# Anti-Racist Change: A Conceptual Framework for Educational Institutions to Take Systemic Action

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*To achieve racial equity in education not only do individuals' mindsets need to be shifted to a more anti-racist ideology, but the institutions in which they work need to make profound anti-racist changes as well. Therefore, we revisit two sets of literature, research on anti-racism and organizational change, to explore what actions and leadership attributes could foster actual institutional change for racial equity. However, we do acknowledge the limitations of each body of research. Anti-racism research is more so ideological and theoretical and does not operationalize specifically how to take action against racism, and the organizational change research largely overlooks equity discussions, especially race. Yet, when combined, the two sets of research offer a more actionable framework for educational leaders. Thus, we merge key concepts from anti-racism and the organizational change literature to present a conceptual framework that leaders in both PK–12 and higher education institutions can use to be accountable for facilitating broad level systemic anti-racist change.*

Educational *institutions* are called such for a reason, because their unspoken norms and social agreements have a long history that has been "instituted" or developed over time, and thus become deeply entrenched into the fabric of how they operate (Larson & Ovando, 2001). This history means that the institutional status quo is designed to long outlast those who are tasked with maintaining it. It is also instinctual for an educational

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institution to maintain and protect any habitualized norms that make undertaking institutional functions easier, because they free members from the "daily stress of incessant decision making" (Larson & Ovando, 2001, p. 102). This institutionalization process is why embarking on the change needed to achieve racial equity in education—or any change for that matter—is rather difficult, because it forces institutional members to call into question how the norms, practices, and routinization they have long grown comfortable with may in fact be the cause of racial inequities that are injurious to marginalized students, faculty and staff, and even the surrounding community (Larson & Ovando, 2001).

However, too often an educational institution's public commitment to racial justice in the end is simply rhetoric or "just talk" because any real action would cause the institution to break away from the ease of norms it has long benefited from. It is considerably documented in educational research that this "Well, we had good intentions" approach is why true institutional change for racial equity often never comes to fruition (Castagno, 2014; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Swanson & Welton, in press). Thus, to achieve racial equity in education not only do individuals' mindsets need to be shifted to a more anti-racist ideology, but the institutions in which they work need to make profound anti-racist changes as well. It is important to clarify what it means to be *anti-racist* and what type of *change* is necessary to do so. Therefore, in this concluding chapter of the yearbook we take the time to revisit two sets of literature, research on *anti-racism* and *organizational change*, to explore what actions and leadership attributes could drive educational institutions to make action for racial equity a reality. By merging these two sets of literature we present a conceptual framework that leaders in both PK–12 and higher education institutions can use to be accountable for facilitating broad level systemic anti-racist change.

## ANTI-RACISM

It is important to begin with a working definition of anti-racism that truly sets the tone for the work needed to achieve institutional change for racial equity. Everyday anti-racism considers how individuals combat racism in their everyday lives and lived contexts (Aquino, 2016; Pollock, 2008). Young and Laible (2000) define anti-racism through three central characteristics: focus on white racial dominance, understanding how it works throughout our society, and taking action against white racism. Similarly, in this yearbook Gooden, Davis, Spikes, Hall, and Lee present a theory of anti-racist action in a principal preparation program that consists of four nonlinear stages: 1) gaining (and integrating) knowledge, 2) examining self, 3) (re)envisioning the world, and finally 4) taking anti-racist action.

Above all, the ultimate goal of anti-racism is to dismantle institutionalized racism (DiAngelo, 2011).

In this section we first discuss why we chose to place emphasis on race in education. We then provide an overview of anti-racism by focusing specifically on the pedagogy and learning around anti-racism, followed by an examination of the resistance that often comes with doing this type of work. Then, we conclude with a discussion on what systemic level of commitment to anti-racism looks like.

## WHY FOCUS ON RACE?

An anticipated question is why focus solely on race? We agree with authors featured in this yearbook who call for educational leaders to consider how race and racism intersect with cultural identities and inequities related to gender identity and sexuality (Mayo), native language and immigration status (Wiemelt & Maldonado), as well as being a Black woman (Patton & Haynes), because focusing on a single identity only narrowly depicts how marginalized groups both experience and use their cultural assets to navigate the racial injustices they confront in educational institutions (see Yosso, 2005). Still, frameworks that are generically inclusive of multiple inequities and overuse concepts like *diversity* and *multiculturalism* and even *equity* and *social justice* might lead educational leaders to "depoliticize," "soften," and in essence water down the critical work needed to promote long-lasting change for racial equity (Irizarry, 2009, p. 194; Martinez & Welton, 2015). Unfortunately, "by addressing the specifics of particular diverse communities, this literature avoids the platitudes and unsubstantiated generalities of generic pedagogical perspectives" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 210). In this yearbook, Stewart similarly cautions that the concept *diversity* simply focuses on the inclusivity and numerical representation of social groups but does not critically question whose perspective still weighs power as majoritarian, and whose does not.

Acknowledging and naming racism is an integral step when attempting to dismantle something so pervasive to education. Conversely, Stengel (2008) believes the direct language of *anti-racist* provokes fear and disengagement from white students (and arguably even educators). This assertion suggests that educators hand hold students (and even other educators) when it comes to addressing racist thoughts, beliefs, values, and actions. History in and of itself should prove that pacifying white people does not work. In consequence, we believe that sugarcoating the narrative of race and racism does not directly address the issue. It only further upholds white supremacy.

## PEDAGOGY AND INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

There is an abundance of research focused on anti-racist pedagogy as well as anti-racism/anti-racist education in general. Many social justice scholars favor anti-racist pedagogy and provide suggestions on how to develop and sustain this practice at the classroom level. Most of the research centers on how to use anti-racist pedagogy to change the mindsets of individuals:

> while ultimately anti-racism targets societal and institutional racism, anti-racist education must be focused on the individual, for it is the individual who ultimately complies with or challenges the existing system of racism. (Young & Laible, 2000, p. 25)

Anti-racist pedagogy is the teaching and practice of anti-racism. Anti-racist pedagogy should also recognize historical narratives and challenge these assumptions to allow for counterstories to these majoritarian narratives (Stanley, 1998). Similarly, Seidl (2007) also believes that teachers should "clearly understand the history of racism and race relations and its influence on culture and society today" (as cited in Davila, 2011, p. 41). To that end, educators must first examine their beliefs, views, and assumptions regarding racialized others before attempting to facilitate critical thinking and change (Davila, 2011; Graff, 2010). Unfortunately, underlying attitudes regarding race are often never fully resolved, which hinders true action and change (Dlamini, 2002). For example, higher education and PK–12 leaders frequently seek out presenters for one-off diversity workshops, but these workshops often never permeate through to facilitate critical dissections of policies and procedures as well as change institutional and classroom level dynamics.

## RESISTANCE TO ANTI-RACISM

Although many educators and scholars have adopted anti-racist pedagogy, there are others that are critical of this framework. For instance, Stengel (2008) implies that the term *anti-racist* is "in your face" and triggers fear for some [white] students, which then causes them to shut down and disengage from discussion:

> Fear and racism go together in our individual, social, and institutional experience. And the fears of the students I observed have individual, social, and institutional objects. They don't want to think of themselves as personally guilty of the moral evil that is racism. They don't want to be held accountable for an acknowledged social evil. They don't want to be forced to consider that their own understanding of the institution of schooling may be fatally flawed. (Stengel, 2008, p. 70)

Stengel's suggestions to change the terminology play into economies of niceness which Galman, Pica-Smith, and Rosenberger (2010) believe take the place of more critical examinations of racism. Similarly, DiAngelo (2011) asserts that defensive behaviors such as fear, anger, or silence to discussions about race only serve to reinforce the racial status quo (also see McMahon, 2007). DiAngelo describes how people of color in mixed-race settings are placed in the vulnerable position of softening their own emotions about racism in order to placate white people's feelings. As a result, people are burdened with explaining white racism in the "right" way that "is generally politely and rationally, without any emotional upset" (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 61). This resistance to engagement prevents any change in mindsets and viewpoints on how racism manifests in society:

> The continual retreat from the discomfort of authentic racial engagement in a culture infused with racial disparity limits the ability to form authentic connections across racial lines, and results in a perpetual cycle that works to hold racism in place. (p. 66)

This resistance occurs in both PK–12 and college/university classrooms and department meetings where participants use tools of whiteness[1] to avoid engaging in discussions about race (Picower, 2009; Swanson & Welton, in press).

In addition, the literature recognizes that educators are not adequately prepared in their preparation programs to successfully facilitate critical discussions targeting race relations (Davila, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Implementing theory into practice proves to be difficult for many educators. Various scholars, like Gooden et al. and Spikes in this yearbook, provide suggestions for restructuring teacher and leadership preparation programs and how to begin implementing anti-racism education in both the classroom and at the institutional level (Brooks & Arnold, 2013; Diem & Carpenter, 2013; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015). Additionally, Ladson-Billings (2000) suggests that teacher preparation programs reexamine the admission process, reassess curricula, restructure field experiences, and recruit and retain Black scholars, and the same strategies should be implemented in programs that prepare leaders of PK–12 and higher education institutions.

## SYSTEMIC LEVEL COMMITMENT

Individual learning and commitment to anti-racism is necessary; however, there must also be a commitment at the systemic level to ensure that not only are individual educators adopting and working toward anti-racism, but that the entire organization is constantly working toward it as well:

> an individual stand against racism is more concrete, a notion important in education because although teachers and administrators may participate in multicultural professional development courses and anti-racist workshops, they must actively engage in anti-racist practices to become anti-racist educators. (Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011, p. 593)

Young and Laible (2000) believe "learning to be an anti-racist educator and/or educational leader is a continual (lifelong) process" (p. 30). Educators must recognize how their racial identity influences their leadership, understanding the role racism plays in sustaining systems of oppression and that anti-racism extends beyond discussions of diversity and multiculturalism (Solomon, 2002).

Individual level learning is important, but the next step is ensuring that anti-racist change is also institutional/systemic. Solomon (2002) provides three specific skills educators should possess to implement systemic level anti-racist change: (1) develop an anti-racist environment for all constituencies, (2) cultivate a school-wide anti-racism curriculum, (3) hire diverse faculty, (4) encourage the participation of all perspectives and confront controversy, and (5) bolster relationships with organizations that have an equity focus. Still, anti-racist pedagogy and anti-racism literature overwhelmingly focuses on the individual, but more research is needed to examine how anti-racist change can be made at the systemic level.

From our work as researchers and practitioners in P–20 contexts, we gather that systemic level anti-racist change never actually happens. Scholars and educators are bogged down with the individual commitment and in turn neglecting the larger institution. In reality, for anti-racist education to work, there must be an action-oriented commitment from the individual as well as the larger institution. Dlamini (2002) quotes Dei (1996) asserting, "anti-racist education is an action-oriented strategy for institutional, systemic change" (Dei, p. 25; as cited in Dlamini, p. 54). Eliminating systemic barriers that deeply "entrench" and recreate racism in PK–12 schools and colleges/universities is the ultimate goal of an anti-racist leader (Solomon, 2002; Swanson & Welton, in press). However, research on anti-racism in education mostly centers on classroom teaching, preparing educators to be anti-racist and the resistance and politics involved in doing the work; limited research provides concrete strategies and examples of how to invoke anti-racist change system-wide. We would like to introduce a new framework combining organizational change and research on anti-racism in order to broaden the scope from the individual to the larger institution or system of power. Anti-racism must be ingrained in working relationships with external partners, the code of conduct for students, as well as the professionalism of staff members in order for progress to occur (Law, 2017).

## INSTITUTING CHANGE

Next, we look to the organizational change literature for insights on how to conceptualize *change* in educational institutions. We refer to organizational management research (By, 2005; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996) as well as research specific to PK–12 and higher education (Buller, 2015; Fullan, 2001, 2002; Kezar, 2001; Oakes, Welner, Yonezawa, & Allen, 2005). To do so, we first define organizational change, and then examine the *focus* of change and consider the *scale* and *degree* of change needed to ensure that the goals for change occur at all levels of the educational institution (Buller, 2015; Kezar, 2001; Oakes et al., 2005). We also emphasize the need for educational institutions to consider the *context* and *conditions* that are foundational to the change effort (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). Finally, we discuss what skills and attributes are needed of an educational leader who drives the anti-racist change process. Hence, when embarking on racial equity work we suggest that educational leaders refer to the organizational change literature to better operationalize and plan for how to transform racially oppressive educational communities into socially just spaces that are anti-racist in both values and actions.

### DEFINING CHANGE

Change management is generally defined as a series of processes that lead to re-envisioning an organization's "direction, structure and capabilities" to serve the "ever-changing" needs and demands that are both external and internal to the organization (By, 2005, p. 369). However, when institutions embark on change they often do so in a reactionary way that is unpredictable and prompted by a sudden crisis, not considering how important timing is to achieving institutional change (see Kezar, 2001). For example, many universities across the country have failed to engage their campus in important national discussions around institutionalized racism such as police brutality in Black and Brown communities, anti-immigration sentiments and policies, the prison industrial complex, and the erasure of queer communities of color, issues that activist organizations such as Black Lives Matter[2] continue to push to the forefront. University leaders typically wait to address institutional racism until it is often too late, responding only when a racial incident has occurred on campus, and try to soften the damage by a simple reaction in the form of a statement sent via mass email to the campus. These reactionary responses do very little to move the needle toward racial equity, as this type of response to racism on campus causes the conversations to be fleeting and sooner rather than later we are back to "business as usual."

Instead, change theorists propose planned and/or managed change, which involves a more deliberate, intentional and "conscious decision to change" (Burnes, 2004; By, 2005; Kezar, 2001, pp. 20–21). This type of change process commonly involves an insider or outsider expert who works with organizational members to "cope" with the challenges that come with implementing change within the organization (Kezar, 2001, p. 20). For instance, outside consulting groups are often hired to assist PK–12 institutions working through racial equity-centered change processes (see Singleton & Linton, 2006). Yet, perhaps an insider approach would garner even greater buy-in and trust from institutional members to participate in the change process because those from inside the institution, such as administrators and teacher leaders, work together to develop their own context-specific professional development for what it means to be an anti-racist educator (for examples see Spikes' chapter in this yearbook). Through the planned change process, organizational members collaborate and strategize to carry out their goals for change (Kezar, 2001). Still, despite bringing outside experts to assist with planned change for racial equity, or instituting school-led professional development and collaboration, these efforts are ineffective and inconsequential if the change is not ongoing and long-term.

Similar to planned change, when organizational members engage in incremental change they continuously handle one problem and objective at a time (Burnes, 2004). However, one major criticism of change that is incremental or planned is that it assumes everyone within the organization has bought into and is on board with the change, not taking into account politics, especially resistance to the change from institutional members (By, 2005). Another criticism is that incremental and planned change is often still too narrow, only focusing on change at a small scale. For example, if you leave it to departments to improve upon the recruitment and retention of faculty of color without instituting a college- or university-wide initiative (also see Eddy's and Tillman's chapters in this yearbook), you are not demonstrating that the goal for change is imperative, nor are you changing the institutional culture or holding people accountable to change. Therefore, for long-term, continuous change to occur it needs to be transformational, which is change that is widespread throughout the institution (By, 2005).

Planned change also assumes institutions function within constant, stable conditions, not taking into consideration how a direct and immediate response is needed when an institution is presented with a crisis or experiences a rapid shift in contextual circumstances (By, 2005). The reality is that states are decreasing funding to PK–12 and higher education institutions and it is uncertain how their institutional goals for racial equity can

prevail with limitations in resources. For example, the state of Illinois' budget crisis directly affected the Monetary Award Program as well as the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Fellowship Program,[3] leaving university and college departments scrambling to continue to support low-income and underrepresented students (Seltzer, 2017). As such, institutions must expect that the unexpected can occur, and in response, their approaches to change for racial equity need to be flexible and adaptable (By, 2005; Kezar, 2001).

## CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS

Context indeed matters to how institutions approach facilitating change for racial equity, as first and foremost the social, cultural, political, and even historical conditions that underlie their change efforts must be considered. At times the institutional *context* and *conditions* call for an immediate response to a problem, because gradual, evolutionary change may be an inappropriate response. Whereas revolutionary actions involve radical, swift change at a scale that impacts "all parts of the organization simultaneously" (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996, p. 1024). However, it is difficult to find examples of radical, revolutionary changes in PK–12 and higher education that are anti-racist because leaders often encounter pushback from various [white] stakeholders such as alumni, donors, faculty, the board, community members, and policymakers who firmly believe that their rights and property[4] could be diminished or taken away if educational opportunities and resources are redistributed in order to attain racial equity.

Unfortunately, swift, revolutionary change for racial equity only occurs when it aligns with the interests of white stakeholders. According to Derrick Bell (1980), leading legal scholar on race, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that declared separate but equal schools unconstitutional is the most classic example of white self-interest converging with that of racial equality. Then, white America was only willing to consider the deleterious effects of racial segregation when at the height of the Cold War the United States' reputation was at risk for its unequal treatment of Blacks (Bell, 1980). Unfortunately, school districts were stagnant in their efforts to desegregate, and now over 60 years later due to *de facto* segregation schools across the United States are more racially isolated than ever before (Garland, 2012; Reardon, Grewal, Kalogrides, & Greenberg, 2012)—a prime example that educational institutions need to understand how the context and conditions of its past could be potential roadblocks to the changes necessary for present racial equity to be realized.

## THE FOCUS OF CHANGE

Institutional members should also consider the focus of change, by asking whether the change is *structural*, a *process*, or *attitudinal*? According to Kezar (2001) *structural* changes are institutional policies, procedures, and even changes to an organizational chart or reward system. *Processes* refer to how members interact with the structures, and *attitudes* are members' belief systems or how they feel when working within the organizational structures and processes (Kezar, 2001). For example, developing a policy that eliminates GRE requirements is a structural change, and then subsequent processes need to be designed that place greater emphasis on other application materials such as GPA, writing samples, recommendation letters, and professional and/or research experience that ultimately serves to improve the recruitment and retention of underrepresented graduate students. Faculty and admission committees must also change their attitudes and perceptions regarding what constitutes a quality student beyond GRE scores.

## SCALE AND DEGREE OF CHANGE

Although the intentions and timing of change are important, an institution should also continuously consider the scale on which they are accomplishing change (Kezar, 2001). For change to occur system-wide, institutions need to address change at multiple levels of scale, especially the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels. For example, when working towards hiring more racially diverse teachers and administrators in a school district, first at the individual level professional development needs to be provided to help district and school level leaders understand why racial diversity in district personnel might also be important to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Furthermore, at the interpersonal level ongoing intergroup dialogue sessions on issues of race would help build better relationships among white educators and educators of color, and then at the organizational level district leaders should institute system-wide supports for the success of new teachers and administrators of color.

Related to scale is the degree of change achieved, which can be assessed by differentiating first-order versus second-order changes (Kezar, 2001). First-order changes are more incremental, minor improvements, whereas second-order changes are transformational in that they alter the values and culture of the organization (Kezar, 2001; Oakes et al., 2005). However, Oakes et al. (2005) argue that first- and second-order changes are still technical and do not satisfy the "moral purposes" of educational institutions, especially when the goals for change are racial equity-minded. Therefore, another degree of change is needed, which Oakes et al.

(2005) call third-order change, in order to fundamentally change "core normative beliefs" and ideologies about race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, (dis)ability and other intersecting inequalities within educational institutions. Oakes et al. (2005) provide detracking classrooms in PK–12 as an example of third-order change, because embarking on this change would require teachers and administrators to make major ideological and attitudinal shifts about who is capable of rigorous instruction, especially their views of students' of color academic abilities. Likewise, according to Espino, the racial status quo can only be disrupted when equity-minded practitioners address how their biases and assumptions, and subsequent policies and practices contribute to either "inclusive or hostile campus climates" for students (see Chapter 9 of this yearbook).

Similarly, Kruger's commonly referenced theory of change, the iceberg model, suggests that change is like an iceberg where "most of the danger lies below the surface" (Buller, 2015, p. 5). As a result, institutions spend more time on surface level, "checklist" type of changes and avoid the root of the problem that is hidden or not as visible. Moreover, based on Kruger's model, "power relationships, politics, beliefs, biases, and perceptions" are problems in the change process that are typically avoided (p. 5). Ultimately, an educational institution's success or failure largely depends on whether the leadership is willing to face and directly address the challenges that lie beneath the surface (Buller, 2015). For real, substantial anti-racist change to occur the institutional leaders must first be able to withstand the resistance and pushback that comes when members try to avoid engaging in discussions about race, let alone changes that push them to alter institutional policies and practices.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

While understanding the mechanics of institutional change is important, ideas and goals for change would never fully launch without strong leadership to steward the vision and institutional buy-in to the change moving forward. According to Buller (2015), for real change to happen leadership is what is most essential: "if you want to bring about lasting, effective change in a department, college or university, change the way you lead" (p. 217). What does seem clear across the research is that leaders will spend most of their time developing a culture for change (Fullan, 2001, 2002) where they focus their energy on developing "*people* and processes rather than outcomes and metrics" (Buller, 2015, p. 217). Essentially, leaders who are successful at building an institutional culture of change focus more on the "big picture" and are "conceptual thinkers who transform the organization through *people*" and collaboration (Fullan, 2002, p. 17). So, leaders must invest time to effectively communicate the vision for change, build relationships and trust,

and empower the people who in the end will be doing the lion's share of the work necessary to see the change through (Fullan, 2001).

Though, for educational leaders who are committed to racial equity, developing a culture of change is not so simple. Anti-racist change demands that the leader pushes for dismantling the racial status quo across the institution, and as we mentioned this radical restructuring and redistribution of power and resources often invokes pushback from [white] stakeholders who fear their privileges might be compromised in the process. To anticipate this type of resistance, when leaders facilitate anti-racist change they not only need to challenge belief systems that are harmful to racially marginalized groups, but also confront and change inequitable policies, structures, and practices that protect white privilege and reinscribe racial inequities (Jean-Marie & Mansfield, 2013; Solomon, 2002). Furthermore, leaders of anti-racist change should encourage others to participate in dialogue about issues of race that may initially be uncomfortable but are necessary (Leonardo, 2007; Singleton & Linton, 2006; Swanson & Welton, in press).

Implementing long-lasting anti-racist change is impossible for a single leader to facilitate. Swanson & Welton (in press) recommend that leadership for anti-racist change be held not just by those at top-level positions, but distributed or "stretched" throughout the institution (see also Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, & Hodgins, 2008). Building the capacity of others to lead and shoulder the responsibility for facilitating anti-racist change only increases the number of those throughout the institution who are accountable for and committed to accomplishing the institution's goals for racial equity.

## A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANTI-RACIST CHANGE

Although anti-racism is the act of "striving to be without racist attitudes oneself as well as being prepared to work against both racist attitudes in others and racial injustice in society more generally" (Blum, 1991, p. 2), the research is more ideological and theoretical and does not necessarily operationalize specifically how to take action, since doing anti-racist work is so context specific. Moreover, the organizational change literature is criticized for generally glossing over equity discussions, let alone race (Oakes et al., 2005). Yet, perhaps by integrating anti-racism with the processes of organizational change, leaders can more concretely plan for what capacity building is needed to achieve racial equity. We need anti-racist leaders that are developing anti-racist institutions, and anti-racist institutions that are continually going through the process of renewing direction, structure, and capabilities.

To that end, we merged key concepts from anti-racism (pedagogy, individual learning and resistance, and systemic level commitment) and organizational change (context and conditions, focus of change, scale and

degrees, and leadership) to develop a conceptual framework that educational leaders can use to outline specific steps when executing institutional-level strategic planning for a particular racial equity issue or goal. To demonstrate, we provide one example for PK–12 education (Table 1) and one for postsecondary education (Table 2). For the PK–12 example we use the conceptual framework to consider steps needed to redress the overrepresentation of Black students for discipline referrals, but we also suggest you refer to Mansfield, Rainbolt, and Fowler's chapter in this yearbook on the implementation of restorative justice practices as a tool for racial equity in school discipline. For the postsecondary education example we chose to focus on diversifying undergraduate and graduate student populations, but we also recommend Pak and Span's (with Anderson and Trent) chapter in this yearbook for additional examples on how to improve institutional diversity and retention.

It would be problematic if educational leaders used our conceptual framework to simply plan, but never actually followed through with implementation. We have far too many examples in education of how racial equity is initially made an institutional priority but then gets demoted for other competing agendas (i.e., whiteness) (Castagno, 2014; Oakes et al., 2005; Welton et al., 2015). In response, we added a continuous improvement cycle to the conceptual framework, because both the anti-racism and organizational change literature emphasizes that the work involved needs to be systemic and ongoing. Thus, the continuous improvement cycle is an accountability measure for educational institutions to ensure they are not just sitting on a plan for anti-racist change, but are indeed taking action.

**Table 1. PK–12 Example: Overrepresentation of Black Students for Discipline Referrals**

| **Change** | **Anti-racism** | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Pedagogy, Individual Learning & Resistance* | *Systemic Level Commitment* |
| *Context and Conditions* | Assess teachers' belief systems about Black students' learning and behaviors.<br>Survey Black students' perceptions about their experiences with learning in the classroom and school-wide. | Examine current disciplinary data. Have district and school-wide discussion sessions about the disciplinary data and what it means for Black students' experiences and learning outcomes. |
| *Focus (structural, process, attitude)* | Use instructional feedback and teacher evaluation tools to determine how teachers' attitudes and practices lead to disciplinary decisions that have negative implications for Black students. | Review and critique current district and school level policies for discipline and classroom management to understand how they disproportionately impact Black students. |

| Change | Anti-racism | |
|---|---|---|
| *Focus (structural, process, attitude)* | Host ongoing implicit bias training for teachers and staff as well as trainings on how to implement more culturally responsive instruction and relationship building with students.<br>Provide district and school level training on how to implement restorative justice practices. | Do an equity audit and walk through[1] of every school to determine what structures and processes impact the overall school climate and negative schooling experiences of Black students.<br>Eliminate zero tolerance discipline policies district-wide, and instead implement restorative justice practices. |
| *Scale and Degree* | At the interpersonal level, improve relationships with Black students and families.<br>Change how teachers talk about Black students to one another and shift from a language of deficit and despair to language of hope, promise and success. | Examine and change district-wide the institutional scripts[2], stereotypes and deficit beliefs about Black students and how they learn. |
| *Leadership* | Help individual educators and staff take responsibility and ownership for the racial inequities that Black students experience.<br>Help individual educators and staff be responsive to receiving feedback on how they academically support and develop positive relationships with Black students.<br>Help individual educators and staff become committed to building better relationships with Black students and families and have a greater investment in Black student learning and success. | Host district and school level meetings to relay vision, goals and make clear that the goal for change is a nonnegotiable.<br>Help the entire district and schools take responsibility and ownership for the racial inequities that Black students experience. |
| *Continuous Improvement Cycle* | Continuous implicit bias training and racial dialogues about school discipline and its impact on how Black students experience school. Continuous critical examination and recalibration of district and school-wide disciplinary policies and procedures. Gather information from students via formative feedback assessments to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the restorative justice process and the overall culture and climate of the schools and district. Teachers develop ongoing peer walkthroughs where they visit one another's classrooms to observe and provide constructive feedback on the culture and climate of the classroom for all students, but especially Black students. | |

1. When educators conduct equity audits or walks they use district and/or school level data or a school walkthrough to identify inequities or any equitable structures and practices that exist (Ontario Principals Council, 2011; Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nolly, 2004).

2. Institutional scripts are norms and assumptions "that underlie educators' interactions with each other and with other stakeholders" and negatively shape and constrain educators' relationships with parents and community members of color (Ishimaru, 2014, p. 12).

**Table 2. Postsecondary Example: Diversifying the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Population**

| Change | Anti-racism | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Pedagogy, Individual Learning & Resistance* | *Systemic Level Commitment* |
| *Context and Conditions* | Conduct college and departmental level climate surveys and discussions.<br>Assess existing resources and supports available to faculty and staff.<br>Learn and understand the individual college and departmental history and relationship with racism and racial diversity. | Learn about and understand the university's history and relationship with racism and racial diversity.<br>Examine admissions data over the past 10 years, and consider how race intersects with gender identity, sexuality, social class, disability, citizenship, and region (rural, urban, suburban).<br>Survey current students, faculty and staff to gain insight into the existing admissions process.<br>Examine diversity of faculty and admissions staff.<br>Benchmark based on peer and aspirant institutions. |
| *Focus (structural, process, attitude)* | Conduct implicit bias professional development for faculty and admissions staff.<br>Host several racial dialogue sessions with faculty, staff, and students challenging norms and beliefs about what makes a "good" student applicant. | At the institutional level ask critical questions such as: Where are you recruiting?, What are the application requirements?, Who is reading applications?, What are their implicit biases?<br>Ensure there is racially diverse representation on all admissions committees.<br>Critically examine and remove application criteria and processes that impede racial minorities from applying. |
| *Scale and Degree* | At the interpersonal level ensure that communication is open (i.e., sharing information, resources) and holding one another accountable for implementing change (i.e., motivation, support).<br>Ensure that there are structured opportunities for open, honest dialogue and to celebrate success when improvement has been accomplished. | Host meetings with various stakeholder groups (board of trustees, academic advisors, deans, department heads) to shift ideologies and help them understand the moral purpose as to why racially diversifying admissions is important. |

| Change | Anti-racism | |
|---|---|---|
| *Leadership* | Provide professional development for campus leaders on how to manage individual stakeholder resistance to changes in admissions policies, structures, and practices. | Explain and provide evidence for why diversity in admissions is important to the success of the college/university.<br>Set and communicate the vision and goals for racial diversity.<br>Ensure that all college/university faculty and staff are on board via listening and learning tours with various stakeholder groups.<br>Hire campus leadership, faculty, and staff who are committed to equity and diversity and have prior experience successfully leading racial equity initiatives, especially in student admissions. |
| *Continuous Improvement Cycle* | Set new goals for each admission cycle. Conduct continuous implicit bias training and racial dialogues that respond to the ever-changing needs of the student population and the larger sociopolitical context. Always critically examine old and new admission policies and procedures. Gather information from students to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the college application and admission process. | |

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The toll of racism on marginalized groups includes experiencing disproportionately higher levels of poverty, crime, and environmental pollution; having lesser quality schools and poorer health; and dealing with the stress of hidden and overt racism (Blitstein, 2009). There are transgenerational effects of racism, and over one's life course racialized disenfranchisement manifests in physiological and psychological ways such as anger, psychological withdrawal, disengagement, emotional and physical exhaustion, and stress (Smith, Mustaffa, Jones, Curry, & Allen, 2016; Smith & Yosso, 2007; Sullivan, 2013). In spite of the serious effects of institutionalized racism, there is a failure to take racial injustice seriously and re-centering of whiteness in panned anti-racist efforts (e.g., "All Lives Matter" in response to "Black Lives Matter" and freedom of expression and freedom of speech being conflated with acts of hate and hate speech as seen at the University of Virginia[5]).

Our P–20 educational system reflects ideological norms and belief systems that do not center anti-racist education. There has been failure to recognize that anti-racist change is essential to advancing educational equity. Some educators drag their feet, require "buy-in," and cannot see

inequities at an individual, organizational, or systemic level. Similarly, in their chapter for this yearbook, Squire, Williams, and Tuitt find that the only way to fight institutional racism in education is if educational institutions are deconstructed and then reconstructed to be anti-racist. Hence, in staying the course toward anti-racist change, educators must recognize that we are not living in a post-racial society, that this work is not static or a one-time affair but complex, dynamic, and ongoing.

The continuing work needed to provide anti-racist change requires educators that have more than perceived multicultural efficacy or cultural proficiency but have equity-based abilities. Equity-based abilities are being able to identify inequity in the subtlest forms, responding immediately and skillfully to inequities, and redressing inequity long-term and sustaining equity efforts (Gorski, 2013). Demonstrating equity-based abilities is engaging in racially just practices and recognizing the need to purge white privilege and racism from the foundations that the American educational system has been built upon. However, the racialized climate inside and outside of educational institutions appears ripe for abandonment of anti-racism, with a doubling down on oppressive and exclusionary contexts in lieu of rhetorical reform, in the absence of radical change conversations that center culture without discomforting inequity and furthering racism (Fields & Fields, 2014; Gillborn, 2005, 2006; Gorski, 2013).

In sum, anti-racist change does not occur and arguably is not taking root when American educational institutions continually center whiteness, do not challenge white supremacy, and fail to problematize and situate racism in equity efforts. As Fields and Fields (2014) note, race is often magically decoupled from racism illustrative of ahistoricism that they call "Racecraft." Today, race still matters, with racism remaining a core problem and principal concern in our schools and society at large. In overlooking and deemphasizing race, we run the danger of failing to deliver anti-racist change and falling short of efforts that truly seek equitable outcomes across diverse learners.

## NOTES

1. The ideology of whiteness is the systemic execution of beliefs, policies and practices that uphold white domination in society over persons of color (McMahon, 2007).

2. To learn more about Black Lives Matter refer to https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/

3. The Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Fellowship Program seeks to "increase the number of minority full-time tenure track faculty and staff at Illinois' two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities" (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2016).

4. Cheryl Harris asserts that "the concept of whiteness—established by centuries of custom (illegitimate custom, but custom nonetheless) and codified by law—may be understood as property interested" (1995, p. 280).

5. Zamani-Gallaher, E. M. (2016, August 15). Racialized realities: The need for activist leadership and scholarship on campus. *HuffPost*. Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/racialized -realities -the -need -for -activist -leadership_us_59912f45e4b063e2ae058116

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