



Stuck Improving: Racial Equity and School Leadership

For School-based Practitioners

This book study guidance document is designed for school-based practitioners who want to learn about, design, and implement racial equity in their educational settings to support Black and Brown students.

Starter Questions: Sharing Your Reading Experience

1. What did you expect to learn coming into the book? How did your experience reading the book match or deviate from your expectations? In what ways?
2. What was your favorite part (chapter, section, or passage) of the book? Why?
3. What do you consider the top 3 takeaways from the book?
4. As you read the book, what surprised you?
5. If you could ask Dr. Irby one question about the book, what would it be and why?

Text Analysis Activity for Groups

Step 1. Circle three words that you consider the most powerful words in the book. Write the words below:

Word 1:

Word 2:

Word 3:



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Step 2. Underline three sentences that you think reflect the challenges or opportunities for advancing racial equity in your own school project. Write the page and paragraph of the sentences in the space below:

Sentence 1:

Sentence 2:

Sentence 3:

Step 3. Highlight three passages that are important for educators to take into consideration when designing and enacting racial equity improvements in a school. Write the page numbers of the passages below:

Passage 1:

Passage 2:

Passage 3:

Step 4. Without talking or interrupting, have each person share word 1. After each person has shared their word without interruption, ask each person to read aloud, without interruption, the sentence they selected.

Step 5. Use the words, sentences, or passages to initiate a discussion about why the selected passages were identified as important.

Repeat steps 4 and 5 if/as necessary.



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School Improvement Discussion

One argument Decoteau Irby makes in the book “Stuck Improving” is that schools need to understand and grow their capacity for racial equity improvement if they expect to be able to implement and sustain racial equity and justice reforms. If we take this to be true,

1. Which racial equity resources do you feel are most important to cultivate and leverage to grow your school’s capacity to improve? Why?
2. What is the status of the various racial equity resources in your school? What is dormant? What is being cultivated? What is being leveraged?
4. Based on the “Circle of Racial Equity Work” figure in Chapter 5, what are the types of activities that are currently underway in your school? Why? What kind of work is required to move to a higher capacity section of the circle?
5. Based on your reading of the book, what are the qualities and conditions that are important to consider when forming partnerships with racial equity consultants or researchers?



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Deepening the Conversation with Your Own Questions

Develop 2-3 questions that you would like to explore with your book study group. Write the questions below and place them in a hat or knapsack. Pick a question from the sack. Present it to the group and discuss it.

[Empty speech bubble for writing a question]

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[Empty speech bubble for writing a question]

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Thank you for engaging in a "Stuck Improving" book study. We invite you to keep the conversation going.

Do you have a question that was not addressed in the study guide? Ask Dr. Irby by tagging @stuckimproving on X.

