Article

Hearts and Minds First: Institutional Logics in Pursuit of Educational Equity

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Abstract

Purpose: Despite an explosion of professional development to help educators discuss issues of race and equity, expectations for addressing racial disparities outstrip current leadership practices, and scant empirical research exists on the organizational changes that emerge from the work of equity teams. This study examined equity teams' theories of organizational change for equity and how those theories related to their efforts to change school policies and practices. **Research Methods/Approach:** Drawing on institutional logics from organizational theory, this comparative case study examined transcripts and fieldnotes from 22 meetings and 27 interviews with two school equity teams in diverse contexts in the Pacific Northwest. **Findings:** Despite differences in the principals, team conversations, and organizational contexts, we found that both teams' discussions asserted a primary theory of change for shifting schools toward greater equity. According to this "commonsense" notion, efforts to become more equitable as a school first require shifts in individuals' understandings, beliefs, and attitudes—changes to "hearts and minds"—*prior to* engaging in other actions to address organizational change. Ultimately, our findings suggest

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that the dominance of a *hearts-and-minds-first* theory of change constrained changes to organizational policies, structures and practices. **Conclusions:** Alternative theories of change to catalyze equity-focused organizational shifts hold promise for fostering educational justice. Future participatory design research with schools may yield knowledge of multiyear organizational change.

Keywords
equity teams, organizational leadership, school improvement, institutional logics

Amid growing recognition of disparities by race and gender in school discipline, student learning experiences, academic achievement, and other indicators of educational success, district and school equity initiatives have raised the accountability stakes for educational leaders and their critical role in closing opportunity gaps (Rice, 2010). Moreover, the national educational leadership standards now call out equity and cultural responsiveness as core leadership responsibilities (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015). Yet the expectations for addressing racial, class, language, and other disparities in student outcomes exceed the current capacity of leaders in P-12 public schools (Furman, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2008). Such efforts require more than heroic individual leaders. Scholars and practitioners alike have recognized the need to build *organizational leadership* to address the policies, structures, culture, and practices that reinforce and exacerbate societal inequities (Grubb & Tredway, 2010; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014; Kose, 2009).

Yet building organizational leadership for equity is a tall order for an institution steeped in histories of colonization, oppression, and assimilation (Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wolfe, 2006). Embedded in an increasingly polarized sociopolitical context, schools are also staffed by primarily white middle-class educators with limited lived experience of racial inequities. A growing body of scholarship *and* practice in the field point to the necessity of explicit conversations about race and equity in order to address the deep and persistent racial disparities in education (Carter et al., 2017; Horsford, 2014; Irby, 2018).

An explosion of professional development (and an industry of equity consultants) have emerged to help educators—often in teams—discuss issues of race and equity in relation to their own identities, experiences, and school contexts (Singleton, 2014). But scant empirical research exists on the new

practices or organizational shifts that emerge from these conversations. Anecdotal accounts point to how such conversations have curtailed disproportionate discipline or decreased gaps in test scores, yet much of this comes in the form of testimonials from clients, and our prior work suggests a preponderance of talk over action in efforts to address inequities (Galloway et al., 2015). To be clear, we do see changing talk as a form of action, and racial literacy as essential for leading educational change, but a growing body of work has identified the need to address what *kind* of talk matters as well as the change that emerges as a result of conversations (Bertrand & Marsh, 2015; Garner et al., 2017; Irby, 2018). Addressing racial inequities in education *also* necessitates changes in organizational or instructional practices, policies, processes, and systems (Gooden et al., 2018; Khalifa, 2018). For example, equity-based changes to policies and practices might include efforts at detracking, the implementation of full inclusion classrooms, culturally responsive instructional improvement, restorative justice policies and practices, or equitable engagement of families and communities (Ahram et al., 2011; Carter et al., 2017; Khalifa, 2018; Oakes, 1985).

The emerging research on improving equity in educational organizations suggests that leadership is critical in enabling organizations to engage in new, collective learning to transform cultures and practices (Bensimon, 2005; Bensimon & Malcolm, 2012; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). This study aimed to contribute to that body of research by exploring how two leadership teams of middle school administrators, teachers, specialists, parents, and students engaged in different districts to foster more equitable outcomes for students. In particular, we attended to how the teams' efforts to make collective or organizational change intersected with the prevailing logics—the "common sense" reasonings—and associated theories of change about how to shift toward more equitable schools. Specifically, we examined: *What are teams' implicit theories of change, and how do those theories relate to teams' efforts to change organizational policies and practices in pursuit of education equity?*

We first contextualize the study within the literature on school improvement and organizational leadership for equity. Then, we describe the concept of theories of change within institutional logics as a lens for understanding how organizational leadership teams work to understand and address inequities in their school contexts. Drawing on comparative case study methods to analyze data from two school equity teams over a year, we examined how and why their discussions and efforts resulted in limited organizational change. Despite differences between principals, the trajectories of team conversations, and school and district contexts, we found that both teams' conversations asserted a primary pathway for change. According to this theory of change, efforts to become more equitable as a school first required shifts in

individuals' understandings, beliefs, and attitudes—changes to "hearts and minds"—*prior to* engaging in other actions to address organizational change. Our findings suggest that the dominance of this theory of change within the institutional logic of educational equity constrained changes in organizational policies and practices. The article concludes with directions for future research and implications for school and district equity reform initiatives.

Equity-Focused Change in Organizational Leadership Practice

This study seeks to deepen our understanding of how schools might proactively foster educational equity through educator teams functioning as a form of organizational leadership. We unpack below each aspect of this conceptualization by drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship to examine organizational change efforts for educational equity.

Overall School Improvement and Equity-Centered Change

Across reform eras, school improvement work has largely focused on raising the average achievement and outcomes of all students, with little attention to the racial and other inequities that permeate schools and the broader contexts within which they operate (Trujillo & Renée, 2015). Reforms may result in overall (average) improvements, measured in grades or test scores, but they often do little to impact disparities by race, gender, class, language, and other marginalized identities (Carter et al., 2017; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Warren et al., 2011). The persistence of racial and other inequities constitutes a critical dilemma for educational improvement efforts (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Payne, 2008).

Diluted meanings and uses of "equity" in the field may contribute to this problem. In this study, equity refers not merely to equal opportunity, but to fairness in processes, practices, and outcomes within the context of historical, economic, social, and institutional forces that have resulted in an unequal playing field, particularly for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, and Asian American students (Brayboy et al., 2007; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). An equity agenda requires addressing the systemic and structural roots of disparities, not merely the symptoms as manifested in student test scores or graduation gaps (R. S. Johnson, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Skrla et al., 2004).

One-size-fits-all color-evasive improvements or turnaround schemes in "diverse" school contexts may appear to be race-neutral but often default to dominant assumptions, norms, and practices that reinforce the institutional status quo of inequity (A. W. Johnson, 2013). For example, in theory, No

Child Left Behind-era turnaround reforms were supposed to dramatically improve student outcomes and reduce "gaps" in student "subgroup" performance through processes of school closure, reconstitution, or new governance. However, in practice, low-income schools serving mostly students of color were disproportionately closed or privatized, compounding existing disparities with disruptive transitions and contentious formal processes that marginalized youth and families of color (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015; Kirshner & Jefferson, 2015; Trujillo & Renée, 2015). Thus, even interventions ostensibly adopted to address racial disparities can be taken up in ways that reinforce status quo inequities in schools and systems (Irby, 2018).

From Individual Leaders to Organizational Leadership in Teams

Principals, superintendents, and other formal educational leaders play a key role in remediating racial inequities in schools, and a growing body of work has focused on the commitments, traits, behaviors, and interactions of individual leaders to disrupt inequities and lead for social justice in education (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Furman, 2012; Gooden, 2012; Theoharis, 2007). However, organization-wide change requires more than a lone social justice leader (Bensimon, 2005; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014). This study seeks to understand leadership as an *organizational* practice that includes but also extends beyond the actions or attributes of individuals in formal roles of authority (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Drawing from sociocultural learning and distributed leadership theories, we define organizational leadership as constructed through collective activity (Spillane et al., 2004; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Such work is participatory and shared; it requires learning to address critical, persistent, and unsolved problems (like racial and other disparities) across roles and differences through replacing old or ineffective practices with radically different ones (Engeström & Sannino, 2010; Miettinen & Virkkunen, 2005). We view this approach, with its central focus on changing organizational *practice*, as a significant departure from much prior educational discourse focused on the values, commitments, and actions of individual leaders.

Increasingly, school change efforts have looked to educator teams as a vehicle for organizational change. A robust and growing literature examines the features, context, interactions, and discourse of teacher teams as they collaborate around data and problems of practice to improve their instruction in mathematics, literacy, science, and other content (Gannon-Slater et al., 2017; Horn et al., 2015; Penuel et al., 2007). Collaboration between teachers can foster learning, build skills, and change teaching practice as well as catalyze

school improvement (Bryk et al., 2010; Grubb & Tredway, 2010; Horn & Little, 2010; Scribner et al., 2007).

Across these studies, talk plays a key role in negotiating meaning and leading change, as "talk is the bridge between educational values and improved practice in schools" (Kruse et al., 1995, p. 30). It serves as a "conceptual infrastructure" for educators' work, guiding acceptable norms and practices for teaching and learning (Horn, 2005). We argue that talk unfolds within specific organizational contexts infused with historically and institutionally based norms and assumptions, not only about teaching and students, but also about the problem and solutions to inequities. These norms shape group processes and establish what actions are deemed appropriate or logical. Attention to talk thus provides insights into the collective aims and targets of change, from individual mind-sets to organizational policies (Irby & Clark, 2018), as well as the conditions and expectations that shape subsequent actions.

Thus, the literature highlights race-explicit discussions and improvement efforts as a necessary foundation for addressing long-standing racial inequities in education. Although educator teams hold promise as a form of organizational leadership for addressing inequities, we need a deeper understanding of how equity team talk and deliberations implicate efforts to change school policies and educator practices. We turn next to institutional logics in the context of educational equity as a lens to attend to the organizational norms and assumptions that shape equity team interactions.

Conceptual Framework: Institutional Logics of Educational Equity

Institutional logics refer to the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, norms, and practices that influence how actors within a particular institution act, interact, and undertake their work. Friedland and Alford (1991) describe institutional logics as both material and symbolic; they shape ideas and patterns of thinking to both focus attention on certain possibilities and limit or curtail others. For instance, in the context of educational leadership, Rigby (2014) identified three institutional logics of instructional leadership: a prevailing logic (focused on the principal's role in managing the school and working with teachers); an entrepreneurial logic (focused on private-sector mechanisms to improve student standardized test scores); and a social justice logic (focused on principal attention to marginalized groups and inequitable outcomes).

These institutional logics not only shape actors' focus and the norms and assumptions for action, they also guide more specific theories of change within them. Though often implicit, theories of change act as templates for

action embedded within an institutional logic (Bastedo, 2008), operational-izing the base assumptions on which efforts or initiatives unfold, including who the key actors and audiences are, what "counts" as evidence, and who might need to be convinced and how (Tuck, 2009). In the case of many "race-evasive" school improvement schemes (Annamma et al., 2017), the domi-nant theory of change is premised on "fixing" young people of color and/or their families and communities—a racial ideology that constitutes a form of cultural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Lewis & Diamond, 2015).

However, a robust body of work on social justice and culturally respon-sive leadership has highlighted the need to address the historical, structural, systemic, and institutional nature of racial inequities and the role of educators in reproducing—or disrupting—those dynamics in school policies and prac-tices (Brown, 2004; Furman, 2012; Gooden, 2012; Khalifa, 2018; Kose, 2009). In contrast to a theory of change premised on an ideology of cultural racism, the literature on leadership for social justice and equity suggests that educators must ultimately change school policies, structures, practices, cli-mate, and relationships in order to produce equitable learning environments and outcomes for students marginalized by systems.

Much of the social justice leadership preparation literature and equity-consultancy practices rely on transformative adult learning theories, which posit that change in how an individual views and understands the world pre-cipitates changes in action (e.g., Mezirow, 1995). Through a process of criti-cal reflection and discourse with others, adults come to examine their assumptions and develop more expansive and inclusive perspectives that then guide social change (Mezirow, 1995). From this lens, principals must *first* "honestly confront their biases and short-comings [in order] for the external work in the school community to be authentic and effective" (Brown, 2004, p. 88). Models focused on fostering talk about race and other inequities presume that changes to practice will follow from new beliefs engendered by "transformative learning" in these conversations. However, we have few empirical studies of how this happens (McIntosh et al., 2014) and little sys-tematic evidence of changes to educator or organizational practices (see Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015, for an exception). However, the theory of change that discussion and reflection will lead to more equitable practices remains largely uncontested in the literature.

Building from recent studies (Boxenbaum & Lounsbury, 2013), we posit that multiple theories of equity-focused organizational change and logics may exist simultaneously in education. For instance, Colaner (2016) high-lighted how different institutional logics of the family and of education coex-ist and shape nonparental care arrangements for young children and the extent to which parents and providers may or may not share childrearing

beliefs. Bastedo (2008) examined how the convergence of multiple interrelated institutional logics in higher education state policy making not only shaped a dominant ideology but also directed the policy issues on the "political agenda" and the institutional changes that ultimately got implemented (p. 230). In their study of teams of middle school mathematics teachers, Horn et al. (2015) show how two distinct logics—an instructional management logic and an instructional improvement logic—can simultaneously emerge in teachers' conversations around data use. Yet the institutional management logic, where educators focus primarily on reorganizing instructional work, can predominate over the logic centered on improving teacher pedagogy and effectiveness under policy conditions that foreground accountability without information-rich student assessments.

In the context of K-12 school improvement, multiple theories exist about how to change educator practice. Contrary to "commonly held notions" that changes in teacher beliefs and attitudes precede changes in their practice, Guskey (1986) has argued that empirical evidence suggests the opposite: change in beliefs is more likely to occur once educators experience success (i.e., improved student outcomes) with a new program or practice. In this alternative theory of change, changes to practice might actually precede—and provide the impetus for—changes to beliefs, rather than changes to practice following beliefs (Ahram et al., 2011; Bensimon & Malcolm, 2012; Guskey, 1986; Lewis & Diamond, 2015). An additional theory of change might posit an iterative or cyclic change to both beliefs and practices in tandem with one another. The empirical research is not definitive, so our purpose here is not to argue for the correctness or superiority of one theory of change over others, but to highlight how an institution's underlying norms and assumptions about change may be consequential to efforts to shift schools toward racial equity. We drew on this conception of theories of change within an institutional logic of educational equity to attend to how the equity teams in our study made sense of their charge and undertook equity-focused change efforts at their schools.

Method

Study Sites

We conducted year-long comparative case studies of two teams in metropolitan areas within the Pacific Northwest who were engaged in developing more equitable practice within the context of districts that had designated resources and attention to racial equity. We selected districts with an articulated priority on equity so that leadership team efforts might align with district expectations and so we might probe potential within a conducive context. Based on district

Table 1. Case Study Districts, Schools, and Equity Teams.

	Kerry Middle School	Baker K-8 School
District demographics	70% Students of color >60% Free or reduced lunch 20% Emergent bilingual 15% Special education services	>40% Students of color 40% FRL 10% Emergent bilingual 15% Special education services
School grades and size	Sixth to eighth grade 650 Students	K-8 500 Students
School demographics	65% Students of color (mostly Latinx, Asian, multiracial, and African American) 70% Low-income (FRL) 18% Emergent bilingual 18% Special education services	45% Students of color (mostly African American, Latinx, multiracial) 30% FRL 5% Emergent bilingual 20% Special education services
Principals	Margery Parker (White female, 2nd year at school)	Carla Davis African American female
Equity team members	General education teachers: 6 White females 2 White males 1 African American female Special educators: 1 Latina woman (teacher) 1 Asian/Pacific Islander woman (para) Other staff: 2 Counselors (White females) Attend. Sect'y (African American female) Instructional coach (African American female) 1 Latina, 1 Filipina, & 1 Russian immigrant mother Multiracial male student (7th) Russian female student (8th) Administrative team Principal (see above) Assistant principal (Samoan female) Dean of students (Filipino male) District equity director (Black biracial female)	General education teachers 1 White male 1 White female Special education teachers 3 White females Other staff: Speech pathologist (White female) Instructional specialist (White female) African American mother White mother African American male middle grader African American female middle grader Latina middle grader Administrative team Principal (see above) Assistant principal (White female) 2 District leaders (occasional)

recommendations about which schools had the greatest potential for substantive equity work, racial/ethnic diversity, and principal interest in collaborating, we selected one middle school and one K-8 school. Kerry Middle School was new to school-wide equity work but had sought out support from the district, whereas Baker was recognized for its equity work as a result of several years of implementing interracial dialogues (see Table 1).

Equity for students team at Kerry Middle School. Kerry Middle School[1] was a sixth- to eighth-grade school in a midsized district in a smaller metropolitan region outside a major Pacific Northwest city. The school had become markedly more diverse and lower income over recent decades and drew from both middle-class, racially diverse families and low-income families, many living in a sizable mobile home park. Kerry's Equity for Students team represented the first school-wide effort to address issues of equity at Kerry. The principal put three separate efforts under the umbrella of the team: the "zero" year of implementation for Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS); a grant from the local hospital foundation for violence-prevention work among students in the public housing facility; and the equity work supported by university researchers and the district equity director, aimed at improving the educational environment to ensure the success of every student. Across the year, the solutions discussed by the team ranged from addressing teacher–student interactions; intervening in student peer conversations; communicating behavior expectations; and addressing educator/adult mind-sets about students. The primary change at the end of the year related to expanded understandings of team members and to the increased frequency and focus of conversations between educators about issues of race and equity. There were a few changes to individual practice but no collective changes to practice or schooling structures as a result of team meetings (see Galloway & Ishimaru, 2019, for more information about team processes and organizational routines).

Equity team at Baker K-8 School. Baker K-8 was in a large metropolitan Pacific Northwest district in a diverse but rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. The school had been recognized as a leader in the district's equity work, particularly in relation to its adoption of the Courageous Conversations about Race model. The spring before this project began, the school received a large grant to move to a full inclusion model eliminating self-contained classrooms and moving to a co-teaching model where students and teachers across the learning spectrum would be in the same classes together throughout the day. Prior to the study, the African American principal, Carla, had set up elective courses that both general education and students in self-contained classrooms would take together. The focus on full inclusion shaped which staff members participated on the team, including multiple staff members with a background in special education. It also directed some of the tools the team drew on in the work across the year, such as video of full inclusion classrooms and activities eliciting efforts to promote student inclusion. At the same time, the team was constituted with the aim of countering inequities and forms of exclusion across the minoritized students in the building. As such, the Baker team elected to focus first on developing an overall vision to guide their work around inclusion and "meeting the academic and social needs

of each student." Throughout the year the team worked on crafting a vision statement while exploring how to support parents, teachers, and students in their awareness and understanding of issues of inclusion related to race/racism and special education/ableism; the need for differentiated instruction in classrooms; a coteaching model and schedule modifications to support increased teacher collaboration; and school-wide professional development and training opportunities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2019). Although at the end of the year the group had identified some potential avenues for future changes in instructional practices within the team, they continued to grapple with how to ensure all members of the community were "on board" with equity and inclusion before taking next steps to changing more school structures.

Data

Observations and documents. Our primary data collection comprised videotaped observations of monthly team meetings (as teams sought to improve organizational leadership practice toward equity) as well as planning meetings. Across the two sites, we videotaped and took detailed fieldnotes for a total of 22 meetings. Baker's taped meetings ran November and through May, and Kerry's meetings ran October through June. Meetings ranged from 1 to 2 hours, including both full leadership team meetings and smaller planning meetings. We also conducted an extensive document review of team agendas, notes, data, school-wide communications, and meeting artifacts (slides, small group summaries, and reflection tools) to examine how meanings, policies, and practices changed over time and were conveyed to the school community. The first author, who identifies as an Asian American woman, participated in the Kerry team and led that team's data collection and analyses. The second author, who identifies as an able-bodied white female, participated in and led data collection and analyses for the Baker team.

Interviews. We conducted 27 individual semistructured interviews with equity team members over the course of the year to examine their conceptions of equity and leadership, their perceptions of individual and collective learning, and the factors that seemed to promote or inhibit organizational learning for equity. We were unable to interview one teacher and one parent in Kerry Middle School and one parent at Baker School.

Analysis

We analyzed transcriptions, fieldnotes, and videotaped observations of monthly team meetings; examined documents, data, tools, and communications used in

the process; and coded semistructured interviews with all leadership team members to examine their perceptions of the team's work and process. We first examined how team members negotiated meaning around leadership and equity, identified and described inequities, and brought evidence to bear on their examination of the problem and proposed solutions. We based our initial thematic coding on an expectation from the literature that the teams would differ along key dimensions, such as team composition, definition of the problem, role of the principal, tools, outcomes and district supports/constraints (e.g., resources, policy mandates, professional development). In the first phase, we analyzed each case separately, then examined similarities and differences between the cases using analytic memos to elaborate claims and evidence from the data. Consistent with other studies, our initial findings indicated that team talk, conceptions of the problem, and potential solutions had shifted in important ways.

However, we had limited data about new school practices, structures or policies to improve the learning and success of minoritized students in these schools. We then scoured responses to explicit interview questions about team outcomes, examined meeting transcripts, and scrutinized team documents and artifacts and were unable to document evidence of institutional policy, structure, or practice changes underway in either school at the end of the year. Individual growth may well have manifested in changes to individual teacher practice, but given the complexity and systemic nature of inequities, a few more individual teachers working in isolation fell short of the collective aim of these initiatives. We thus began a second phase of analyses to make sense of this unexpected commonality between two distinct sets of conversations, teams, and contexts.

In subsequent analyses of our data, we sought to understand why such different contexts and conversations might come to a similar conclusion. During the second phase of analyses, we examined the topics and reasoning that preceded and followed instances in which teams sought to put forth potential solutions and next steps. Borrowing from prior studies of teacher team talk (e.g., Horn & Little, 2010; Scribner et al., 2007), we broke our team meeting data into multiturn episodes of problem-finding, problem-defining and solution-proposing to construct an analytic arc of each team's discussions over time. Drawing from Bensimon and Malcolm (2012) as well as our own prior work (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014), we posited that teams' conceptualizations of the problem and solutions provided insights into the collective reasoning of the team. We then examined these episodes for their implicit theories of change by attending to moments of opening or closing in relation to proposals for changes to current policies or practices. For example, at the end of one equity team meeting at Kerry Middle School, the district equity director asked the team to close with ideas about what they might do to "think or talk differently" with

their colleagues, which opened a discussion among team members about how to respond to deficit-based teacher talk about students in informal spaces.

We then used these excerpts to craft cross-case analytic memos, in which we noticed similarities and differences between teams with regard to the theories of change that emerged over time. We drew on the lens of institutional logics to hone in on patterns in the relationship between the theories of change embedded in conversational exchanges across contexts. For instance, Baker team discussions that would move to a decision point about trying a new practice were curtailed by claims about the need to build more people's understanding and investment before making change. We sought to establish the trustworthiness of our findings by triangulating across data sources and checking our interpretations with a community of other educational equity-focused researchers.

Our findings are not generalizable to all equity teams or school contexts across the country, and their shared context in the Pacific Northwest may indicate dynamics specific to the relatively racially diverse, midsize urban school settings we examined. Moreover, the single-year design precluded possibilities to observe institutional change over a longer time horizon; this study thus represents a snapshot within a longer potential trajectory of school change.

Findings

Overall, our findings suggest that despite differences in team composition, initial conceptions of equity, and broader school and district contexts, both teams converged on an implicit theory of change that individuals' hearts and minds must *first* be addressed and changed before any school-wide actions could be undertaken. At Kerry, the theory of change emerged over time across multiple episodes, whereas at Baker, one longer segment during a March team meeting exemplifies the broader pattern. Although the theory of change unfolded distinctly in these different settings, the logic and what got taken up collectively ended in a similar place. We argue that this convergence is more than an accident; we draw on the literature to suggest that this theory of change adheres to a dominant institutional logic about how equity-focused change happens in schools. For each case, we analyzed how the teams played out theories of change related to assumptions about how individuals and organizations learn, grow, and change.

Kerry Theory of Change: Conversations to Changes Beliefs and Mind-Sets

As the Kerry Equity for Students team conceptualized problems and solutions to inequities, they also negotiated ideas about the steps required to move from the current state toward more equitable schools and student outcomes.

Across time, the team's talk veered toward a singular theory of change focused on changing "hearts and minds" prior to making other changes at the school. This theory of change first emerged in the framing and agenda-setting of the principal and district leader. This theory of change was also reinforced throughout team meetings across time in response to particular tools, questions, and calls to action. Finally, the team's reactions to several key events in the broader school—staff retreats and pushback in the form of a racist cartoon left in the staff lunchroom—reinforced this theory of change.

Formal leadership focus on beliefs. The focus on changing beliefs and mindsets first emerged in the framing and rationale for the Equity for Students team from the principal and district leader she brought in to support her efforts. The principal, Margery Packer, expressed a theory of change that tied the team's efforts and learning about issues of equity to the need to *first* address and change adult beliefs. At a meeting, she explained,

> You can't just think you can just fix the system and all of our schools will be fixed, and we would be 100% effective with 100% of our kids. You have to start somewhere, and I believe the place to start is with the grown-ups, the beliefs that we bring into the school everyday, to open up our minds about possibilities about our efficacy, about what we can do with kids.

In particular, the principal framed the need to change adult beliefs and mindsets through explicit "crucial conversations" and explicit *talk* about race as a starting-point that necessarily preceded other changes in practice.

Similarly, the district leader, Ericka Jackson—whom the principal had sought out as a mentor and coach in leading the Equity for Students team—also reinforced the notion of adult beliefs as the first and primary target of intervention. Early on, the district leader reported out a small group discussion which critiqued having conversations without action; Ericka summarized, "The crucial piece was, we need to now change the belief system, believing what kids are capable of." In an interview, the principal likewise highlighted beliefs as a particular challenge for white staff whose beliefs needed to shift *prior* to changing instructional practices because "we've got a lot of teaching strategies that have got to change, but I truly don't believe that they'll ever do it in a fundamental way until our beliefs . . . beliefs have been changed." Thus, positional authorities at the school framed the purpose and direction of the Equity for Students team from the beginning as targeting the beliefs of staff through "crucial" conversations about race and equity; there was no explicit discussion of how action, policy, and practice would then proceed from staff's changed belief systems.

Equity team routines prioritize thinking and talking. The routines developed across meetings served to reinforce a theory of change focused primarily on changes to thinking and conversations. Although the first two meetings of the team focused on an organizational assessment to identify high-priority domains of practice at the school,[2] the team's attendance at a museum exhibit on the history and impacts of race and racism marked a key turning point in the team's conversations and conceptions of equity issues. Though the primary focus of the exhibit was on the historical, structural, and systemic mechanisms of racism, the district leader's facilitation consistently prompted team members to consider how their learning would shift their thinking and talk, not their practices or actions. For instance, at the end debriefing the exhibit, Ericka prompted the team to consider:

> What's one thing that you learned, or one thing that you're really going to challenge yourself to think differently about? About a student, or a group of students, or how you talk about education or about your work. . . . But I'm going to challenge you to think about for next time: **what are one or two things we can commit to as a group of people to really start talking differently about - to start thinking differently about?** (Bold-faced added)

In response to this prompt, then, team members emphasized ways they would begin to *think* differently about their work and interactions with students and other staff.

As leadership began to shift from the school and district leader to other team members, routines focused on affecting "mind-sets" predominated team meetings and proposed actions. After the first staff-wide retreat (led by Ericka), the Equity for Students Team members narrated the discussions of Carol Dweck's concept of growth mind-set as particularly influential. At the next team meeting, Lakeisha, the school's instructional coach (an African American woman) and Maya, a special education teacher (biracial Pacific Islander woman) positioned adult mind-set as a priority focus for the team that had emerged from the retreat. Lakeisha and Maya proposed and modeled collecting simple reflections on their own mind-sets over the course of a week and requested other members to collect this data as well. Maya narrated how her journaling helped her to reflect on her own mind-set and change her thinking:

> The prompts are really just yes—no mind-set and growth mind-set and give us the reason, and I mean it's hard to go back and actually read what you wrote and try to change your thinking. **That's what a lot of this is about, is changing our thinking and trying to move closer to that growth mind-set and how**

we are here for our students. From doing this last week, I see myself as a very positive person, but after I went back and looked at my journal and I saw what I wrote, there were lots of moments where it said, fixed mind-set. . . . What am I going to do differently to get past that horrible thought that I'm having? (Bold-faced added)

Although the team did not follow through on the data collection activity, the language of "mind-set" continued to be used as a key concept and target of change.

Touchstone racial incident as evidence of beliefs. A major event in the school in the late spring surrounded the discovery—by an African American secretary on the team—of a racist cartoon on the faculty lunchroom table. The cartoon depicted a caricature of a Black or Brown young man from the back with a description of "homo slackus erectus" as "created by natural genetic downward evolution. . . . History shows that this species mostly receives food stamps and full government care. Unfortunately, most are highly fertile." The principal responded with a staff-wide e-mail decrying the "blatant racism" of the cartoon and expressing her "hope that I have jumped to the wrong conclusion, and that this was brought to school and shared in horror, and not in fun." The subsequent school-wide staff retreat happened to be scheduled immediately after this. Although the second retreat originally focused on white privilege, Margery felt that most of those planning to attend the voluntary retreat were "very much onboard" already, so changed gears to use it as an opportunity to talk about the cartoon and address "how do we engage in conversations with our colleagues about these kinds of beliefs?"

According to the principal, the cartoon made beliefs visible and marked a turning point for many staff in their willingness to engage; "when that came to light last week, it um, just shown the spotlight on our belief systems about our kids, and everybody on this campus was talking about it." As a result, staff who had previously been reticent about engaging in the equity work "stepped up" to have honest conversations about their colleague's beliefs. Ironically, the Equity for Students team did not discuss the cartoon or the fallout from it at the subsequent team meeting, but the episode seemed to reinforce the importance of addressing staff beliefs about students through "crucial conversations" as the sole intervention in pursuit of equity.

Near the end of the year, when the team's steering committee decided to collect data about what had changed for the members of the team, the prompts highlighted how people were thinking and talking with other staff. In particular, they pinpointed informal staff interactions as the primary context for intervening in the deficit-based beliefs and mind-sets of others. The assistant

principal explained that she would send the team an anonymous survey on behalf of the steering committee to address questions such as:

> [W]ho are you talking with after these meetings? Where are the conversations happening? Are they happening in the staff room? In the parking lot? At a local establishment? Where and how often are you having these conversations, and how are you pushing your colleagues' and your own thinking so that it's not just an isolated, oh, that's something that the equity team does, or that's something that the PBIS team does? . . . Just be thinking, be mindful, of your emotions and your heart and your head.

Rather than asking team members about changes in their instructional practices, school structures, or interactions with students, the steering committee asked team members to attend to "your emotions and your heart and your head." At the final team meeting of the year, the slideshow reviewed the team's activities and ended with statements by individual team members' using a prompt focused on how their *thinking* had changed as a result of the year's work.

Thus, across the year and woven throughout team activities, reflection prompts, staff-wide professional learning, and even reactions to a touchstone racist incident, the Kerry Equity for Students team members honed in on a theory of change that positioned changing the beliefs and thinking of other staff through conversations as a critical first step in the equity work of the school without which no other work could be undertaken. Margery closed the team's year by describing the Student Equity Summit planned for August as a next step in the work. She again reinforced the theory of hearts-and-minds change, arguing that students would be able to elicit the necessary changes among other educators where adults might fall short because "no heart of an educator will remain impassive to student voice."

Competing Theories of Change at Baker

The Baker team spent ample time identifying changes they believed would lead to greater equity in resources and outcomes for minoritized students. Yet the team made little movement on systems-wide changes beyond the principal's initial change to require inclusion in elective courses. Ultimately, moving toward a robust and expanded co-teaching model became the thorny issue, with differing theories on the team about how to approach the change process: one theory around changing people first and the other around changing structures/systems first. Specifically, some of the team members discussed the need to "slow down" or "backtrack" on the move toward inclusion

in favor of dialogues. The dialogues they recommended related to shifting *individuals'* thinking and mind-sets through raising common awareness around issues of inclusion and getting teachers and parents "on board" with the change. This logic, not unlike the one at Kerry, represented an implicit theory of change whereby people's individual practices only begin to change if their "hearts and minds" can be moved first.

In contrast, a second theory of change emerged, advocated most strongly (though not exclusively) by a learning specialist and general education teacher. They argued for making structural changes that could ultimately lead to change in teacher practice and perception. Although the year did end with some hope for implementing organizational changes, the strength of the "hearts and minds" theory ultimately limited the group's efforts to deepen systems level changes. We elaborate these theories of change, first drawing from across the interviews and team meetings and then focusing on a series of interactions from one spring team meeting that illuminates the theories.

Slow down, talk first, get on board as the prevailing theory of change. During interviews and team meetings, several of the participants described their own or others' trepidation with a coteaching model. People described being "afraid," "nervous," "apprehensive," "uncomfortable," or generally lacking of awareness or understanding of inclusion. One of the team members described the change as entailing "a real big mind shift" for other teachers at the school. The assistant principal, Kristy, expressed hearing "all these excuses" and "oh, that's not realistic" from teaching staff. Gina, one of the self-contained special education teachers on the team, argued that the change had gone "too far, too fast." Even though Kristy and the principal, Carla, felt strongly that the change would be best for meeting minoritized students' needs, the concerns raised within the community prompted slowing down implementation in favor of dialogues. Kristy expressed as follows:

> If [Carla and I] had had our way, we would have just jumped in. . . . Let's do it. This is what works. We know it works. So we realized, no we can't do it that way. We've got to go slowly. So it's kind of this long term plan of asserting things into the culture and **giving people that time they need to talk about and process and everything else.** (Bold-faced added)

During a November team meeting, Kristy tried to allay fears about moving forward too quickly: "We're going to carefully think about things. We're going to have conversations." This decision to fall back on dialogue as a necessary precursor to additional organizational change became the primary approach the team would take.

The following excerpts from a March team meeting illustrate how the team vacillated between the need to move forward with changing organizational structures and the need slow down by first raising awareness, changing mindsets, and getting buy-in. The strategy of getting buy-in created important dialogue regarding the need to gather a broad spectrum of voices and perspectives. At the same time, it thwarted moving ahead with proposed systemic or organizational changes that could address student outcome disparities.

The March meeting opened in the way the team had become accustomed: sharing celebrations around working toward inclusion. The first activity favored discussion of individual teacher change, rather than collective action or structural change, and a few of the teachers on the team who had been utilizing push-in and coteaching strategies presented individual pockets of success. Brian, a general education teacher on the team, recognized this logic and problematized the individualistic nature of the inclusion work thus far. Although the successes should not be dismissed, he described a general lack of organizational systems in place to support efforts toward co-teaching and inclusion.

Brian and four other members of the group proposed creating "built-in," "scheduled," or "protected" time for collaboration in order to develop instructional strategies and best utilize the collective strengths of a co-teaching team to meet the range of learning needs in their classrooms. Before the idea could progress into something actionable, Jackie, one of the special education teachers, argued that the team needed to "backtrack . . . on using time." First, she stated as follows:

> We need to reel everybody in, all staff, where all staff that's going to be part of this needs to really understand really what inclusion is. Because I feel like those of us at the table are really starting to understand what it is, but I don't feel like all of our staff really understands what inclusion is.

Her suggestion was taken up by one of the other special education teachers who stated, "there has to be an open-mindeness," along with a parent who asked, "What's needed to get people more on the same page?"

Following this, two initiators of the conversation about the school schedule attempted to return to organizational-level change. They suggested revising the schedule to systematize collaboration time was necessary for an effective coteaching model. Their move was again impeded by one of the general education teachers who argued for focusing first on changing mindsets before systems-wide change:

> I think that before we even get there, we have to go backwards with people. . . . We're getting some pushback from parents. [They're saying,] "I didn't know

those kids were in [General Education classes]," and teachers are going, "I'm not sure about having those kids in my classroom." . . . People are afraid. It's a change. You can't start . . . helping the children until you get the adults to kind of get rid of that fear . . . I mean, it's talking about race, you know.

This same general education teacher indicated hearing people say things like:

"We can't do that, because it's uncomfortable," or its, you know, "Oh, we can't talk about kids who have different learning needs, because that's uncomfortable," but it's like, you need to. It's what we do. It's got to be on the table, and we need to be able to support our children, and our parents, and our community, and so I think . . . we need to remember that our staff is not here at the table, and the same [with] parents.

Throughout this thread, the team members did not racialize or "ableize" *which* teachers, parents, and students hold discomfort in talking about inclusion. Yet the dominant majority have historically been "protected" or "insulated" from conversations about privilege and ultimately fear redistribution of resources to minoritized students and communities (DiAngelo, 2011). The teacher went on to suggest that the team was "**way ahead with having these conversations**, and there's a lot of parents who are just scared" who think, "that kid doesn't look like my child. That kid doesn't act like my child" (Bold-faced added).

One of the parents followed her point by expressing particular worry about getting other parents on board: "You still have today people that judge your skin color or your sexuality or whatever." With the school working to include students with disabilities, the parent expressed: "It's like it's so much that we're asking people to accept . . . It's just, it's hard for people to change their mind-set." The other parent on the team again attempted to engage a conversation about organizational changes to support implementation of an inclusion model. She suggested pooling additional staff resources and making teachers aware of these resources.

Again, other participants expressed trepidation about moving forward without training and "conversations around differences." One of the special education teachers raised further concerns that students in the current push-in classes were experiencing "name-calling," creating an exclusive, rather than inclusive environment. To address the concern, the group elected to focus on increased and authentic dialogue. Jackie proposed as follows:

Staff, parents, kids, all need to have lots of conversations around differences, and like you were saying, not just differences with learning but differences with the way we look, sexuality, race . . . I think our kids even have

this misconception of what you can talk about and what you can't talk about, um, and so then when we start talking specifically about special needs, you know, it's kind of like the elephant in the room, you know, like . . . what do we say? What do we not say? What do we pretend isn't there? . . . **There's training on how to bring it up, how to talk about it, how to support our community**. (Bold-faced added)

This section of the meeting closed with the parent who initially suggested looking at redistribution of staff resources instead asking whether there were resources to train the community on how to have more dialogue. This shift illustrated the power and primacy of the *hearts and minds first* logic.

Over the course of the remaining spring meetings the team continued to discuss how to change "attitudes" and cultivate a common understanding before expanding to systemic change. They also offered team-level steps to realizing inclusion by expanding the number of coteaching positions to include all teacher members of the leadership team and giving these coteachers "the planning time they really need to do this right." In this way, there was some collective (albeit not institutional) action the team *proposed* to take in the future. During the last meeting of the year, the special education teacher who had voiced concerns that the administrative team had moved too quickly had shifted her perspective, reflecting:

> Originally, I thought that this went way too fast, you know, as far as doing the full inclusion. And I might have done it a little differently in a leadership position and done some of the training first and all that. But also thinking about how the school is so stuck in its old ways. I kind of think it was very intentional in Carla's part to do kind of a shock; like this is the only way we're gonna get it done. Otherwise, we're gonna talk about it for two years and it won't happen.

Yet at the final meeting, after the group had articulated their vision of inclusion, they began to discuss whether they should start a visioning process over the next year, with a broader range of stakeholder groups; in essence, to ensure "everyone" (often a stand-in term for majority individuals) would be onboard before moving forward. This end to the year mirrored a concern raised by the speech pathologist during a fall interview. She expressed as follows:

> It almost feels like we're in this sort of wading pool right now, um, not moving forward necessarily but just stuck in this examining phase. Um, which again is good because it keeps it sort of present all the time and I'm aware, but I wonder what the next [step] . . . when we'll be moving to . . . I don't know what the next step would be necessarily either.

Her perspective points to the constraints of a talk first, get-all-on-board approach, which predominated across the year.

Different Teams, Singular Prevailing Logic

Across our two cases, we identified differences in the trajectory of team conversations over time, particularly with regard to how theories of change emerged from each context. In the case of Kerry, only one theory of change seemed to exist around the need to shift adult and student mind-sets and beliefs as the primary target of action. In the case of Baker, however, two theories of change emerged. The primary theory focused on talking first and getting everyone onboard with inclusion and equity before moving to collective action. The second theory centered on structural changes to move individual teacher perception and practice. Overall, our findings demonstrated that across the year and despite team difference, one logic about addressing mind-sets prior to undertaking action prevailed. In fact, it was such a powerful logic, that we, as researchers, also found ourselves complicit in this theory of change at times. For example, Baker's initial focus on developing a shared vision (as opposed to other changes) was selected by the team from the framework the coauthors had previously built (based on an iterative survey process with practicing leaders and leadership scholars, see Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). Likewise, at Kerry, when the lead author was asked to synthesize the steering committee's plan for the Equity Team, she formalized this theory of change by naming "understanding and knowledge building" as the first year's work. In both cases, our own participation and contributions implicitly adhered to a hearts-and-minds-first theory of change.

This notion dominated conversations across distinctly different contexts. Rather than operating as one set of ideas amid a number of others, this logic predominated in both teams. Perhaps most significantly, this theory of change served to elevate conversations to address beliefs and mind-sets as the primary (or only) form of team action. Drawing on this logic, both teams thwarted other forms of collective action and institutional change in favor of addressing the beliefs and mind-sets of individuals beyond the team to get them "onboard" with change.

Discussion and Implications of Heart-and-Minds-First as Equity Change Logic

Given the urgency and complexity of addressing racial inequities in education, this study highlights a critical tension with regard to team-based equity work in schools. Amid conducive district and school conditions, additional

time and financial resources, and the availability of research-based tools and expertise, teams engaged in complex discussions of race, racism, ableism, and inclusion. However, those conversations implicated a dominant theory of change that yielded few shifts to schooling practices or structures. Scholars highlight racial literacy and talking about race as essential capacities for improving schools and ameliorating racial and other disparities (Carter et al., 2017; Rusch & Horsford, 2009). Thus, equity work in schools *does* necessitate challenging conversations that many educators are unaccustomed to having, as well as significant resources and concerted, sustained efforts over time. However, this study suggests that even explicit and systems-focused race talk may be insufficient for catalyzing organizational change when those conversations are governed by what we argue is an institutional logic about the aims and order in which equity-focused change must proceed. Our findings suggest that race talk directed predominantly at changing hearts and minds prior to mobilizing other forms of action may inhibit other forms of organizational-level change. In other words, engaging in explicit race talk may be necessary but insufficient for fostering equitable organizational change; we suspect most scholars calling for explicit race talk recognize such conversations as a critical means to an end, not an end in and of itself. This study calls us to interrogate the logics, assumptions, and aims of race-explicit conversations as well as the consequences of the theories of change that predominate in negotiations.

The priority on changing educators' hearts and minds *prior* to undertaking other change highlights the other side of the tension in team-based school equity efforts. That is, deeply-held belief systems of adults are profoundly difficult to change, even via years of professional development. Ahram et al. (2011) used the word "glacial" to describe the typical pace of change in deficit-based educator beliefs. It would be naive to overlook how difficult it can be for a predominantly white middle-class teaching workforce to talk about and acknowledge the role of race and racism in schools (DiAngelo, 2011). Even if we presume the belief systems of an entire workforce can be changed through explicit conversations about race, the time horizon risks prioritizing adult learning and needs over those of students. Minoritized students and their communities have been systematically marginalized by school systems for centuries; they and their families are hardly well served by waiting for beliefs and mind-sets to change at the rate at which most white educators and parents feel comfortable and "ready."

Beyond the timeline for change, though, there are other dangers of presuming a sole "talk first" approach will automatically result in changed behaviors, structures, and systems. First, we already know that a desire to change and the accountability threats to compel it do not equate to

the capacity to enact different practices (Elmore, 2000). Teachers and other educators can hold deep moral commitments to equity but not have the skills or capacity to align their everyday practice with those commitments (Galloway et al., 2015). Moreover, individualistic changes on the part of a few do not equate to sustained organizational change. Second, when changes to educators' belief systems do not quickly translate into changes to practice and to student learning and outcomes, we run the risk of such efforts getting dismissed as "ineffective" and losing resources and already-precarious political will to undertake challenging racial equity work.

Hearts-and-Minds-First Within an Institutional Logic of Educational Equity

We argue that the prevalence of a hearts-and-minds-first logic across two quite different contexts was not a coincidence. According to institutional theory, institutions and groups within them make sense and decisions about work according to an underlying set of organizing principles that comprise an institutional logic (Bastedo, 2008). In this case, we argue that the field of education substantiates a hearts-and-minds-first conception of how equity-focused school change proceeds. A prolific body of professional development emphasizes the need to *first* raise awareness and understandings of race to enable self-reflection and discussion about the dynamics of inequity and oppression as necessary precursors to addressing changes to practice and structures (Singleton, 2014). Moreover, the antibias literature and much of the social justice educational leadership also implicate an "inside-out" approach that prioritizes individual leader and educator self-reflection and awareness prior to other changes (Brown, 2004; Lindsey et al., 2009; Spikes, 2018). For instance, Furman (2012) cites Brooks and Miles (2008) in her summary of the social justice leadership literature, describing how principals "must first develop a 'heightened and critical awareness'" of oppression from which they can *then* imagine and construct alternatives. Likewise, Horsford (2014) describes "racial reconstruction," a step toward racial literacy, as "the process of ascribing new meaning to race in order to transform the ways we think about and subsequently, act on, our racial assumptions, attitudes, and biases" (p. 100). This presumes a sequencing of thinking *first*, then acting. Even our own prior work, despite disavowing a predictive trajectory, posits that leadership practice moves from awareness and planning to collective action (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014).

To be clear: we are not saying hearts and minds do not matter. We recognize that technical fixes absent deeper understandings can often be implemented in ways that simply default to the implicit biases of educators and

inequitable systems. However, we know that other theories of change *do exist*—for example, that of addressing beliefs and practice in tandem or changing practice first, then shifting educator beliefs and expectations on realizing improved student learning (e.g., Guskey, 1986; Lewis & Diamond, 2015). The theory of change associated with the dominant institutional logic of equity implicitly assumes that changes to *thoughts* and *beliefs* will automatically translate into changes to practice and policy; however, our findings did not substantiate this assumption.

We posit three possible explanations for the power of this institutional logic: a dynamic of white fragility in schools; a lack of robust practitioner-focused frameworks for moving to equitable organizational change; and institutional arrangements and norms of authority that constrain the scope of educator teams. First, DiAngelo (2011) defines white fragility as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" by white people in North America (p. 54). The continued references in both our cases to those outside the team and the need to get them "onboard" highlighted a fear of pushback as a consequence of change. Indeed, Kerry MS experienced such "pushback" in the form of the racist cartoon and resistance from white teachers who objected to the principal's focus on "culture." Similar to Lewis and Diamond's (2015) findings, the fear and anticipation of pushback from white teachers or parents appeared to factor into equity team conversations. Although the assumption was not always spoken, the hearts and minds that needed to be changed often seemed to be those of *white* teachers and parents. In this sense, then, teams may have taken up a (white) heart-and-minds-first theory of change to anticipate and center efforts to address white fragility as a barrier to change. However, our study did not provide sufficient evidence for us to determine whether white parents and teachers were, indeed, those targeted by teams' intent on getting everyone "onboard."

Second, and perhaps in tandem with the first explanation, the teams in this study seemed to have limited access to *alternative theories* or conceptions of change beyond the "common sense" dominant logic. Given the unique nature of equity team work and the limited empirical scholarship on it, teams or individual "expert" consultants may default to prior models of cultural competency training. However, we argue that there are robust bodies of learning theory and research to anchor these efforts, even as we recognize the unique demands of equity-focused change (see, instance.g., Bensimon & Malcolm, 2012; Ishimaru et al., 2019; Welton et al., 2018). Taking up alternative theories of change in racial equity work requires reckoning with the contradiction that "common sense" approaches may function to inadvertently thwart moves to collective action and institutional change.

Last, institutional arrangements in schools with regard to the locus of control of teams may help explain the dominance of this theory of change within an institutional logic. The structure of schools prescribes the scope of what teachers, parents, and other educators outside of formal authority typically influence. The structures and norms of schools assume that teachers (and parents) can, at most, influence each other's ways of thinking and talking, but they cannot compel other kinds of change either to individual practice or to organizational policies and their implementation. Thus, the institutional logic may also be shaped by assumptions about the kinds of change teams comprised mostly of teachers can make in schools. Institutional norms are not simply imposed from top-down and legislated by formal policy. As institutional actors, we also recreate and reinforce these norms through our everyday interactions, conversation, and actions - even norms that may implicitly restrict our own agency to make change. By constraining the presumed sphere of agency and control of actors, institutional logics maintain the status quo of the institution and its structural and normative arrangements.

Although these two disparate teams and contexts suggest a broader institutional logic, future research should investigate the extent to which this logic predominates in other schools and districts as well as examine the potential explanations posited above. In particular, future research that attends to "the unmarked Whiteness of mainstream organizations" (Ray, 2019) might further explore the racialized nature of multiple logics and theories of change at play in equity-focused educational reforms. Finally, the field would benefit from more longitudinal research designs to follow the multiyear trajectories of change in schools such as our case study sites to examine whether different theories of change emerge or predominate over a longer time horizon. Equity teams' adherence to a heart-and-minds-first logic is by no means inevitable. However, our findings suggest the need for more robust theories, tools, and expertise about how organizations marshal collective learning to make change. We, as scholars, are also implicated. At the time we collected our data, we could not see the theory of hearts-and-minds-first predominating. We, too, were caught up in the dominant logic. Had we recognized the patterns in the moment, we could have facilitated reflection, interruption, and redirection. However, our deeper analyses and findings guide how we now engage with equity teams such that we can anticipate the default logic and narratives and proactively work to surface and intervene in them. We also call on scholars engaged in participatory research to work with educators to surface and interrogate default, often tacit theories of change that can perpetuate inequities

One avenue for both intervening and building new knowledge about equity-focused educational change lies in participatory design approaches that build from design-based research, formative interventions, and social design experiments (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Gutiérrez et al., 2016). For

instance, drawing on the theory of expansive learning from cultural historical activity theory (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) could provide frameworks for building new practices, knowledge, and forms of activity that expand and remediate conventional roles and institutional scripts (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2017). Within such efforts, organizational routines with equity teams could foster explicit discussion of theories of equity change and draw on expansive forms of data to collectively examine and test alternative theories.

Such interventionist research also relates to community- and practitioner-engaged scholarship that engages multiple stakeholders in iterative equity-focused inquiry and improvement. For example, Bensimon and Malcolm's (2012) Equity Scorecard focuses higher education professionals on examining data to address the structural and organizational conditions that produce inequitable systemic outcomes for students. Similarly, though not explicitly focused on racial equity, strategic inquiry work (Panero & Talbert, 2013) and improvement science approaches (Bryk et al., 2015) focus on the learning and organizational conditions and systems that produce outcomes. As more districts turn to equity teams as a vehicle for school change, they would be wise to attend to the capacity-demands of equity policy implementation. This study suggests the need for skilled facilitation and leadership expertise in fostering organizational learning and catalyzing change to policies and practices. Realizing the promise of organizational leadership for equity via teams may necessitate self-reflection and dialogue about racism and oppression *as well as* joint work to construct and enact theories of change that challenge institutional "common sense" and transform both the structures and culture of schools toward justice.

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Notes

1. All names are pseudonyms
2. Using a tool developed by the authors in partnership with practitioners and Education Northwest.

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