“If students feel they don’t belong at school, we would benefit from understanding this as a problem of organizational capacity.”

– Decoteau J. Irby
Objectives and what to expect

Change agents would benefit from understanding belongingness as a problem of organizational capacity for equity-focused improvement.

Part I. The Problems and Questions

Part II. Organizational capacities for racial equity improvement

Part III. What increases capacities
Change at Central Waters High School

5-year research project in a diversifying Wisconsin High School

Initiated Participatory Research Study

December 2013

Organizational Capacity for Racial Conflict and Reconciliation

5 years

Presentation of Research Findings

October 2018
Identity and Belonging
Self-reflection

1. Create a Self and Identity Map
2. A time or experience when you felt included? And why?
3. A time or experience when you did not feel included? And why?
Part I. Equity Inertia in Schools: problems and questions

- School Demographic Change Research
- School Improvement Research
- Critical Race in Education Research
- Critical Whiteness in Education Research
School Improvement Research

Capacity and what supports it’s development

• School capacity is an interactive collection of organizational resources that support school-wide reform, teacher change, and ultimately the improvement of student learning (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010; Cosner, 2009).
  – the design of school systems and structures
  – professional development and organizational learning
  – the emotional life of school
  – leadership
• As U.S. migration patterns diversify schools that have been predominantly white in years past, school leaders and teachers are not adopting the policy and practice changes that meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of their increasingly diverse Black, Brown, Linguistically marginalized, and low-income and opportunity students.
  – Structural racism (segregation, access to employment, etc.)
  – Institutional racism (tracking, curriculum, etc.)
  – Ideological racism (colorblindness, meritocracy, etc.)
  – Resistance from parents, teachers, etc. (race and class)
Race is social constructed but real. Racism is powerful and pervasive.

- If we acknowledge race is socially constructed (learned) and ingrained into the fabric of all aspects of U.S. life, then change and improvement concepts and practices derived to overcome structural, institutional, and ideological contributors to organizational inertia but that not consider the permanence of race and racism and racial realism are bound to fail (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2005)
Critical Whiteness in Education Research

White people learn to be white and learn to accept racism. Racism (white supremacy) has distinct detrimental impacts on all people, including white people.

- Racism (white supremacy) enacts violence on people of color and **racism (white supremacy) devastates white people, their souls, and shapes their intellectual and emotional (in)capacities to behave and relate** to people of color in ways that benefit humanity (see Baldwin, 2013; Douglass, 1995, 2003; Dubois, 1999; (Jupp, et. al, 2016; Thurman, 1949).
  - White fragility and white racial solidarity
  - Incoherent race talk
  - Ideological tools of whiteness (tokenism)
  - Racial evasion
  - Underdeveloped understandings of racial experience
Hidden Racial Developmental Demands?

What resources remain untapped and are not put to use for improvement?

• Capacity is an interactive collection of organizational resources that enables improvement

• School leaders and teachers are not adopting the policy and practice changes

• Race is socially constructed (learned), real, and ingrained into the fabric of all aspects of U.S. life

• White supremacy shapes white people’s intellectual and emotional (in)capacities to behave and relate to people who are different than them
Reflection and elbow partner chat

1. What are my key takeaways so far? What am I learning? What is intellectually challenging about the content?

2. Can racially or otherwise marginalized students ever fully belong in a space of domination?

3. On a scale from 1 – 10, how bad is Dr. Irby trippin? And why? Or am I trippin? What do I find emotionally challenging?
Part II. Organizational capacities for racial equity improvement

- A shared metacognitive awareness of racial emotions and ideologies
- A normative understanding of structural racism (perpetual racial dilemma)
- Routine initiation of courageous confrontations related to racial inequities
- Black and Brown students’ and people’s experiences and perspectives are central to decision-making
- Routine curation of spaces of white discomfort
Capacity 1
A shared meta-cognitive awareness of racial emotions and ideologies
Capacity 2

A normative understanding of structural racism (perpetual racial dilemma)
Capacity 3

Routine initiation of courageous confrontations related to racial inequities
Capacity 4

Black and Brown students’ and people’s experiences and perspectives are central to decision-making.
Capacity 5

Routine curation of spaces of white discomfort
Elbow Talk: Change Foci

What increases capacities?

- Hearts
- Minds
- Practices
- Structures
- Vision
- Policies
Part III.

Change Foci: What increases capacities

- Hearts
- Minds (Racial Ideologies)
- Practices
- Structures
- Vision
- Policies
Hearts
Useful but insufficient
Minds

Effective but leads to variation
Practices

Most effective and most difficult
Structures

Essential to driving improvement
Vision

Absolutely Necessary
Policies
Good to have but can also emerge from practice change
Stuck Improving

For school communities who work to build capacities for equity improvement, an outcome is that they will find themselves “stuck improving” or in a perpetual shared state of experiencing and working through *racial equity dilemmas*.

- Decoteau Irby
Recap & Concluding Reflection

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