



*"If students feel they don't belong at school, we would benefit from understanding this as a problem of organizational capacity."
– Decoteau J. Irby*

Stuck Improving

*Organizational Capacity
for Equity-focused
Improvement*

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



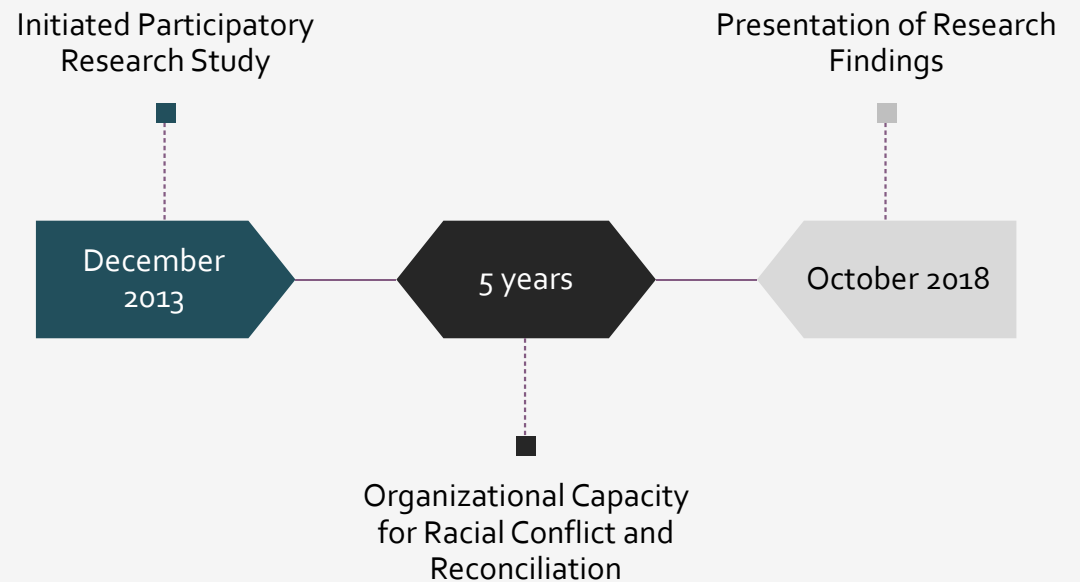
Part II.
Organizational
capacities for racial
equity improvement



Part III. What
increases capacities

Change at Central Waters High School

5-year research project in a
diversifying Wisconsin High School



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?

4

*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*

School Demographic Change

Equity inertia and its contributing
factors

- 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)

Critical Race Research

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 meta-cognitive awareness of racial emotions and ideologies



A normative understanding of structural racism (perpetual racial dilemma)



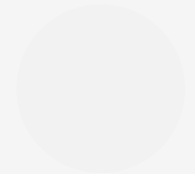
Routine initiation of courageous confrontations related to racial inequities



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

Metacognition

I think about my thinking!



- I'm thinking...
- I'm noticing...
- I'm wondering....
- I'm seeing....
- I'm feeling...



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



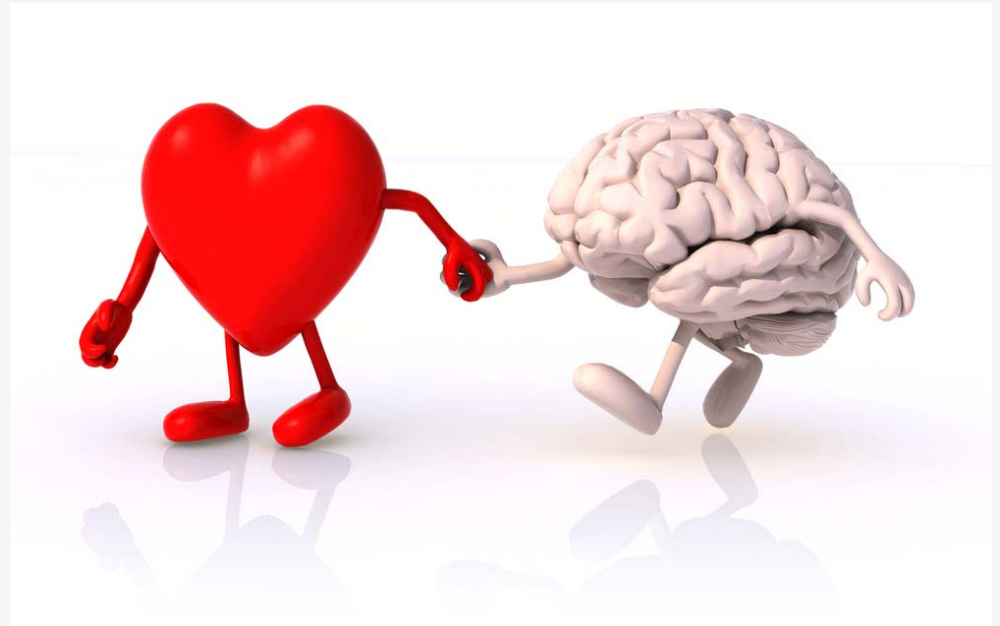
Vision



Policies

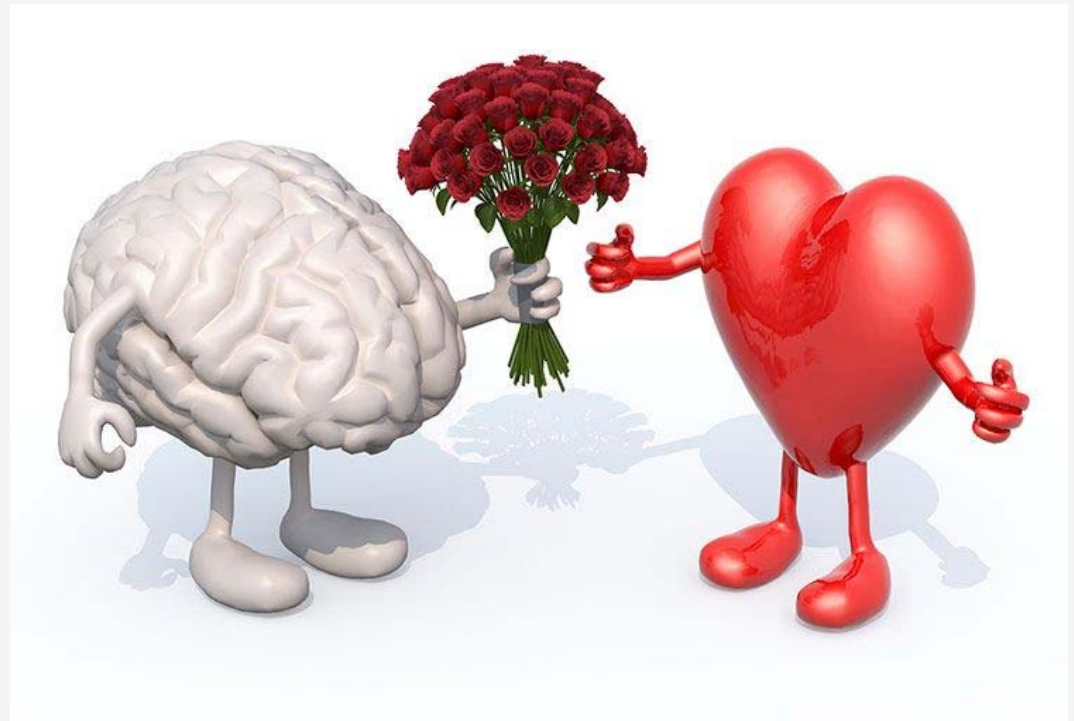
Hearts

Useful but insufficient



Minds

Effective but leads to variation



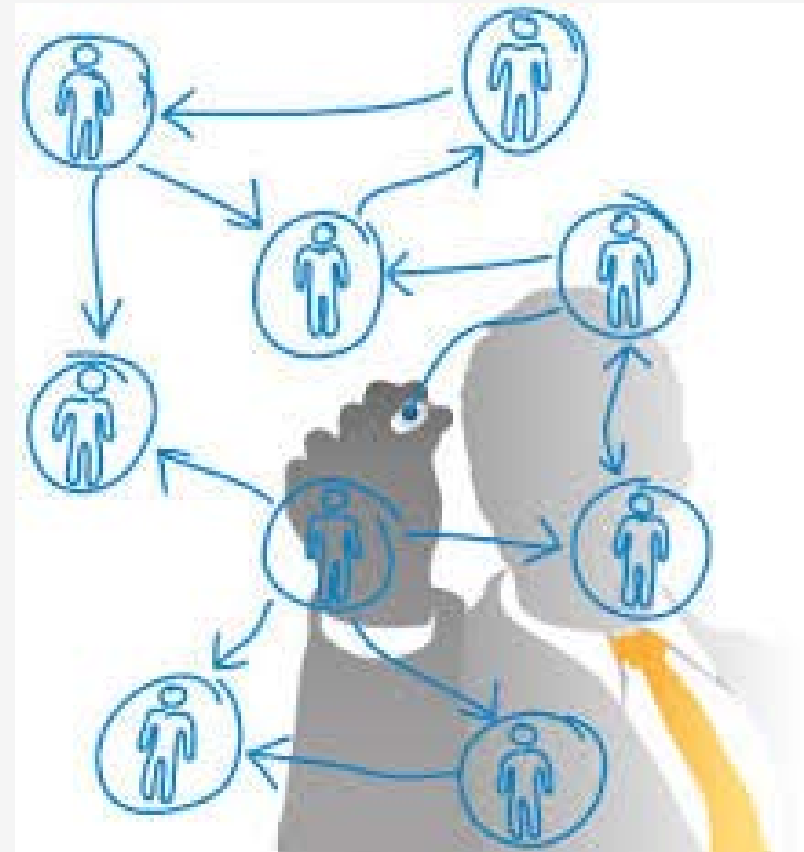
Practices

Most effective and most difficult



Structures

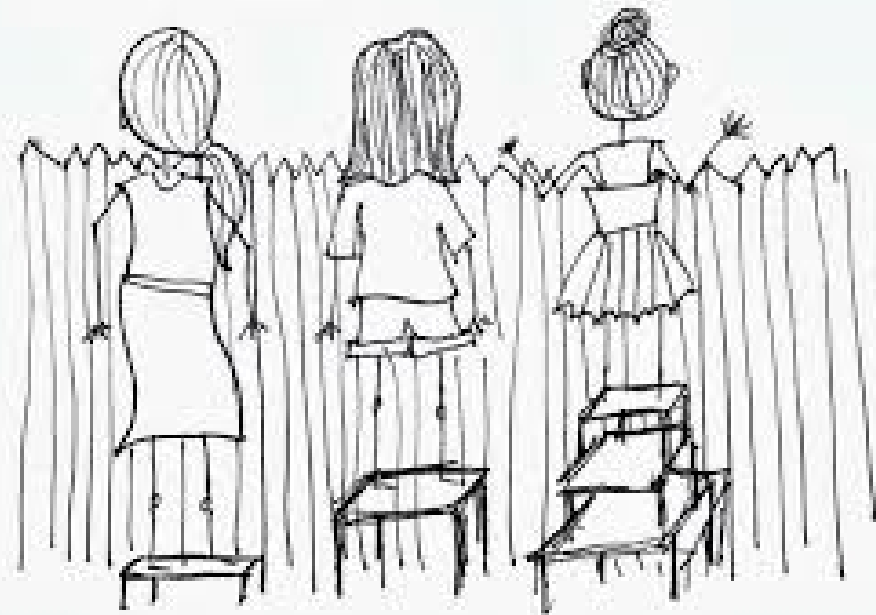
Essential to driving improvement



Vision

Absolutely Necessary

EQUITY!



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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