P1 took away any teacher responsibility that was non-instructional and had his teacher teams concentrate on instructional goals. Feeling excluded from most of the teachers, P2 worked on the parent team first and then created teacher teams when she had more come on board. P3 learned who the leaders of the various network groups among the staff are and made sure they are included in the formation of instructional teams. She had them create “a vision, a mission, goals, strategies and action plans.” P4 was able to enlist the efforts of veteran teachers from four clustered areas of the school through building relationships. She created a professional development cadre out of these teachers, and they worked to enlist other teachers into the effort of school transformation. P5 concentrated on the students and teachers of a half-dozen classrooms. He formed relationships with the students and teachers of these classrooms and built on these. He publicized their achievements to the rest of the school. The concentration on achievements snowballed into virtuous cycles of more group memberships and achievements.

Removing teachers became a strategy for school transformation. P1, P3, P4 and P5, actively observed classrooms and documented ineffective teaching. Guidance and support were given to the ineffective teachers. Most teachers deemed ineffective sought to transfer out, and some were removed through negative evaluations. P2 utilized the Reduction In Force (RIFs) that was being imposed in her school district to remove ineffective teachers. Many of P2’s teachers sought to transfer to other schools, stating that P2’s expectations were too high.

All five participants sought to balance the drive to move forward to transformation and the school inertia. All had self-doubts whether they were pushing too hard or not enough.

*Isolation and loneliness.* All principals experienced a significant degree of isolation and loneliness at Critical Point One. P1 felt isolated. He realized that he couldn't confide his inner experiences to anyone at school. He realized the district office, and his supervisors did not understand the potential of his school to transform. His initial attempts at seeking support got him what he felt was the wrong advice. He sought and acquired a mentor whom he could consult regarding his deepest thoughts and concerns regarding his work. P2 felt excluded by the school staff, "no matter what I did. It was very lonely. I don't know how else to say that." She felt a spotlight was always on her wherever she was at school and whatever she did. She felt publicized and judged constantly. She also felt her supervisors did not understand the school and she couldn't confide in them. Her principal colleagues discouraged her attempts at transforming the school, stating that it was futile. The more she proved her colleagues wrong, the more these colleagues discouraged her. She, therefore, made a decision to isolate herself from them. She started journaling to record and reflect on her thoughts. She also sought the advice and support of a principal friend living in another part of the state. Like P2, P3 also felt an outsider at Critical Point One. Not a natural listener, she forced herself to listen and not make any input for the first ninety days of her arrival. All throughout this period, she felt that she was acting and playing a role. She was extremely uncomfortable with the organizational and interpersonal dysfunction of the staff she encountered on her arrival. "Sometimes it makes you feel like you're the one who is crazy." Her role-playing was a defense against this. "And even when you interact with them you're playing a role. You're playing this role so you could stay out of it. You don't get in it with them, but rather, it's like acting. It really is." P4 felt lonely and isolated at what she termed "caught in the middle." She was in the middle between the demands of the district office and the needs of the stakeholders at her school. She could not get the support she needed from her

supervisors or the district office. All she received were directives and orders. She later found out that her supervisor was keeping from her documented positive observations from several district agencies regarding her school. She felt she could not be the authentic leader she needed to be for her school because she was always fighting fires. P5 intentionally isolated himself from everyone. He felt he needed the isolation to form his personal vision of what his deep belief that all children could learn would look like manifested. There was no transformed school or transformational leader within five local counties that he could reach out to for advice.

***Common inner experiences at Stage 2 (Critical Point Two).***

*Positive emotions.* At receiving the news of the school's first AYP success which marks the Critical Point Two, all principals reported feeling positive emotions.

One of the common positive emotions felt was celebratory. P1 reported that more than the high bar of successful AYP accomplishment, all other benchmark data reflected the change in his school. "When you go for a goal and you do what you can. Then when the results come back stronger than you thought was even possible, that's the stuff that blows your mind."

Alongside celebratory feelings, P2 and P3 felt euphoria.

Another common positive emotion experienced was validation and certainty. P1 felt that finally, he has evidence to show the outside world that not only can he do it, but he is also doing it well. He felt a shift from uncertainty to certainty. "You go from not sure if we can do it, to we just did." P2 felt her plan was coming into place and started to imagine more possibilities, "I felt like, 'Wow, I can really do this.' I was in a place of.... 'The world is mine now. Okay, we're doing this.'" P3 felt her vision, what she saw in the beginning, was emerging, and she had control of the transformation. P4 felt that the AYP success validated the strategies and actions she took the school year prior. She was ready to make a stand and continue with her plans

regardless of what programs the school district tries to impose on her school. P5 stated the AYP success, “validated everything I shared with the staff. Immediately every teacher jumped on board. Immediately.”

*Profound belief.* At Critical Point Two, all principals felt the intensification of their profound belief that all children can learn and achieve. P1 always longed others to believe as he did. “Because, in my heart, I believed that once we made more believers of the adults and the kids, the work would take care of itself. Because their actions would align with their own beliefs.” He saw this as a key point in time in the school’s transformation as more teachers, parents and even the students themselves shared his belief. P2’s intensified belief enabled her to weather the high teacher attrition stemming from self-initiated transfers. Instead of feeling rejected, she looked upon it as an opportunity to find more teachers who shared her belief. With her renewed belief, P3 didn’t have the previous doubt that she could take the school toward the transformation she envisioned. P4 likened her belief to a seed she planted to make a garden grow. “The challenge was to keep people away from digging up our garden or pulling at the seed to see what’s happening. Before it was time.” Situated in a depressed community, the parents in P5’s school, for the most part, did not believe their children could achieve or do well in school. When his students started feeling more confident about their abilities, the effect was infectious. P5 felt his belief strengthen when parents started sharing it. “When the kids started feeling better about themselves and seeing going forward, I noticed the parents kind of jumped on. ‘Hey, my kid is pretty smart.’ Yeah, he is actually...and they got invested in the kids’ success.”

*Stress.* The inner experience of stress did not disappear or lessen with the AYP success. P1 encountered outsiders who attributed his success to luck. “Some people, at first, will say oh you guys got lucky, or, you know that was. ‘Let’s see that over time.’ That’s the ultimate

pressure. You won one, so to speak. ‘Can you win again?’” He felt not only did he have to go through all that happened in the first year and do it all over again; he had to do it better. The media constantly asked him what the “magic bullet” was. He recalled feeling very irritated and pressured by the underlying assumption in that question. “I said, there’s no magic bullet. A lot of freaking hard work. But the media didn’t want to hear it... Because the good answer is not one that makes sensational headlines.” P2 had her share of non-believers from her colleagues. One of them said, “you know when you make that big jump, you go down the next year.” She felt the stress of climbing higher to the next stage of clearing P.I. status. P3 described it as:

So it gets harder, with the more you get in. And I think that’s why a lot of people don’t stay, you know more than two or three years sometimes at the school. Or it just stays, flat-lines. Because what you have to do the second and third year are different and just as hard. It’s just as hard. It’s just a different kind of work that the school needs.

With her negative health experience, P4 didn’t know whether she had the capacity to continue the improvement for a second to the third year. The serendipitous arrival of two assistant administrators who shared her beliefs was a relief. Unfortunately, with the school district’s insistence that she implement the imposed programs at her school for one more year, she had to seek the aid of her union to stand her ground. She excluded her school from participation. This refusal caused her undue stress on top of her negative health. An independent evaluator assigned by the state was scheduled to evaluate P5’s school that year. Unbelieving of the school’s success, the evaluator visited him at his site, stating that she would be especially hard with the process of evaluation. She offered him her card so he can opt out and choose another evaluator. His superintendent encouraged him to change evaluators. However, he didn’t.

*Envisioning the future.* All five principals experienced an affirmation of the vision they had (in Critical Point One) for the school based on their inner beliefs. P3 stated: “So the vision is really emerging. What you saw in the beginning. Where you knew that you had it. It takes time.

So you see that you can't build that team right away. Because it takes time to build that capacity and that quality.”

*Strategizing to create the envisioned future.* All five principals experienced strategizing for the next level of the path to transformation. P1 strategized on professional development improving on instructional strategies. Alongside celebration of successes, part of P1's strategy was also a transparency to acknowledge failure, making it public, so that it can support a culture of improvement. P2 felt the importance of reflection, “That's the problem that I see with many people. When people now get a sense of accomplishment, they run to everything without really reflecting on how to do things systematically. Step by step.” P2 used her journaling to reflect and strategize her plan step by step, “put a plan for what we were going to do next. And every year was a different plan, all working together towards that vision that I had initially.” P3 questioned herself constantly about next steps. She strategized and led her team to institutionalize successful instructional practices, taking it from novelty to routine habit. “It's sort of building that culture for learning. And then you get into the academic culture and how do you get all the kids to standard. How are you going to do that?” Her school team worked on intervention and more importantly, quality first-teaching experiences for the students. She led her team to create rubrics long before the district came down with standardized rubrics for all schools. P4 strategized on improving her improvement plan separate from the one the district wanted to impose on her school. She ran the plan by the school site council, the parents, and the instructional team for approval. Before the district could organize to enforce their plans, she sent them hers and refused participation for the district's plan. P5 strategized on how to support all the teachers who came on board with the school's recent success.



*Perseverance.* With the celebratory feelings and the concomitant stress and insecurity feelings of whether they can sustain improvement towards transformation, all five principals experienced the need for perseverance. P1 experienced it as maintaining focus and deliberate actions. P2 didn't allow obstacles and setbacks to deter her from implementing her strategies for school transformation. She saw the hindrances as more opportunity to reflect and improve. P3 overcame her doubts and persisted. She identified students whose results did not hit benchmarks and used that as an inspiration to move forward and support them. P4 realized that she was the first principal in four years who stayed on for a second year to lead the school, without being removed or electing to transfer out. She felt this proved she was there for the long haul to the stakeholders. Her negative health problems impeded her, but she kept on.

The pain was intense. And trying to lead this school where I couldn't often sit down, or stand up, or walk because the pain was a challenge. But it had to be done. The school deserved something beyond, you know, a different leader every year. Yeah, so I did what needed to be done.

Often, when she felt particularly vulnerable, she would go into her office and remind herself her initial feeling that she was at that school for a reason. P5 realized the school needed to stop celebrating at some point and focus on sustaining the improvement. Perseverance toward the goal of transformation was the key because it's so easy to slip back and stay in P.I. status.

So again, you kind of go through. It's like a rollercoaster of emotions. Like you're very happy. But it's almost like, it's almost more stressful. Because you're so close. And it's so rare for people to get out of P.I. in two years. You hope that you can do it. But it's so rare. All of the schools in the district were P.I. five, and so that's what they were doing. And it's like kind of once you get into P.I., it was sort of like this self-fulfilling prophecy. You're just there, and you're going to stay there.

***Common inner experiences at Stage 3 (Critical Point 3).***

*Positive emotions.* All principals felt the concomitant celebratory feelings at having their school exit P.I. status and achieving the clear exit status. P1 also saw the improvement of all

other markers of achievement that weren't included in the AYP. His school topped the charts on new benchmarks being set by the district that year. Even his staff attendance rate was the highest in the district. P2 was pleased that the news of clearing P.I. had a very much positive effect on the students' sense of self-worth and their parents became more highly involved. Clearing P.I. status wasn't the only achievement for P3's school at Critical Point Three. Her school received the award for Title One Achieving School that year as well. She was grateful for the rewards, some of them monetary. She felt these rewards encouraged even more growth. Most of all, she was happy for the lifting of scrutiny and mandates from the district office. They left her school alone after that. P4 stated that if she could physically do the "happy dance" then she would have. She enjoyed having the naysayers come on board and sought to collaborate with them. She was happy for the parents whose attitude toward the school had changed at that point. Most of all, she was happy for the students who were aware the school achieved a milestone. She could tell they were very proud of their accomplishments from the smiles on their faces and the changed climate of the school. P5 felt it was "super rewarding." He had continuous, affirmative self-talk with himself at Critical Point Three. He appreciated most that no one thought it was a fluke. Success and achievement became the norm for his school.

*Stress and perseverance.* All five principals experienced inner stress even as their schools cleared P.I. status. The stress took on a different quality for most. They met stress with perseverance. P1 found himself fighting back against the district office. The district was imposing programs that were not in line with his school's progress. He felt the school's achievements were enough validation to push back.

So I had the confidence and the data to go and say when somebody asks me, whether its district stuff or if a policy came up that was asking us to do something. That it wasn't really going to be in line with what we were doing, I would always fight it. And I rested on the fact that I believe we had enough people on the district that would have some

common sense. That even when I challenged my bosses because I did that plenty of times, and I got slapped around for it a few times, that at the end of the day, I would be ok because I have enough faith in it. Not always, consistent, but it was there. And I think ultimately it played out for the better. You got to have faith that the right thing will happen.

P2 felt fear. Her school had improved tremendously in the past two years, and she felt the naysayers would even come back even more vehemently this time. She felt that clearing P.I. status was not an end; it was just the beginning.

Now everyone was at a place where we could thrive. It's almost like when you get to 800 in the old days sort of speak now. You get to 800 and people say 'we've arrived.' But that's really the bottom floor. What have you really arrived to? You have arrived to continuing on that work and on that journey. And I think that's what that year was. With there, everyone's working together. Really, the work began that year. That's when the work began actually.

P3 echoed this in her interview. "But you also know there's so much more to do. Just exiting the P.I. is just the beginning. Really. 'Cause you still have a lot of kids that aren't at standard. So yeah, it encourages you to just work harder, certainly." P4 felt the same stress of having to do even better.

Of course you worry about people celebrating too much. Because I feel like there's never a down time, there's never a time when you can just say, 'ok I'm done. I did this. It's ok.' No, it's like now we're worrying about the next year and the next test. So it's like this vicious cycle of, you know, celebrate, but not too much because you still have work to do because this is your next goal.

Being the principal of the only school that transformed in his area, P5 felt the stress and pressure of ensuring the school's transformation would be long-lasting. "Because once you make it. Once you exit P.I., you have to stay out of it. And it's not easy because the stakes just keep getting higher and higher."

*Profound belief.* At this critical point, all principals felt an affirmation of their belief that all children can learn and achieve. P1 felt that his belief and his acting upon it were right and had a higher purpose. Realizing he cannot control everything and his efforts have limits, he

surrendered and put faith “in the hands of a higher being.” In affirming his belief, he questioned his purpose in much self-talk:

Why are you there? What are you there to do? You know. And you do it. To me, those are like the battle wounds of fighting the fight, so to speak. But yeah I remember going back to the office, and it was just like, it gets to you. And there were many instances like that where you go ‘wow is this really,’ you know, ‘can I keep this ship together?’

It was at this critical point that P2 started feeling less lonely. She realized that her inner belief that all children can learn and achieve brought her the staff that could make it happen by clearing out the naysayers. She started to create a “family” at school. A home away from home. P3 became even more relentless at making sure every student who was not achieving to standard was identified and supported.

We were all like you know, ok we have these thirty FBB kids, what are we doing for these kids? What can we do? More specifically how can we track it? It was just that kind of group that you build in a school like that. I guess if we would’ve stopped here, we could’ve rested on our laurels some. But we didn’t. We took it three more years.

P4 focused on more professional development to ensure every teacher was capable of reaching every student.

I knew what I wanted to happen. I knew what I wanted the kids to learn. I knew how I wanted them to go about learning. And I knew it because I had experience. I was a teacher. I know how to use data to plan curriculum to move students. But you have to. Just like our kids, you have to take them from where they are. I had to stop at a certain point and look at my staff and say, ‘ok this is, they don’t know this. I need to work with them.’ Everybody was at a different level.

P5 acted on his beliefs and focused on the students who were still struggling.

It’s a lot of work, but you can do it. And you know having that confidence and seeing them when they’re tired and down, and you pat them on the back and you just tell them ‘good job.’ And they’ll keep fighting through it.

*Complete inner shift to team mindset.* At Critical Point Three, all five principals had totally shifted from viewing the school’s transformation as a result of their leadership to viewing

the school's transformation as a result of team effort. This team included not only teachers but students and parents as well. P1 states at this point:

It's hard for me to go to self because I always felt it as a 'we.' I never felt like, 'Yay, I did this.' It was always we. 'Yay, we did this.' And we were, you know, all in a room together waiting for the state to release its data. My greatest pride was in gaining the teachers' capacity built up to be the real owners of it. Because they're in the class teaching the kids each day. Also, I credited myself for hiring good people because I wouldn't settle for somebody that would just be ok. I spend a lot of time hiring the best I could. Even if it took fifty interviews to hire a few people. I spent a lot of time on that. And we did it that way.

P2 felt that the school had come together for the first time that year. She no longer felt isolated. The school had become a home away from home. She spent much time with the teachers in the new professional development room she furnished, eating, planning, coaching, making merry. "We're happy. This is a great place to work and to be. So that excitement continued throughout the year. Really and truly." Enduring relationships that continue to this day started at Critical Point Three.

So it's almost like it becomes your place, it becomes a place where you thrived. And they still call me. The staff will still call and say, 'hey how you doing, we're having a baby shower you want to come?' And it's good to see them. But that journey to, it's almost like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz I mean like (laughing) that was a real journey. But it's not impossible. It's not something if a school like that can do it anybody can do that, right? But it takes an observant, dedicated staff willing to make that sacrifice.

From the deep sense of isolation in the beginning and the inauthentic feelings of playing a role, P3 credits the team she had created in the school transformation. Like P2, she also enjoyed forming long-lasting relationships with the staff of her transformed school to the present day. She states that the team kept the school transformation, and it never slipped back into P.I. status even after she left. The school only turned over two teachers since her leaving.

P4 felt grateful she was part of a team that proved a predominantly minority, low-income school could meet federal criteria for success. "And, um, yeah. It's do-able. It's do-able."

P5 never took public recognition for his school's transformation.

You know, and that there it was, just super rewarding and when you really stop thinking about it, I also had a lot of conversations and thoughts again with myself, and that was more or less like 'we did it.' You know, I never, to be honest, I never took personal recognition for it. I always pushed it out to everyone else. Because I thought it was so critical for them to be recognized for how hard they worked and what I expected and what I said was true, 'Hey if you do the best that you can that's all anybody can ask and you're going to do great things.'

Even as they had shifted into a team mindset at the onset of Critical Point Three, during the interview, all participants acknowledged that it was their leadership that made the difference. P1 acknowledged that the Tipping Point, the most critical point in the school's transformation was his election as the principal. He brought the school to transformation. Though it was a group effort, he led that effort. He said that he believed that inner states and inner experiences are very important as they influence how a principal will feel and behave. P2 stated that participating in the study had brought some things more clearly to her. She was about to be interviewed for a higher position a few days after the study interview, and she declared that she was having a hard time articulating to herself her contribution to the school's transformation. The study interview made it clear to her, what she lived and did. It is now clear to her that any other principal wouldn't have been able to do what she had done and that it was rare. P3 credits herself for being the principal that brought about the school's transformation. She stated that the measure of the achievement was that the school never fell back into P.I. status and had kept the trajectory of improvement to the present. She stated that she would have been aided in her school's transformation process had this interview occurred in the process. She gained insights in the study interview. She plans to make changes in the way she mentors principals from this study participation experience. P4 stated that after a series of failed principals, it was she who brought about the school's transformation. She had suffered serious health consequences because of her

efforts. So heavily impacted was her health that she had to take a leave a year after the school was transformed. She has since recovered. She found her participation in this study to be quite “healing.” P5 acknowledged that it was his belief and vision and how he worked to bring them to reality made the difference. His school was the only one to transform in five counties. All five participants remarked that they had not been asked questions about their inner experiences as leaders prior to their participation in this study.

**Research question three.** Research question three asks: “What inner experience does the principal consider to be the most important in the transformation process?” The researcher reviewed the transcriptions to find any direct mention of which inner state or experience the principal considered most important. The last question of the interview asks the participant, “Is there anything else you would like to share with me that I may not have asked about?” The response to this question, after the participants have communicated their inner experience through their school’s transformation process, was an opportunity for them to qualify or prioritize their inner experience even if not directly asked to do so. There was a ten-minute follow up phone to each participant to ask them to validate the results of their initial interview. If the participant did not state their most important inner experience during the initial interview, the researcher asked the question directly during the ten-minute validation phone interview, after the participant has validated the results. All participants identified one common inner experience as their most important inner experience in the transformation process: the profound belief that all children can learn and achieve.

***Profound belief.*** All principals in the study had the profound belief that all children can learn and achieve. P1 stated that it was a core value. He stated this was not something one just says because it sounded nice, or people wanted to hear it. It must be in the “very fabric of your

being.” This inner state, he explained, was the source from which all the other inner experiences follow and the source from which all outward behaviors spring. His biggest hurdle, he felt, was how to get others to believe it too. It was because very few others truly believed it that the transformation process was so stressful and difficult. P2 overtly stated during the interview that this was the most important inner experience for her as a transformative principal. For her, it went beyond belief. It was a certainty, “All children can achieve. All children, no matter where.” She had a vision of what it would look like, this belief, manifested. Her work then, she stated, was simple, how to make this belief a reality at her school. What she marveled at was how something so simple could be so extremely difficult. She stated unless a principal profoundly believed all children can learn and achieve, school transformation is not possible. If you don’t “own it,” she stated, you can’t do it. From her current position as a mentor to other principals, she observed that the very rare few, who truly believed, are the ones able to make a lasting difference. P3 had almost no knowledge of the school prior to accepting the position other than it was one of the lowest achieving schools with a multitude of problems. She stated that her belief that all children can learn and achieve enabled her to agree to the position as principal of her school. She was surprised and overwhelmed by the enormity of dysfunction she encountered as soon as she was in the position. However, her belief kept her going. Her belief enabled her to endure all the stress and difficulty she faced. She even risked alienation from and went through intense, stressful periods in her marriage and family to manifest her belief at the school. P4 stated that beyond believing all students can learn and achieve, she believed that they could all be educated to be “good people. Great, productive citizens.” She has since recovered from the negative health effects that was caused by and plagued her during the transformation process. Not naturally defiant, she went against the district establishment to do what she felt she needed



to do to prove her belief that the school could transform. She stated that she would do it again, “in a heartbeat.” She knows of no other way to be. P5 not only believed that all children can learn and achieve, “I lived it, as a classroom teacher.” P5 also elected to go through the enormous stress and difficulty, along with negative health effects to transform the school because he believed that it could be done.

Uh I think more than anything else, it was my body. I think that I didn't realize how much I was doing, how fast I was going and it felt like thousand pounds came off my back. I have faith in it. I felt a hundred percent confident that we were going to be out because I asked some critical questions to my assessment person about what do you think we need? So I set goals higher than that.

## **Summary**

The preceding chapter presented the results of the five interviews with five principal participants, including a ten-minute, follow up validation interview for each.

HyperTRANSCRIBE and HyperRESEARCH software were used for the transcription, coding, and theming of the interview data. A doctoral degree holder familiar with qualitative phenomenological studies was consulted for an inter-rater review of the coding and theming of the data. The chapter introduction described the data gathering process and presented the participants with a purposeful eye toward maintaining confidentiality.

A brief review of the research questions followed the introduction, reiterating the concepts of critical points and their significance in the school transformation process. The next section of the chapter presented the findings organized according to the research questions. Research question one queried on the inner state and experiences of the five principal participants at each critical point. The critical points were presented in chronological order of the school transformation process described in Leithwood et al. (2010). After each critical point, the inner experiences of each principal around that particular point were described in order from

principal one (P1) to principal five (P5). The Tipping Point, a fourth critical point where the outcome of school transformation could have led to success or failure was identified by the principal and presented last. The inner experiences of the principals around the Tipping Point followed in the same order.

Research question two queried on the common inner experience of all five principals at each critical point. Again, the critical points were presented in order. After each critical point, findings were presented, organized according to the type of common inner experience for each principal.

Research question three queried on what each principal participant regarded as the most important inner state or experience in the entire school transformation process. All principals identified one and the same inner experience as most important: The profound belief that all children can learn and achieve. A description of how that belief was experienced by each principal participant followed.

## Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion

### Analysis

This final chapter presents the summary and discussion of findings, a grounded theory model of the inner experience of transformative principals, implications and recommendations for future research.

**Chapter structure.** The second section of this Chapter is the summary and discussion of data. The summary of data will first present the table of Major Common Inner Experience Themes for Each Critical Point. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings as it relates to the literature review in four major areas: (a) the role of the principal, (b) inner experience theories, (c) organizational theories, and (d) leadership theories. Following is a discussion of findings unique to this study.

The third section of this Chapter is a presentation of a grounded theory model based on the analysis of the data findings.

The fourth section of this Chapter will first provide the implications and recommendations of this study in the areas of: (a) principal training, and (b) principal support. Then, this section will provide the limitations and recommendations for future research.

Finally, the fifth section will provide the summary of the entire study.

### Discussion

**Summary of findings.** The inner experiences of five transformative school principals were gathered along three critical points. These critical points mark the fundamental periods in a school transformation process according to the three stages of the school turnaround process described in Leithwood et al. (2010). These three stages apply to the California School Improvement process as presented in Figure 4:

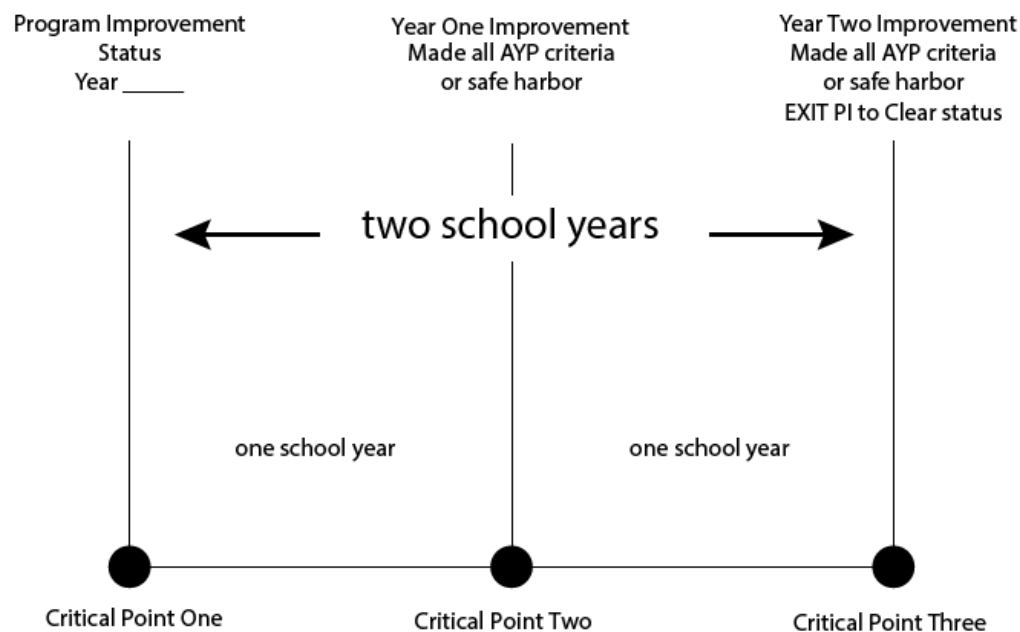


Figure 4. Critical points in the California school transformation process.

Table 1 enumerates the major themes found in the inner experiences of the five transformative principal participants of the study.

Table 1

Major Common Inner Experience Themes for Each Critical Point

Critical Point One	Critical Point Two	Critical Point Three
Stress	Positive Emotions	Positive Emotions
Profound Belief	Profound Belief	Stress
Envisioning the Future	Stress	Perseverance
Strategizing	Envisioning the Future	Profound Belief
Isolation and Loneliness	Strategizing	Team Mindset
	Perseverance	

After querying the principals on the three critical points, the principals were also asked to provide a tipping point: a point in the transformation process that turned a corner into

transformative success. The principals each had a unique response to this query according to

Table 2.

Table 2

*The Tipping Point from Each Principal's Point of View*

Participant	Tipping Point Identified
Principal 1	Identified two tipping points. The first tipping point occurred when he took on the position as principal, and the second, when he left. He felt that he built on the progress of the previous principal and he left a school that was able to carry on the improvements for years without him as the leader.
Principal 2	The tipping point occurred the moment of transformation, the clear exit from P.I. status. She felt this was the real beginning of the school's transformation.
Principal 3	The tipping point occurred right before Critical Point Two, when she was able to remove enough staff whose beliefs about student achievement did not align with hers.
Principal 4	Three concurrent factors between Critical Point One and Critical Point Two provided the tipping point, namely: (a) grant monies alleviated years-long arrears, (b) assignment of two assistant principals who matched her belief regarding student achievement, (c) achievement of an inner state when she felt she had nothing to lose.
Principal 5	The tipping point occurred at the beginning of Critical Point One, when he formed a vision of what his belief regarding student achievement would look like, manifested.

If, during the initial interview, the principal participant did not identify what they consider to be the most important inner experience during their school transformation, they were directly asked about it during the ten-minute validation phone call. The ten-minute validation phone call is a recorded phone call made by the researcher to each of the participants after the coding, theming, analysis, and inter-rater review had been done. The researcher went over the findings of the interview with each participant to give each one an opportunity to validate or negate the analysis of their particular interview. At the end of this entire process, all five participants identified one common inner experience as their most important: The profound belief that all children can learn and achieve.

**Findings juxtaposed to literature review.** The findings in this research bear up and augment much of the literature previously reviewed in Chapter II in the four areas of: (a) the role of the principal, (b) inner experience theories, (c) organizational theories, and (d) leadership theories.

*The role of the principal.* The interviews validate much of the literature on the role of the principals. All of the principals spoke of being “caught in the middle,” between a superior educational infrastructure that sends down an endless series of multiple, disconnected demands to be performed at the school level and a school whose unique set of needs to be addressed are incompatible with the solutions provided. Collisions between demands and needs occur persistently. “In this work, administrators most obviously bore the brunt of these collisions” (Craig, 2009, p. 133). The chaos and complexity of the principal’s roles are described well by the principals as these demands and expectations were processed through their inner experiences. The detail complexity was seen in the long weekday hours and entire weekends spent at work to deal with the sheer number of detailed demands they need to meet. The dynamic complexity of the environment the principals need to pay attention to were well described as a “fragile,” “delicate fabric,” and “no matter how well you are doing, it all goes to ‘hell in a hand basket,’ because one incident can blow it all out of proportion, and your entire reputation can change.” The social complexity was revealed in disparate beliefs and opinions regarding student learning and achievement from the media, the district, the teachers, parents and students, all creating a situation stuck in dysfunctional low-achievement. All our participants transformed these seemingly indelible situations. Finally, all these principal participants faced a generatively complex challenge. The three features were: (a) the solution is unknown, (b) the situation is still unfolding, and (c) the key stakeholders are not clearly identified or in place.

The preceding conditions of detail, dynamic, social and generative complexity caused extreme stress for the principal participants throughout the entire transformation process.

*Inner experience theories.* This research study used the retrospective interview method for gathering inner experience data. The researcher did not encounter any of the issues proposed by the critics of the process of retrospective introspection. There was no change in the content or meaning of the interview findings after a period of a few weeks when the researcher contacted the participants to validate the findings and analysis. Interestingly, the researcher did encounter a mindset shift in the participants when they were describing their inner experience. This shift was due to a preconception that took the place of the inner experience itself and the inner experience was ignored. This shift occurred on the same question in all five interviews. In relating their inner experience around Critical Point Three, all participants attributed the transformation to the collaborative teamwork of the school staff, students and parents. Though, ostensibly, from a more objectively describable point of view this is true, it didn't bear out with the inner experience they had been reporting so far. The researcher used bracketing and guidance to assist the participant in reconciling this disparity. All participants expressed surprise when they realized they discounted their contributions and falsely attributed the school transformation to the wrong participants. The principals had discounted the fact that their leadership was what made the difference between continuing failure and successful transformation of their school. All the schools were stuck in years of low-achievement before the participants' assuming the role of principal. Their assumption of the principal's role was the only change in each school before the first year of significant improvement. All their inner experiences so far had pointed to the extraordinary effort and strain each went through to effect the change that had not been possible

before their arrival. Attributing the success to “teamwork” misses the crucial element of their leadership that made such teamwork possible.

The interview, as is typical of introspective research, brought about clarity and expanded the participants’ understanding around the topic. All participants declared they had not been led through this process and questions before. By the end of the interview, all participants expressed gained insights and recognition of their exclusive role in the school transformation process. P1 had a new appreciation of his role in the transformation process. P2 found it newly possible to exactly articulate what she had done to make the transformation of her school possible. She stated that the research interview was serendipitous in aiding her with a job interview that was taking place in a few days. P3 planned to adapt and shift her approach in mentoring principals with what she newly acquired from going through her inner experience of her own school’s transformation. P4 found the interview process “healing.” P5 stated he never considered his key role in the school transformation process prior to the interview: “I just still pushed and pushed it on everyone else. Because I thought it was so critical for them to be recognized for how hard they worked.”

The findings validate Halal’s (1998) contention that the leaders’ inner experience was the source of their decisions and actions. P1 directly acknowledged that developing his inner capacities and capabilities enabled him to persevere in the transformation process. The isolation and loneliness felt by all participants, particularly around Critical Point One reveals the importance of the inner state of leadership. It uncovers the process by which visioning their beliefs, reflection and strategizing during these moments generated the outward manifestation of their interventions. This reflective inner work process and accessing of their inner experience also concurs with Branson’s (2007a, 2007b) “model of the self” (p. 236, p. 491).



Finally, this research underscores Bohm's (1981) view that the inner experience is not separate and divisible from outer manifestation. The inner experience is participatory in outer experience and results. Both inextricably enfold one another, creating meaning.

***Organizational theories.*** This section will be further divided into two sub-sections: (a) Systems Thinking and Learning Organizations, and (b) Organizational Change.

*Systems thinking and learning organizations.* This study of the inner states and experiences of transformative California school principals supports the literature on Systems Thinking and Learning Organizations. All participants practiced the concept of Personal Mastery. Personal Mastery is the process by which: (a) one repeatedly clarifies to one self what is important and, (b) continually seeking to understand and to see current reality more clearly. The distance between current reality and what is important is called "creative tension" (Senge 1990, p. 142). All principal participants had extreme creative tension to reconcile when they faced the difference of their beliefs and vision from the current reality of multiple year P.I. schools. All principals were at high level of Personal Mastery as their inner experiences revealed they clearly saw their connection and responsibility to the outer world and were committed to serve the whole at great personal expense.

The concept of Mental Models was borne out in the process of the interviews when the participants revealed how their profound belief determined the behavioral choices they made. All the principals avoided single-loop learning by continual self-talk and reflection. Seeing the results and the feedback to their decisions and actions, they kept asking themselves what their governing values were and whether their behavior was consistent with these values and beliefs. Clashing mental models between stakeholders were revealed as a major source of tension and barrier to transformation.

The concept of building shared vision was reinforced in this study. As stated by Du Four and Eaker (1998), this process is problematic when applied to schools and education. Fullan (1993) emphasized the need for patience and perseverance in the process of merging personal vision with a shared vision. At the schools the participants led, what was important was that the teachers and other stakeholders shared the belief and vision of the principal. The five principals were very active in weeding out and removing teachers who did not share their vision. They did this through the process of performance evaluations, building teams with key memberships to augment peer pressure, and taking advantage of district Reduction in Force procedures. The principals went beyond asking for compliance from the staff; they wanted commitment. The principals worked with small key people in the first year. The majority of the teachers and other stakeholders who lasted through the transformation process got on board after Critical Point Two. The systems archetype, "Success to the Successful" (Senge et al., 1994) manifested at this point. However, even at Critical Point Three, the process of continually affirming shared vision and beliefs to consolidate action and results continued. Examples were teachers remarking to P2 and P3, "You always want more." All of the schools were, for the most part, populated with stakeholders who shared the same beliefs and vision after Critical Point Three. This is a factor that, as Collins (2001) stated, enabled the organizations to remain in greatness, long after the principal's tenure.

Team learning was at play through most of the school transformation process in all five schools. The principals all believed in, and practiced dialogue and discussion. They suspended assumptions. They used listening and empathy to balance between advocacy and inquiry. They engaged heavily in reflection and thinking insightfully about the complexity of the challenges they faced. They asked the other stakeholders to do so as well. Interestingly, there was little

dialogue between the district offices and the five schools. Most of the interaction from the district offices to the schools consisted of mandates and directives.

*Organizational change.* Even with no concrete, specific change being imposed on the five schools, the seven stages of the CBAM model were enacted in the transformation of the five schools. The principal was directly participatory in each stage until virtually each teacher either changed or got out.

The 7S model also applies very well to the narrative of the school transformation process. All the three soft and three hard areas, including the superordinate goal, were easily identifiable in the interviews. There were the strategy, the structure and the systems that made up the behavioral, positional and procedural aspects. There were the beliefs, the personal factors and the skills that made up the human aspect. Finally, the principal participants with their profound belief that all children can learn and achieve supplied the superordinate goal and value that must be realized through the other six factors.

The interviews support Conner's (1998) emotional cycle of change. All the principals report jumping into their situations with optimism and certainty, shored up by their beliefs but with relatively little information. After delving into the harsh realities and gaining more detailed information, doubt ensued. These realities were addressed in the crucial third stage of the cycle where they met the doubts with belief, determination and commitment. The principals all exhibited the characteristics of resiliency that enabled them to be successful. They all remained focused and persistent, if not positive.

In comparing and contrasting the interviews with Ackerman-Anderson and Anderson's (2001) model of transformational change, we see the radical change of school culture, behavior and mindset of the school stakeholders between Critical Point One and Critical Point Three.

Everyone was asked to change and reorient all energy to a new future. The path was certainly not clearly defined and was marked with constant stops, turns and instability. From this seemingly chaotic process, the school transformation was manifested.

*Leadership theories.* Each principal's interview, for the most part, showed close compatibility with the leadership theories highlighted in the literature review in Chapter II.

The revelation of each transformative principal's inner experience held up the four dimensions of emotional intelligence leaders needed to have as defined by Goleman et al. (2002). All the principals exhibited self-awareness, self-management, an awareness of the social realities they faced and a focus on relationship management.

All five principals engaged in strengths-based leadership. They were meticulous about the new staff they hired for the school. This diligence, coupled with removing staff that did not exhibit the belief that all children can learn and achieve, ensured that the principals, in time, surrounded themselves with the "right people." All throughout the process, they engaged in professional development to raise the staff skills to the level needed to address the learning needs of each student.

The inner experience of school transformation indicated that the process is all about the Type III adaptive situation. The leader's essential work is about changing the hearts and minds of the members. The five principals started with small numbers of members and slowly built up an entire school with radically changed beliefs regarding student learning and achievement. Each small success added to the momentum. As P5 said of the success encountered at Critical Point Two, "it just snowballed from there."

Servant Leadership is deeply represented in the interviews of the inner experiences of the participants. Fueled by past experiences and belief, all of the five principals had the first

motivation of service before the motivation to lead. All strove to see the way forward from the point where they encountered the school was situated. Informed by their beliefs, they formed the vision of the transformed successful school. They practiced extensive listening and empathy for the stakeholders. They engaged in constant self-questioning, reflection and reorientation of their actions. In varying degrees and manner, they all displayed prescience, intuition and foresight.

Stewardship is clearly evident in the five principals' goal of leaving a school that has its own capacity for continual improvement. Even at the end of Critical Point Three, they have not stopped the quest to totally realize their belief. They looked at the transformation as a beginning of even greater school accomplishments and not as an end goal. This point in the transformation process was when all principals completely shifted from a solitary, lonely leadership to a team leadership mindset. Their goal was the empowerment of each stakeholder to exercise the shared responsibility for continual transformation.

Spirituality, the surrender to a higher force at great personal cost was clearly evident in the inner experiences of the five participants. Each participant was tested to the limits of his or her skills. Each went through loneliness and isolation willingly, to reflect, to question their goals, motives, and actions. They practiced authentic self-expression of the higher goal of common good even if it didn't seem natural. Each listened deeply to their stakeholders to create a way forward; to see the future more clearly and to act with wisdom. All five participants engaged in the process, from surrender to action and back again in a continuous spiral of development.

Scharmer's (2009) U-Theory Model of Perception and Change is very well represented in the interviews. The left side of the "U" happens relatively very quickly in the school transformation process, all within Critical Point One. The principals find themselves at the bottom part of the "U" or "presencing" when they form the vision of the future that is the

manifestation of their beliefs. The process on the right side of the “U” takes place during the rest of the critical points.

**Discussion of findings by research question.** A search for any study that inquires into inner experiences of transformative school principals revealed that this has not yet been done before this study. Therefore, this research represented a seminal work on the subject and was intended to be explorative. This research was also intended to investigate if there was any substance in this area that could somehow illuminate a path forward from the entrenched problem of educational reform. The findings revealed a body of thought-provoking and compelling data that would be worth further research and expansion. The data was weighty enough to form a grounded theory specific to the issue of school transformation.

**Research Question 1 discussion.** Research Question 1 asks: “What are the inner experiences of the principal in schools that are able to transform from failing (program improvement) to successful (clear status) at critical points of this transformation?” The data was presented in Chapter IV. The data was organized from Critical Points One to Three with the inner experiences of each principal detailed out within each. There was a fourth critical point, around which the participants’ inner experience was asked about, named the Tipping Point. The Tipping Point was not something the researcher identified (as was the case with Critical Points One to Three), but was identified by the participants. The Tipping Point is what each of the participants considered as the juncture where events turned away from failure and unquestionably toward successful transformation. The participants were free to identify this point anywhere within the school transformation process and provided their inner experiences around it.

What was intriguing about the inner experiences around Critical Points One to Three (identified by the researcher) of school transformation was their sameness. This similarity is in contrast to the variety of inner experiences around the tipping point (identified by the participant).

The principals have little in common in their characteristics. Usually, two, no more than three principals share the same attribute such as race, gender, school location, school level, beginning circumstances and school district. However, as one studied their inner experiences in Critical Points One to Three, one realized that one is reading approximately the same inner narrative. This sameness will be explored further in the discussion of Research Question 2. Research Question 2 explores what is common among their inner experiences. The quick answer to this question is: “virtually everything.”

The tipping point, as identified by the principals, however, introduces variety. This variability may be due to the interpretation of the question by each participant. The researcher, in the spirit of exploration and objectiveness, did not attempt to clarify the question on tipping point unless asked to do so. One principal identified the tipping point at the beginning of Critical Point One when he began his position as principal. One principal identified the tipping point at Critical Point Three when the school cleared P.I. status. For her, this was the bottom floor and reaching it assured further success. One principal identified both his start and end of tenure as the tipping points, stating that the point of leadership changeover was inherently a tipping point. Two principals identified the middle of the transformation process as tipping points, both emphasizing change in staff as the crucial element.

The variety of responses to the tipping point question reflects the variety of the principals' context and background. The researcher notes that the two principals who identified the tipping point to be the beginning of their tenure (around Critical Point One) were also principals that

promoted through the ranks to the principal's position from within their school. The other principals who identified the tipping point as occurring within other critical points were principals who were assigned as principals from another location. The variety of the responses to the tipping point query makes this a question that may be unusable to form any theory or conclusion. In future research, one can either clarify the question further or discard it entirely.

**Research Question 2 discussion.** Research Question 2 asks: "What inner experiences are common among these principals at each critical point?" The data were presented in Chapter IV. A table listing the themes of the common inner experiences of the participants was provided earlier in this chapter.

As mentioned in the discussion of Research Question 1, the participants revealed great similarities in their inner experiences at each critical point. The following discussion will be organized from the most prevalent inner experience across all critical points to the least prevalent.

*Profound Belief.* All participants identified this particular inner experience as the most important one. It will be discussed extensively in the section discussing Research Question 3.

*Stress.* The inner experience of stress was endemic at all critical points. At Critical Point One, the stress was mostly centered on the enormity of the work they perceived needed to be done to transform the school. As the principals started the school year, they started to fully grasp the magnitude of the issues that kept the school from improving. All of them fully experienced the extreme creative tension caused by the wide disparity between existing conditions and school transformation. The issues were as specific and technical as years-long arrears, dysfunctional procedures, extreme waste of resources, the immensity of detailed responsibility, and ineffective mandated programs. Many issues, however, were amorphous such as disbelieving stakeholders and supervisors, and a negative and toxic school culture.



Success with AYP didn't change the level of stress for the participants. What changed was the source and quality of stress. All the participants, even as they first felt celebratory with the announcement of AYP success, immediately felt the stress of having to continue the much-lauded progress. P3 puts it succinctly: "So it gets harder, with the more you get in....Because what you have to do the second and third year are different and just as hard. It's just as hard. It's just a different kind of work that the school needs." The extra attention the schools received with their AYP success brought much attention from outsiders who outwardly stated their disbelief at the school's improvements and prognosticated the trend to be short-lived. This type of skeptical scrutiny caused much stress as well. Detail complexity remained and continued to contribute to the stress level at this critical point.

Even with an official notice of clear exit from P.I. status, the stress experienced by the principals did not abate. This time, however, they had less stress from the previous outside sources. They had more validation and less scrutiny from outside the school. The stress was more internally generated as they strove to improve their schools even more. The demands of NCLB incrementally increased every year, and they had to make sure their schools stayed ahead of the curve. As in Critical Point Two, detail complexity remained and continued to contribute to the stress level at Critical Point Three.

The researcher notes that all this stress caused negative health consequences for four of the five participants. The consequences of stress on their health ranged from unwanted weight gain and hypertension to hospitalization. The one principal that didn't experience negative health consequences had been involved in daily health exercise all her life. She used her workout time to strategize and reflect on school transformation.

*Envisioning the future.* All five principals engaged in “presencing” (Scharmer, 2009) when they envisioned what the future would like if their beliefs were manifested. This inner process is very much tied to their profound belief that all children can learn and achieve. This vision of the future laid out what the principals needed to do to manifest it. In essence, the principals learned from this vision. This common inner experience occurred in both Critical Point One and Critical Point Two. In Critical Point one, it was mostly the principal engaging in this inner exercise. In Critical Point Two, there were enough stakeholders who shared the same belief as the principal that this process became more of a shared inner experience through dialogue. This inner experience also speaks to the foresight and prescience elements in Servant Leadership. This capacity to sense and foresee a possible future that has not been manifested yet is the most amorphous yet essential leadership trait (Greenleaf, 1977). The principals did not highlight this inner experience in Critical Point Three. What was once a solitary vision that evolved into a shared vision had, by Critical Point Three, been the new future and a reality.

*Strategizing.* All five principals did extensive strategizing during Critical Periods One and Two. They used self-talk, reflection, journaling and introspective observations to flesh out their plan for action. The strategizing was the bridge between the envisioning of the beliefs and outward actions and behaviors. The strategies they made included: (a) Building relationships with stakeholders, (b) Creating a team of teachers that shared the same vision, (c) Removing teachers who do not share the same belief in students, and (d) Maintaining a balance between driving forward and inertia. Each of the preceding strategies produced a complex system of actions and behaviors the principals enacted to achieve results. Behaviors included listening, empathizing, team building, acting to make small wins, celebrating successes, evaluating staff, among others. The strategies created were qualitatively different between Critical Point One and

Critical Point Two. The differences reflect the contrast between the two contexts. The participants did not highlight strategizing as an inner experience at Critical Point Three.

Most studies and literature on school leadership concentrate on traits, skills and behaviors the principal needs to have or do to transform a school. They all spring from this strategy level. What is not written about or studied is the precursory and underlying inner experiences that generate these strategies.

*Positive emotions.* All five participants disclosed this inner experience at Critical Points Two and Three. This inner experience of positive emotions took on the range from feelings of validation and certainty to celebratory feelings, to euphoria. As P1 puts it, “that’s the stuff that blows your mind.” There was a qualitative difference between the positive emotions at Critical Point Two and Critical Point Three. At Critical Point Two, the celebratory feelings had a mix of validation and stress. Each principal felt validated their belief and actions have been right all along. They all saw how their vision was finally taking shape. At the same time, the principals encountered disbelief and dismissive attitudes from outsiders (e.g., other principal colleagues, the media). Mostly, their school’s accomplishment was attributed to luck and perhaps a little manipulation of data. Though their schools received the recognition that significant gains just occurred, the main expectation was the improvements would not be sustained because the benchmarks became more demanding for the next year. The stressful feelings came in with the need to make the same leap for the next year. P4 didn’t know whether she had the energy to continue for another year.

At Critical Point Three, the positive emotions took on more of a quiet certainty after the initial rush of positive emotions. The disbelief from outsiders had dissipated. At this point, the culture of the participants’ schools had shifted to a success-driven way of life.

*Perseverance.* The principal participants felt the need for perseverance at Critical Points Two and Three. At Critical Point Two, the will to perseverance was an inner response to the stress of having to prove the school could improve one more year for a clear exit from P.I. status. At Critical Point Three, the perseverance was felt more from a sense of empowerment and dissatisfaction. Each of the principals had transformed their schools according to an independent, objective standard. Each of the principals felt the need to make the transformation total and run in perpetuity. They were not satisfied with just being transformed. Exiting P.I. to clear status has now become a minimal achievement goal. They wanted transformation according to their personal standards of excellence and for it to continue beyond their tenure.

*Isolation and loneliness.* At Critical Point One, all five participants had the inner experience of isolation and loneliness. Each volunteered a different reason and context for this inner experience. However, they were all connected to the process of induction into the role as principal and to their profound belief. Whether the inner experience was self-imposed as a self-defense (P1, P3, P5), or was a result of overt ostracizing by others (P2), or was the result of lack of support (P4), it was profound. This inner experience had greatly weakened by Critical Point Two for most and was not present at Critical Point Three.

*Team mindset.* The researcher noted that all participants had taken on a team mindset as the cause of school transformation at Critical Point Three. This shift is in marked contrast from the lonely, isolated inner state at Critical Point One. It seemed as if the participants, at the point of transformation, lost touch with their contribution and their fundamental role in the transformation process. The researcher inquired into this shift, asking about the substitution of the team concept for the inner experience. When faced with this incongruity, the principals acknowledged the substitution and re-oriented back into their inner experience.

This finding is important to the research on school transformation. There are many advocacy books on collaboration and team effort as solutions to school transformation. While these are ostensibly key factors, what is missed is the heroic contribution of the principal to make all these possible.

***Research Question 3 discussion.*** Research Question 3 asks, “What inner experience does the principal consider to be the most important in the transformation process?” As stated in Chapter IV, the principals unanimously chose their profound belief that all children can learn and achieve as their most important inner experience.

*Profound belief.* In their book about turning around failing schools, Murphy, Meyers, National Staff Development Council (U.S.), and American Association of School Administrators (2008) gave a laundry list of characteristics and traits needed by a principal to transform an organization. They also emphasized that these characteristics are effective contingent on the context of the school and how adroitly the leaders can manifest each trait depending on the situation. Not one of the resources they cited for the laundry list was based on school leadership. This list is in stark contrast to what this study found.

This study on the inner experiences of transformative California school principals revealed the importance of the profound belief the principal possesses in the school transformation process. They all deeply believed that all children could learn and achieve. What made this common choice of most important inner experience even more striking is the heterogeneity of the participant pool. The participants were all different from each other on many identifying characteristics, including the location and demographics of the schools they transformed. No more than three participants led schools in the same general area of California (i.e., Northern, Central and Southern), or were of the same gender. No more than two

participants led schools of the same level (i.e., Elementary, Middle, High). No more than two participants were of the same racial background. No more than two participants shared the same conditions of initial assignment to the principal position at the schools they led. The age range of the participants spanned approximately 20 years. Even when they shared the same characteristics (e.g., race, gender) they would differ in others (e.g., school level, area, age).

There are multitudes of examples of how the statement, “we believe all children can learn and achieve,” has been used in schools all over California and beyond. If this is all it takes, then why haven’t more schools transformed? The answer lies in the inner experiences of this belief by all the transformative principals. This belief was deep-seated enough to form part of the essence of their being. As P1 states: “It must be in the fabric of your being.” The belief must be so profound and so entrenched in the principal that they would be willing to go through enormous difficulties, stress and obstacles to manifest it.

This belief must also be earned through a history of confirmation and evidence. The concept of earning a belief is grounded in the definition of the word belief. According to the third full definition of belief, it is a: “conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon especially when based on examination of evidence” (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, n.d., para. 8). This is to differentiate it from its synonym, faith, which “almost always implies certitude even when there is no evidence or proof” (para. 22). According to all the participants, their belief that all children can learn and achieve is not an empty, groundless belief. All of the participants had a prior history of transformational change before they transformed their schools. All participants have transformed their classrooms into places of high achievement where they addressed the learning needs of all their students. All participants had been successful, transformative subadministrators before they took on the principal role. They

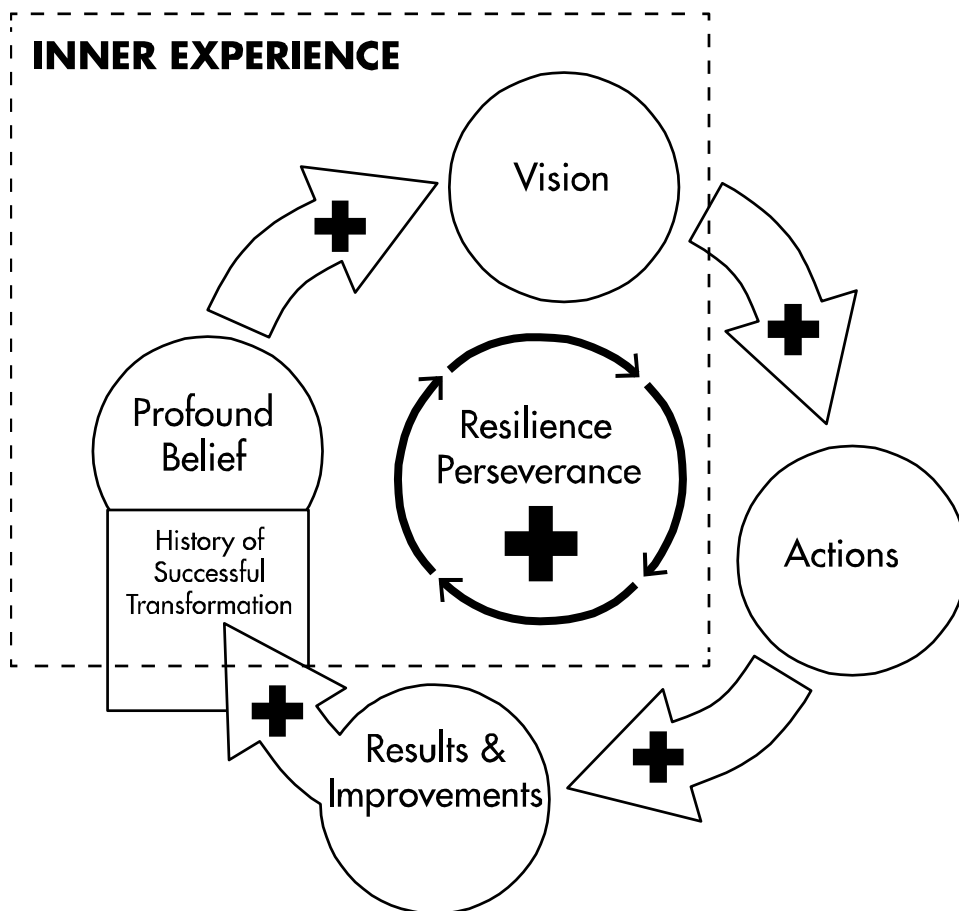
transformed the areas of responsibility they were assigned to the great benefit, if not a transformation, of their previous schools. Their lived experiences of successful transformation made the profound belief that all children can learn and achieve possible. These were principals with a transformational history.

This profound belief, with its grounded actuality, not only prepared them for the heavy burden of school transformation, it was the very reason they accepted the position in the first place. They know of no other way to be. When the researcher asked P4, “After having gone through the extreme negative experiences and hospitalization, if you had known of this future before you accepted the principal position, would you still do it?” Her response was, “in a heartbeat.”

### **Conclusions for School Transformation**

**A belief, action, and results cycle.** After studying and discussing the data in this study, the researcher proposes the following conclusions based on the inner leadership of school principals and its role in transforming schools: 1. School transformation requires a principal with a deep and grounded belief that all children can learn and achieve. 2. The principal must have a profound desire and willingness to manifest this belief even at great personal cost.

To trace the cycle of how this inner belief is essential in the school transformation process, the researcher offers the following figure called the belief, action, results (BAR) cycle (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* The BAR cycle of inner experience and school transformation.

First and foremost within the inner state and experience of this principal is a deep and experience-grounded belief that all children can learn and achieve. The belief must be compelling enough to shore up the principal through all the considerable complexity, obstacles and hardship encountered in the process of realizing this belief. The strength of the belief is supported by the principal's history of successful transformation in other positions. The principal creates a future vision of the belief and learns from this vision how to move the school forward towards it. The principal then strategizes complex actions and maneuvers to enact the future as envisioned. These actions result in positive gains that validate and support the belief, making it stronger. This virtuous cycle enables resilience, creates perseverance, and strengthens the inner drive to see the transformation to completion.



## **Implications and Recommendations**

This section will provide the implications and recommendations in the two areas of: (a) principal training, and (b) principal support.

**Principal training.** The results of this study on the inner leadership of transformative school principals imply and recommend that some modifications could be made in the area of principal training. The researcher suggests the following capacities to be addressed in the training of principal administrators: (a) self-awareness, (b) reflection and strategy, (c) listening and empathy, and (d) stress management.

***Self-awareness.*** This study demonstrates that much could be gained with training present and future principals on self-awareness. All the principal participants in the study exercised this self-awareness to a great degree. They had great knowledge of their personal capacities, biases, and beliefs. So much so, that a major maneuver they exercised in their school transformation was to increase their awareness of how others “tick.” Self-awareness enabled these principals to exercise greater self-discipline resulting in better-managed behaviors and relationships. Self-awareness also improved their resilience in extremely stressful conditions. Self-awareness was the foundation of their substantial emotional intelligence.

***Reflection and strategizing.*** All the principals heavily practiced reflection and strategizing. Reflection included exercises in introspection and self-questioning to look deeply into their internal motives and actions. Reflection also included envisioning their belief and learning from that vision. In partner with reflection, the participants used heavy strategizing as an end-result to reflection. These strategies were then enacted into specific behaviors and leadership maneuvers. An emphasis on increasing the capacity for reflection and strategizing in training for

school leadership enables future principals to build a bridge between their inner experience and effective outward results.

Bolton (2006) makes a well-researched case for professionals developing and practicing the skill of reflection. Her book (Bolton, 2014), now in its fourth edition, lays out a comprehensive professional development program for improving the practice of reflection. The book also provides a rich fount of resources for the fundamental principles, the expansion, and customization of the program.

***Listening and empathy.*** All the five transformative principals exceedingly engaged in listening and empathizing. These were the key actions and behaviors they enacted to know their staff and build the teams essential to school transformation. P3 would have been better served had her training included more emphasis on listening and empathy for these to be second nature. She encountered much stress doing something she felt was not “natural” for her. This study indicates an emphasis on listening skills and developing empathy during principal leadership training would be beneficial.

***Stress management.*** All the principals in the study went through formidable stress in the process of transforming their schools. Developing the preceding three capacities would do much to alleviate the stress they experienced. However, specific training to improve stress management skills needed to be given more weight. All but one of the five participants experienced negative health consequences from the stress they bore. The only principal who didn’t experience negative health effects was P3. She had a well-established stress management exercise lifestyle. She used her workouts to not only work through the stress and dysfunction she encountered but also to reflect and strategize solutions.

**Principal support.** None of the participants in the study revealed a supportive relationship with supervisors or the district office. Four of them specifically searched for and obtained mentoring from outside their districts. The results of this study on the inner leadership of transformative school principals suggest that some modifications could be made in the area of principal support. The researcher suggests the following principal support actions to be addressed: (a) programs, (b) mentoring, and (c) authority.

**Programs.** Four of the five principals were initially saddled with programs from the district office. Some of these programs were mandated by the state to support the school in turning around and exiting P.I. status. The rest were programs chosen by the district offices themselves for the schools. All of the principals found these programs to be burdens and not benefits. The participants found the programs did not address the specific problematic context of the school. The participants welcomed monetary support but not the conscriptions that accompanied it. All principals expressed great relief when school transformation lifted away the mandated programs. Two of the principals found their district offices to be extremely insensitive to the improvements. This was because they were still mandated to work the programs even after school improvements essentially disqualified involvement. The district attributed the AYP success of the transformed schools to these programs even as all other schools on the programs failed. The principals were certain the programs were a hindrance. Defying the district office and rejecting the programs caused much stress. This research indicates that district offices should be more sensitive to the internal contexts of each school and work with the principals to address and not add more obstacles to transformation.

**Mentoring.** Four of the five transformative principals sought mentoring outside the school district they belonged to. Their reason for doing this was the lack of effective mentoring

from the very supervisors and offices expected to give supportive guidance. One mentor informed the principal that she would be “extra-hard” in evaluating the school because she didn’t believe the improvements were real. One principal found out from other sources that her supervisor, while giving out negative evaluations and critiques, withheld from mentioning positive evaluations and data the supervisor received from other district offices. This research indicates that district offices and principal supervisors would give better support to principals by developing their mentoring capacity and effectiveness.

*Authority.* A major strategic maneuver enacted by the principals was the removal of staff that did not share their belief that all children could learn and achieve. This study recommends that the process for removing and transferring ineffective and resistant teachers be modified to cause less stress and collateral damage at the school site.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is an exploratory study of the inner leadership of transformative school principals. Inner states and experiences were studied to see if there is something in these areas that could shed light on a path forward from the intractable issues of school transformation. This study, the first of its kind for school principals, is naturally limited and not intended to be a comprehensive nor final word on the topic. The implementation, measures and benchmarks of school improvement used to determine critical points in the study are specific to the California context only. Other states and their local educational systems have different variables, measures and degrees of implementation that need to be considered when generalizing from this inquiry.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The following recommendations for future research are based on the questions, concerns, findings and opportunities that were encountered in the course of performing this study.

1. Conduct more studies looking into the inner experiences of transformative California school principals. More studies of the same kind would shed some more light into the viability of the findings in this study.
2. Conduct inner experience studies with California school principals whose schools did not undergo a transformation within any two-year span of the NCLB period.
3. Modify the study to the educational context of other states and perform the modified study to determine whether the findings are durable across different contexts.
4. Implement a particular principal training recommendation over a period of time with a small population of principals and study whether this had any effect on school improvement.
5. Conduct a Grounded Theory research on the inner experiences of transformative school principals.

### **Summary of Study**

This is a research study on the inner leadership of California school principals who were able to transform their schools from failing to successful as determined by California measures. This study queried into and explored the inner experiences of five California school principals during critical points in the transformation process. This exploratory study was undertaken to see if the inner experiences of transformative principals hold some answers for the seemingly intractable issue of failed school reform efforts that has escalated since the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The study findings yielded data compelling enough to create a grounded theory of effective school transformation. The study proposed a model to illustrate how the inner experiences of principals fit into effective school transformation. The study also presented its implications, limitations and recommendations for future research.

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## APPENDIX A

Table of Increasing School Sanctions for Schools Identified as “In Need of Improvement” (PI Schools)

**Table A1: Increasing School Sanctions for Schools Identified as “In Need of Improvement” (PI Schools) source: California Department of Education.**

<b>Year</b> <b>1</b>	<b>School</b> <b>Improvement</b>	The school must:
		• Prepare an improvement plan
		• Offer public school choice
<b>Year</b> <b>2</b>	<b>School</b> <b>Improvement</b>	
		• Implement the improvement plan
		• Continue public school choice
		• Offer supplemental services (tutoring) by outside providers
<b>Year</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Corrective</b> <b>Action</b>	
		• Continue public school choice and offering outside supplemental services
		• Take at least one of the following corrective actions:
		• Replace staff
		• Adopt a new curriculum
		• Change management
		• Extend the school day or year
		• Restructure the internal organization of the school
<b>Year</b> <b>4</b>	<b>Restructuring</b>	
		• Continue previous requirements related to choice, supplemental service, and corrective actions
		• Prepare a restructuring plan for the school

<b>Year</b>  5	<b>Restructuring</b>	At the beginning of the school year, implement the restructuring plan, which must include one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-open the school as a charter school</li><li>• Replace all or most of school staff, including the principal</li><li>• Contract the school management with a private company</li><li>• Takeover by the State</li></ul>
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## APPENDIX B

## List of Inner Experience Elements

## INNER EXPERIENCE DEFINED FOR THE STUDY.

Inner experience is that which occurs within the body, mind, emotions and “soul” of the subject. It can include:

## Body:

1. Imagined or felt physical sensations during the event
2. Actual physical symptoms such as illness, positive health, etc. transient, extreme or chronic

## Mind:

1. Thoughts
2. Visualizations
3. Self-talk
4. Conversations in the mind which include reviewing, anticipating, planning, structuring dialogues with self or imagined others that occur internally in the mind
5. strategy construction
6. beliefs, prejudices, biases,
7. meaning attribution to events, objects, persons, etc.

## Emotions

1. any feeling which can include transient, chronic, or extreme emotions, the more specific the better  
e.g., euphoria, happiness, lightness, sadness, depression, anger, fear, trepidation, apprehension, heavy,

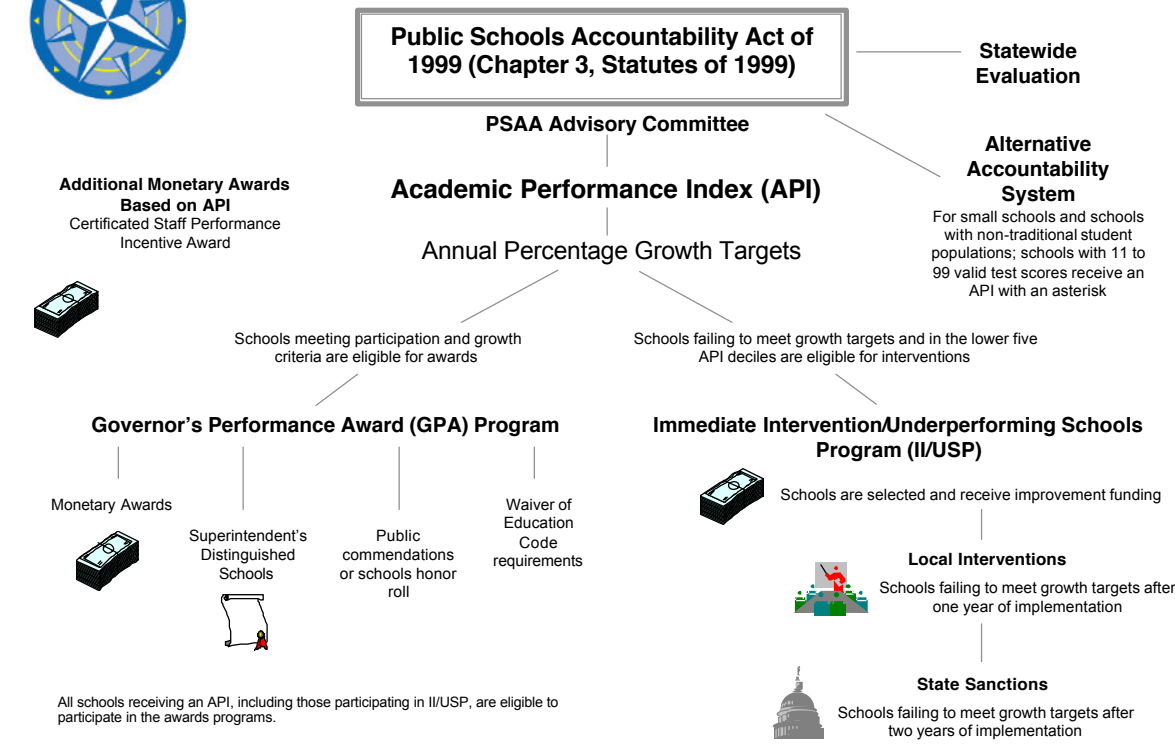
## Soul

1. Instinctual, gut, ephemeral experiences not related to emotions
2. Spiritual experiences

APPENDIX C

Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999

**Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999**



## APPENDIX D

## Administrative Responsibilities 2007–2008

<b>Principal</b>	<b>Assistant Principal,</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>
Academic Intervention	Bell Schedules	Assemblies/Guest Speakers	504 Meetings
Administrative Staff	Language/DRWC	Audio-Visual/Media	Academic Eligibility
Public Relations/Media	Budgets	Discipline/Policy	Articulation
Adopt-A-School	Child Abuse	Display Cases	Career and College Awareness
Advisory Councils	Eight Grade Activities	Emergency Procedures and Drills	Crisis Intervention
Auxiliary Periods	Sub Coverage	Expulsions	Course Outlines
Bilingual/ELAC	Course Outline	Fundraisers	Instructional Support
Budget	English Language Arts	Graduation/Activities	Master Program
Community Relations	Instructional Leadership Council	Hall Passes	Middle school Redesign (SLC)
Coordinators	English Language Arts	Hate Crimes	Migrant Education
Department Chairs	Language Appraisal Team	Health Services	Modified Consent Decree
Faculty Meetings			New Student Orientation
Instructional leadership/Support	Instructional Leadership Council	Instructional Support	Opening/Closing of School
Newsletters/Mailings	Instructional Support	Instructional Support	Open House/Back Bulletin
Payroll	New Teachers	Intervention Programs/ELP/ELAP	Parent Conference
Program Improvement	Ordering: Invoices and Requisitions	Inventory	Parent Involvement
Principles of Learning	Professional Development	Keys	PHBBO Conferences
PHBAO Conference	Library/Media Center	Metal Detector/Random Search	Placement Testing
Principles of Learning	Literacy Cadre	New Student Orientation	Referral Agencies
School Site Council (SSC)	Public Address Announcements	Parking	Report Cards/Progress Reports (Includes Printing)
Shared Decision Making Council	Secondary Periodic Assessment (SPA)	Physical Plant/Facilities	Roll Books

Principal	Assistant Principal,	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal
Single School Plan	Student teachers	Public Address Announcements	Room Assignments
Rodriguez Consent Decree	Supervision of Instruction/Stulls	Room Assignments	SIS Program
School Improvement Council	Testing	School Safety Plan	Standards Based Promotion
Site Action Team (IIUSP)	Textbooks	School Security	Student Recognition
Sex Harassment Staff	Title IX	Secondary Periodic Assessment (SPA) /Math	Student Study Team
Staff Relations	Master Calendar	Student Dress Code	Suicide Prevention
Staffing	Weekly Bulletin	Supervision of Instruction/Stulls	Summer School
Student Body Finance		Technology	Supervision of Instruction/Stulls
Stull Evaluations	<b>Personnel Assigned</b>	Vandalism	Surveys
Williams Consent Decree	District/University Interns	Yearbook	
Copiers/Duplos	Guest Teachers		<b>Personnel Assigned</b>
	Instructional Paraprofessionals	<b>Personnel Assigned</b>	Counselors
	Textbook Clerk	Audiovisual Coordinator	Crisis Intervention Team
<b>Personnel Assigned</b>	Testing Coordinators	Campus Aides	Itinerant Teachers
Title I/CEAC		Chemical Safety Coordinator	School Psychologist
Yearbook Sponsor	<b>Departments/Grade Level Supervised</b>	Dean of Students	Special Ed. Paraprofessionals
Administrators		Nurse	Suicide Prevention Team
Bilingual Coordinator	English/DRWC	Safety Officer	TUPE Coord.
Cafeteria Manager	Librarian	Technology Coord.	
Class Sponsor/Leadership Advisor	Substitutes		<b>Departments/Grade Level Supervised</b>
Clerical Staff/ Textbook Clerk	ESL	<b>Department/ Grade Level Supervised</b>	Social Studies
Dean of Attendance	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Math/Science	Special Education
Financial Manager		P.E.	Sixth Grade



<b>Principal</b>	<b>Assistant Principal,</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>	<b>Assistant Principal</b>
Literacy/Math Coaches	<b>Content Area Expertise</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Foreign Language
Magnet Coordinator	English/Language Arts		
Plant Manager	Drama/Musical Theatre	<b>Content Area Expertise</b>	<b>Content Area Expertise</b>
PSACounselor		Algebra, Yearbook	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
School Administrative Assistant			Social Studies/Special Education
School Improvement Coordinator			
Title I Coordinator			
<b>Departments/Grade Level Supervised</b>			
Professional Development			
Cafeteria Staff			
Magnet Coordinator			
Science/Math./Music			
Science			
Cafeteria Staff			
Magnet Coordinator			
Technical Coordinator			
Math			
Music			
<b>Content Area Expertise</b>			
Bilingual Coordinator			
Math			
Science			
Music			

## APPENDIX E

## Invitation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am writing to inquire if you would be interested in participating in my doctoral research about the inner leadership of transformative California School Principals. I am completing a doctorate of education in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University. This research has been approved by Pepperdine University's GPS-IRB and expires on\_\_\_\_\_.

The purpose of this study is to explore the inner lived experiences of principals during the time they lead their school in a successful transformation from Program Improvement to Clear Status.

There are relatively very few schools in California who have gone through the successful transformation from a Program Improvement to Clear Status. Successful school transformation is a highly complex field of inquiry and this study will focus on the inner lived experiences of the principals who have lead the schools in successful transformation.

It is hoped that the findings of this study may prove useful to a better understanding of how leadership affects the process of successful school transformation. The findings of this research will be extremely important for principals, both novice and seasoned, as they undertake the complex and difficult of leading their schools through successful transformation. Coaches, consultants, and human resource professional who seek to influence leaders and the organizations they serve may find the results from this study helpful. Researchers may also find the results of this study useful as they work in the areas of leadership and leadership development.

I plan to conduct one-on-one in person interviews with each of you. The interview should last about one hour and will be audio taped with your permission. Once consent is given to participate in the study I will forward these materials to you. Participation in the study is strictly voluntary.

The information obtained from the interview will be reported in the dissertation thematically.

I have enclosed an Informed Consent Form for you to review. It outlines several important items regarding your rights as a study participant. I will follow-up with you soon to answer any questions you may have to learn if you are interested in participating in this study. Should you decide to participate you will need to sign the Informed Consent.

If you have any questions regarding the study procedures, contact me, Conrado Tiu, to get answers to your questions. If you have any further questions, contact Dr. Robert Barner, Graduate School of Education & Psychology, Pepperdine University, \_\_\_\_\_ . If you have further questions about your

rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Graduate and Professional School IRB Chairperson, Graduate School of Education & Psychology, [REDACTED].

Thank you for considering participation in my research. Your contribution to this study will advance knowledge regarding school principals, leadership and successful school transformation. I look forward to the possibility of including you in this research project.

Best regards,  
Conrado Tiu

## APPENDIX F

## Informed Consent Form

I authorize Conrado Tiu, a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Robert Barner in The Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, to include me in the research project entitled "A Qualitative Study into the Inner Leadership of Transformative California School Principal." I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

I have been asked to participate in a research project which is designed to explore my inner experiences during the time I served as principal in a school that resulted in a successful transformation process. I have been asked to participate in this study because I have successfully lead a school through a successful transformation from a Program Improvement Status to Clear Status.

I will be asked to participate in a one hour, face-to-face interview that will provide information about my leadership.

I understand that the interview will be audiotaped if I decide to participate in this study. The tapes will be used for research purposes only.

The potential risk of participating in this study is a violation of privacy to self and/or my organization. Every attempt will be made to minimize this risk by maintaining confidentiality. All study records will be kept in a locked file cabinet and the raw data collected in this study will not be shared beyond those involved in the study.

I understand that the primary benefit from participating in this study is the benefit that may occur from intentional personal reflection on my values and leadership along with a value associated with making a contribution to knowledge regarding school principals and successful school transformation.

I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from, the study at any time without prejudice to me or my organization. I also have the right to refuse to answer any question I choose not to answer. I also understand that there might be times that the investigator may find it necessary to end my study participation.

I understand that no information gathered from my study participation will be released to others beyond the study without my permission, unless such a disclosure is required by law. I understand that under California law, an exception to the privilege of confidentiality includes but is not limited to the alleged or probably abuse of a child, physical abuse of an elder or a dependent adult, or if a person indicates she or he wishes to do serious harm to self, others, or property.

If the investigator has or is given such information, he is to report it to the authorities.

If the findings of the study are published or presented to a professional audience, no personal

identifying information will be released. The data gathered will be stored in a locked file cabinet to which only the investigator will have access.

The information gathered will be made available to other investigators with whom the investigator collaborates in future research. If such collaboration occurs, the data will be released without any personally identifying information so that I cannot be identified, and the use of the data will be supervised by the investigator. The data will be maintained in a secure manner for a minimum of 5 years.

I understand that I will receive no compensation, financial or otherwise, for participating in the study.

I understand that my job will not be jeopardized by choosing to participate or not participate in the study.

I understand that if I have any questions regarding the study procedures, I can contact Conrado Tiu to get answers to my questions. If I have any further questions, I may contact Dr. Robert Barner, Graduate School of Education & Psychology, Pepperdine University, West Los Angeles Campus, 6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90045, Ph: 310-568-5600. If I have further questions about my rights as a research participant, I may contact Graduate and Professional School IRB Chairperson, Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, [REDACTED].

I understand to my satisfaction the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the research project. All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent from which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX G

### Interview Protocol

1. Welcome the participant and thank the participant for agreeing to share their inner experiences around their school's successful transformation process.
2. Review the purpose of the study – The purpose of this exploratory study is to find out inner experiences of school principals who have lead their schools from failure to success.
3. The use of data collected – Data will be collected using interviews. The interview data will be analyzed for convergent and divergent patterns and themes. This interpretation will be submitted to an intra-rater, inter-rater and member checking evaluation to ensure accuracy of the interpretation. The results of this process will be reported in categories or themes in the final dissertation document.
4. The interview is confidential. The comments shared will be presented as themes and direct quotes.
5. Collect signed Consent Form.
6. Inform participant that the interview will be video and audio taped (with participant's permission) which allows me to be sure that I can review what was said later. Also, taping allows both of us to focus on the conversation. Tell the participant I will be taking occasional notes. Obtain permission to video and audio tape.
7. Tell participant that I am looking for an account of inner experiences of successful school leadership – there are no right or wrong answers. "I want to hear the stories and descriptions of your inner experiences at certain key points of your school's successful turnaround process. I have a list of inner experiences that you can use as a starting point. Please do not feel that you are confined to the items on the list. It is just a guide and a

prompt to consider. Feel free to talk about anything you consider to be an inner experience.”

8. Ask if there are any questions before we begin.
9. Say, “Imagine yourself at the time when the school just started improving, look at the inner experience list and describe any experience around that time that comes up for you now as you relive that moment?”
10. Say, Imagine yourself at the beginning of the school year, one year after the school embarked on its improvement path. The school’s P.I. status officially indicates that it has achieved all the benchmarks and one more year of improvement along the new benchmarks will ensure exit from P.I. status. Look at the inner experience list and describe any experience around that time that comes up for you now as you relive that moment.
11. Say, Imagine yourself at the beginning of the school year, two years after the school embarked on its improvement path. The school’s P.I. status officially indicates that it has, once again, achieved all the benchmarks and is now officially in the clear exit status. Look at the inner experience list and describe any experience around that time that comes up for you now as you relive that moment.
12. Say, “As you were reliving the process of your school’s turnaround process just now, what would you consider to be the tipping point, or the most critical point when events could have gone either to failure or success? Look at the inner experience list and describe any experience around that time that comes up for you now as you relive that moment.”
14. Ask, “Is there anything else you would like to share with me that I may not have asked

about?”

15. Indicate appreciation to the participant for their participation and contribution to my study. Indicate that the participant will receive from me in a few days: Copy of the informed consent and later when interviews are completed, interpretation of interviews for member checking.



## APPENDIX H

## Institutional Review Board Approval and Exemption Notice

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

February 16, 2015

Conrado Tiu

Protocol #: E1214D07

Project Title: A Qualitative Study into the Inner Leadership of Transformative California School Principals

Dear Mr. Tiu:

Thank you for submitting your application, *A Qualitative Study into the Inner Leadership of Transformative California School Principals*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Barner, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Collins, Manager of the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu). On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thema Bryant-Davis".

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.  
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives  
Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney  
Dr. Robert Barner, Faculty Advisor