The Fourth Condition

educators through these conversations about race. It helps participants to know where they are personally as well as to understand the place from which others’ contributions come; the result is an expansion and deepening of beliefs and opinions for all participants.

Figure 8.1 The Courageous Conversation Compass

On this compass, we have identified four primary ways that people process racial information, events, or issues: moral, intellectual, emotional, and relational. These are the four points or cardinal directions of our compass:

Those positioned in the moral quadrant develop a deep-seated belief related to the racial information or event. This belief has to do with the “rightness” or “wrongness” of any given issue. One’s justifications for a moral viewpoint are often located in the “gut,” and articulating them verbally may not be possible. On an intellectual level, the primary response to a racial issue or information is characterized by a personal disconnect from the subject or a steadfast search for additional information or data. The intellectual response is often verbal and based in one’s thinking. In the emotional arena, educators respond to information through feelings in the sense that a racial issue strikes them at a physical level causing an internal sensation such as anger, sadness, joy, or embarrassment. Finally, a view positioned in the relational zone of the compass reveals one’s connection and response to racial information through acting, as defined by specific behaviors and actions. In a sense, moral responses reside in the soul, intellectual in the mind, emotional in the heart, and relational in our hands and feet.

The Courageous Conversation Compass resembles a Chinese compass, which has five coordinates: east, west, north, south, and center. On our compass, the four