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Ethnic Diversity and Inclusive School Environments

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Inclusive school contexts can promote psychological and social adjustment and enhance learning among students. Changing demographics and 21st-century workplace needs suggest that ethnic diversity is one important dimension of inclusion to consider. This article presents 4 suggestions for how schools can facilitate inclusivity for ethnic diversity that are recommended to be employed in conjunction with one another: (a) school and classroom ethnic composition (i.e., increased ethnic diversity), (b) positive ethnic identity for ethnic minority students, (c) multicultural/diversity training and cooperative learning, and (d) the promotion of social competence and prosocial behaviors. Developmental considerations are discussed and a case is made that improving individual students' functioning can ultimately promote inclusivity for *all* students. Assisting students to be ready and able to form friendships with peers from ethnically diverse backgrounds provides them with valuable experience and skills that they can carry forward to new educational, community, and workplace settings.

The ethnic composition of the United States (as well as other countries worldwide) is continuously changing as a function of immigration policies, emigration patterns, and within-country job opportunities and costs of living that shift geographically over time. In response, teachers, schools, and districts must contend with changing demographics within student populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018) and be nimble in their approaches to foster interethnic inclusivity. When considering workplace needs for the 21st century, the U.S. Department of Labor (1991) identified the ability to work with ethnically diverse others and interpersonal skills more broadly as critical to workplace success (see also NCREL & Metiri Group, 2003). In addition to the shifting demographic landscape, the future workforce will likely be required to be flexible and adaptable (e.g., NCREL & Metiri Group, 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Thus, flexibility and adaptability, as well as ability to work with ethnically diverse

individuals, have been identified as "21st-century skills" that all students should acquire (NCREL & Metiri Group, 2003).

The ability to function well in diverse groups is also expected to be critical to solving some of the most difficult problems in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields (see Page, 2011) that have been previously viewed from a singular or dominant ethnic group perspective. A developmental approach to preparing students for these new challenges points to school settings as fruitful avenues for skill building, which in turn promote current and future inclusive environments. Here, we define inclusive school environments as schools that broadly foster positive social experiences for all students (e.g., characterized by less victimization, loneliness, and discrimination; more safety, belongingness, and positive cross-group attitudes), regardless of ethnic background or the school ethnic composition. Inclusive environments are also expected to provide safe opportunities for all students to practice cross-group interactions and engage in cross-group friendships that can continue to serve them well even outside of school. In turn, these

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environments are expected to promote learning as well as social and psychological well-being.

The focus of this article is on inclusive school environments from the perspective of ethnic diversity. We approach this article primarily from a social contact framework (e.g., Allport, 1954; Blau, 1977; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), which suggests that positive cross-group attitudes (as well as reduction in stereotypes) can be fostered by opportunities to interact with cross-group others under conditions of increased frequency and type, equal status between groups, a shared goal between individuals, and when the interactions are voluntary in nature. All of these conditions can be made readily available in school settings. We also integrate a model of racial/ethnic identity to illustrate how students who have a strong ethnic identity could be expected to contribute to an overall inclusive school environment for *all* students (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998).

These two frameworks (contact and the model of racial/ethnic identity) point to a multipronged approach for ethnic diversity inclusiveness and are expected to work in complement to increase inclusiveness in school settings. We start by describing ethnic contextual factors for schools and districts to consider, such as the variety and balance of ethnic groups, that have been associated with more inclusive school environments. Although the characteristics of the student population can be partially out of the control of schools and districts, what is under their control are the practices and types of programs offered to the student body that could improve school interracial/interethnic climate and inclusivity. In the subsequent three sections, we describe practices that educators can implement for their students. First, schools can bolster strengths in individual students—specifically ethnic identity for ethnic minority students—that provide direct benefits for the individual. However, we argue that when students have a positive ethnic identity, there are also widespread effects for the broader student population. Next, we consider ethnicity and diversity-specific programs that are aimed at diversity awareness, tolerance, inclusion, and multiculturalism. Cooperative learning strategies can be used to achieve these outcomes via the shared goal condition of contact theory. Collectively, these programs focus on improving diversity or ethnicity-related conditions within the school and are expected to then generalize to other aspects of students' social lives. Finally, we conclude with another way to think about inclusiveness and ethnic diversity by focusing on broadly promoting social competence and prosocial behaviors within classrooms and schools. The expectation is that these general skills can spill over into interethnic inclusiveness more specifically.

CREATING SCHOOL CONTEXTS THAT FACILITATE INCLUSION

Ethnic Composition Produces Opportunities for Inclusion

Opportunities for interactions with peers from ethnically diverse backgrounds create learning environments that can facilitate inclusion in school settings. Although merely having the opportunity to interact with a cross-group classmate or schoolmate (i.e., access, exposure) is not necessarily enough to improve inclusiveness in schools, there is reason to expect that the ethnic composition of classrooms and schools can facilitate inclusivity. To date, the bulk of recent research has focused on ethnic diversity, broadly characterized as contexts in which multiple ethnic groups are present with relatively similar proportions within the school (see Simpson, 1949). This notion of ethnic diversity (e.g., Bellmore, Witkow, Graham, & Juvonen, 2004; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006) is modified from older research conceptualizations, in which diversity was measured by the percentage of non-White students in a school. This earlier approach was limited in that a school could have a high percentage of non-White students and still be very homogenous (e.g., the non-White students reflect a single ethnic minority background). Another reason the older approach is limited is that, at least in the United States, White youth (around the time of this publication) are projected to no longer make up the numerical majority of the child population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). In fact, White students, compared with students from ethnic minority backgrounds, are more likely to be embedded within very homogenous public school settings (Orfield, Frankenberg, & Garces, 2008) and are more likely to attend private school or be home-schooled (Reardon, Yun, & Orfield, 2006; Redford, Battle, & Bielick, 2016). Thus, using predominantly White schools as the comparison group may no longer apply, now or in the future.

A diversity focus on balance and number of different groups also speaks to the contact theory premise that improved intergroup relationships occur when there are more groups and more frequent interactions (Allport, 1954). In school settings, more groups are expected to provide a wider range of individuals, behaviors, values, and perspectives across the student body. In turn, the environment might be inherently more inclusive because it is harder to stand out. Settings with greater number of ethnic groups may also allow for development of greater identity complexity, where new and different aspect of one's identity may be highlighted and promoted through interactions with individuals from different backgrounds (e.g., Graham, 2018; Knifsend & Juvonen, 2017). For example, rather than being perceived and identifying only

as a Latinx student, in diverse school settings there may be greater allowances for the same student to *also* identify as an athlete, an anime fan, a chef, and so on. In other words, in diverse settings where ethnic groups are numerous and more evenly distributed, students need not solely define themselves based on ethnic background. Thus, students may have a wider array of peers with whom they can interact, subsequently improving all students' sense of inclusion within a school.

Greater balance is also presumed to reflect a context in which there is equal status—to the extent that numbers/representation could shift the balance of power within a school setting (e.g., Thijs & Verkuyten, 2014). For instance, having a small numerical representation of one's own group within a school might not matter as much if everyone's group is similarly small. However, it may matter a lot if one's group is small relative to a single other ethnic group that reflects the numerical majority within a school. A few experimental studies highlight the fact that unequal status/representation can indeed undermine inclusiveness, though these studies typically examined only two-group scenarios in elementary school settings (e.g., Bigler, Brown, & Markell, 2001). For example, Brown and Bigler (2002) randomly assigned elementary-age youth to contrived groups that varied in classroom representation based on colored T-shirts. In general, youth exhibited in-group biases—attitudes that might limit inclusive behaviors—when the proportions of the two groups were very disparate.

Further, although it may be expected that these processes would operate similarly across development, much of the work on school ethnic composition has taken place during the adolescent years at the middle and high school levels because of their greater ethnic diversity (e.g., Juvonen et al., 2006; Moody, 2001; for an exception, see Benner & Crosnoe, 2011; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). Preschools and elementary schools tend to be smaller, be more ethnically homogenous, and draw from the more immediate neighborhood (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007), which is why there has been less prior research at this age.

Direct Correlates Between Ethnic Composition and Inclusivity

As previously defined, inclusive school environments are characterized by positive social experiences for all students. Such positive experiences can include decreased bullying, less loneliness, and greater number of cross-group friendships. A number of studies point to greater diversity predicting inclusiveness, as measured by positive social experiences, in school settings. One study of almost 2,000 sixth-grade students across 10 public middle schools that varied in ethnic composition found that in

more ethnically diverse schools (defined as schools that contained many ethnic groups each with relatively even representation in the school), students felt safer, less picked on, and less lonely compared with their same-ethnic counterparts in less diverse schools (Juvonen et al., 2006). In addition, the finding was the same when examining diversity across the more than 70 *classrooms* represented in the sample. Greater classroom ethnic diversity was associated with the feeling safer, less picked on, and less lonely both in fall (just after the transition to middle school) and spring semesters, and diversity remained a robust predictor of these outcomes, even after controlling for classroom levels of school engagement. The finding also extended to psychological adjustment such that students in more diverse middle school classrooms reported less social anxiety and loneliness than their counterparts in less diverse (i.e., more ethnically homogenous) classrooms (Bellmore et al., 2004).

Although the Juvonen et al. (2006) study examined the association between diversity and social experiences at school only for African American and Latinx students, the finding has since been replicated with other ethnic groups as well. Specifically, in a sample of more than 4,000 middle school students across 26 schools, school-level ethnic diversity was associated with students feeling safer, less picked on, and less lonely (Juvonen, Kogachi, & Graham, 2018). More ethnically diverse schools were also related to stronger student perceptions of fair and equal treatment by teachers. Likewise, school diversity was associated with lower out-group distance, meaning that students reported being more willing to associate with cross-group peers. These main findings held similarly for African American, Latinx, Asian, and White students. Combined, these findings point to a greater sense of inclusivity among students in more diverse schools compared with their counterparts who attend less diverse schools. However, Juvonen et al. (2018) did note one important caveat: When students' classroom-level diversity did not match the school's diversity, the markers of increased inclusivity associated with school diversity were largely negated. That is, when students were grouped into classrooms that limited their access to the school's diversity (i.e., they were in less diverse classrooms than the school average), their intergroup attitudes and perceptions of teachers' fair treatment were no longer related to school-level diversity.

Moody (2001) also found that school practices surrounding the diversity were critical to students' outcomes. Using data from the Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Moody examined the association between school ethnic diversity and cross-ethnic friendships in a sample of around 90,000 students across more than 100 nationally representative schools. Although the Add Health data set did not have information of de facto

segregation *within* schools that might occur through practices such as academic tracking, schools that implemented practices that appeared to address some of the conditions of contact theory (e.g., equal status and cooperative behaviors) through ethnically integrated sports or extracurriculars had students who formed more cross-ethnic friendships.

The Moody (2001) study suggests that another marker of inclusivity might be the presence of cross-ethnic friendships in school settings. Such friendships require going a step beyond mere exposure and imply that meaningful social interactions between students from different ethnic groups are taking place. Cross-ethnic friendships are important metrics not only of inclusivity but also of a future ability to engage in interactions with diverse others (Lewis & Nishina, 2018). Indeed, research suggests that greater ethnic diversity within school contexts is related to a greater likelihood of cross-ethnic friendships across preschool, elementary, middle, and high-school-age students (Benner & Crosnoe, 2011; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987; Moody, 2001; Quillian & Campbell, 2003). Thus, greater ethnically diversity itself may promote the positive social interactions reflective of inclusive school environments.

Diverse School Settings May Buffer Against Discrimination Experiences

Some might argue that youth who attend ethnically diverse schools are at risk for negative social experiences because of their ethnic background (i.e., discrimination from peers). This may especially be the case when many students in the school are prejudiced against outgroup members (Özdemir, Sun, Korol, Özdemir, & Stattin, 2018). Consistent with contact theory, initial cross-group contact (or a rapidly shifted ethnic composition of a school) may also result in conflict, or at least discomfort, that can dissipate over time (Allport, 1954). Several intriguing findings suggest that despite the possibility of increased discrimination experiences, the diverse context itself might also serve as a buffer against these experiences. For example, Seaton and Douglass (2014) measured African American high school students' daily racial discrimination experiences. Consistent with prior research, discrimination was associated with increased depressive symptoms the following day. However, this association was present only for those youth attending a predominantly White or predominantly African American high school. For African American youth attending high schools with no majority group (i.e., more diverse), there was no association between daily discrimination and subsequent depressive symptoms.

Other research has found similar buffering effects of diversity for discrimination. In one cohort of incoming ethnic minority college freshmen (i.e., Asian, Black, Latinx, multiethnic), having more diverse high school friendship groups protected against discrimination experiences (Ramirez Hall, Nishina, & Lewis, 2017). Specifically, for those who had less diverse friendship groups in high school, discrimination predicted a decreased likelihood of declaring a STEM major in college. However, for ethnic minority students who reported having a diverse friendship group in high school, there was no association between discrimination and STEM major declaration. Thus, it appears that benefits of having attended a more inclusive school (as indicated by more diverse high school friendships) may carry over into the new college settings, when the peer group is typically almost entirely new.

International Findings

Finally, it is worth nothing that the United States is in a somewhat unique position to both study and reap the benefits of ethnic diversity within its school-age population. Research on diversity in other countries is often limited by having a single numerical majority group (e.g., Madsen et al., 2016; Schwarzenthal, Schachner, van de Vijver, & Juang, 2018; Vitoroulis, Brittain, & Vaillancourt, 2016). These studies find seemingly inconsistent results compared with some of the work conducted in the United States, with school diversity unrelated to aspects of inclusion, such as less loneliness, lower victimization, and intergroup prejudice. But a closer inspection of these studies reveals that floor effects are likely at play. For example, in a Danish study of more than 4,000 students (11–15 years old), an increased proportion of same-ethnic peers within a school was associated with decreased loneliness for minority youth (Madsen et al., 2016). This finding may seem to suggest that greater homogeneity benefits minority youth. However, most students in the nationally representative sample (>85%) reported being Danish, with the remaining composed mostly of Turkish, Iraqi, Lebanese, Somali, and Pakistani youth. Therefore, any increase in the proportion of ethnic minority youth would also increase diversity within the school. Likewise, in a majority White (77%) Canadian sample, using percentage of ethnic minority students in the school as the metric of diversity, ethnic minority students reported less victimization when there was a higher percentage of ethnic minority students in the school (Vitoroulis et al., 2016). However, as in the Danish study, the average percentage of ethnic minority students in the school was rather low (23%, $SD = 15\%$; with Asian, South Asian, African, Aboriginal each composing less than 8% of the total sample population) meaning that even at $+2$ SDs above the mean, the proportion of ethnic minority students in a school would barely exceed 50%. Given the ethnic distributions in the samples, these

international findings may still be consistent with the observed correlation between diversity and indicators of greater inclusion found in U.S.-based studies. With the absence of high levels of school diversity, as well as the presence of a single numerical ethnic group across schools, further exploration is needed to determine whether the U.S. findings replicate internationally.

Ethnic Diversity as Superordinate School "Culture"

In ethnically diverse settings, because no single group holds the majority, the school environment might naturally create a new superordinate school "culture" to which all students must "acculturate." As such, students have the opportunity to include peers from diverse backgrounds into their friendship groups, and in these diverse groups, a wider range of acceptable behaviors may be allowed. In contrast, in less diverse schools, those in the numerical majority would likely have to do little work, if any, to fit in because they are already familiar with the norms and values of the broader group. Only those students in the numerical minority need to try to learn and conform to the numerical majority group's norms, or work to remain distinct from those in the numerical majority (Nishina, Bellmore, Witkow, & Nylund-Gibson, 2010). This explanation may also account for why diversity has been associated with a host of positive and inclusive outcomes just described. It is important to note that this potential practice with social flexibility and adaptability maps onto the 21st-century skills described earlier in the article.

The effects of having experienced these inclusive environments may also carry over across school transitions. For example, Lewis and Nishina (2018) found that students who had more *opportunities* to interact with cross-ethnic peers in high school were more likely to report having friends from ethnically diverse backgrounds after the transition to college. As part of the same larger study, Ramirez Hall et al. (2017) found in two separate cohorts of ethnic minority (non-White) students that those students who reported having an ethnically diverse friendship group in high school were more likely to declare a STEM major (i.e., majors that are historically less ethnically diverse) and report higher levels of academic efficacy as they entered into college.

This current section makes an argument for why creating diverse school environments in both schools and classrooms may improve inclusiveness for students. However, as many school and district administrators may point out, it is not always possible to configure schools to have even moderate levels of diversity. They may be limited by the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods, or by district policies that determine neighborhood feeder patterns. We suggest that there are still within-school practices schools can take to maximize the diversity that is present within districts and schools—for example, by ensuring that all students are exposed to what diversity the school does have (Juvonen et al., 2018; Moody, 2001). In fact, school indicators of inclusion (e.g., positive school interracial climate) have been found to be associated with increased feelings of belongingness (Vang, Templin, & Nishina, 2019) and reduced ethnic discrimination regardless of whether schools had higher or lower levels of diversity (Bellmore, Nishina, You, & Ma, 2012). Nonetheless, the next three sections focus on how schools can make the most of the diversity they do have by promoting positive ethnic identity within ethnic minority youth, by engaging in pedagogical practices aimed at either teachers or students, and by facilitating social competence and prosocial behaviors that can shape social norms for inclusion. These approaches also leave students with experiences and skills that they can take with them as they transition across grades and schools.

PROMOTING ETHNIC IDENTITY IN ETHNIC MINORITY OR MARGINALIZED YOUTH

In addition to directly facilitating a sense of inclusion, school composition can make ethnicity more salient for students. This can happen in diverse schools, where there are many different ethnic groups represented, as well as in nondiverse schools for students who are in the numerical ethnic minority. Because of this potential salience, we argue that positive ethnic identity development could ultimately create a sense of inclusiveness within the school. In the late childhood and adolescent years (i.e., ages 9–18), issues of identity come to the foreground as youth explore who they are more directly (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). During this time, ethnic identity development may be important to consider in regards to social functioning and inclusivity for ethnic minority children (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). Beginning in late childhood and through adolescence, young persons often proceed from a lack of thinking about their ethnicity, to increasing in their commitment, to identifying with their ethnic group (Schwartz et al., 2014), which is important for healthy social and psychological adjustment (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014).

In both diverse and nondiverse environments, schools supporting ethnic minority children and adolescents' ethnic identity development may help students develop positive feelings regarding their selves and their ethnic backgrounds (Sellers et al., 1998). Having a stronger or more positive ethnic identity may provide a sense of security in ethnically diverse contexts (Rivas-Drake, Umaña-Taylor, Schaefer, & Medina, 2017), or when youth are not in the numerical majority. In addition to a sense of security, students in supportive schools may feel

more comfortable when exposed to ethnically diverse social situations (e.g., classrooms, peer groups). In contrast, their counterparts in less supportive schools may be self-conscious of their ethnicity, or believe that others view their group negatively (Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013). Thus, students who have a positive ethnic identity may feel a greater sense of inclusion in schools regardless of the peer ethnic composition.

Ethnic Centrality, Private Regard, and Public Regard

Specifically, ethnic identity may be conceptualized as multiple dimensions, the meanings of which may differentially relate to perceptions of inclusion in school environments. *Centrality* is defined as the significance attached to ethnicity in self-definition, or the extent to which individuals emphasize ethnicity in their self-concept (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Centrality may be important because those secure in their ethnic group belonging may also feel more secure in ethnically diverse school environments. *Regard* is defined as the perception of what it means to be a member of an ethnic group in terms of positive–negative evaluative judgment (Sellers et al., 1997) and is conceptualized as two separate dimensions. *Private regard* refers to how positively or negatively individuals view their *own* ethnic group; feeling positive about belonging to an ethnic group is key to positive ethnic identity development and to feeling a sense of inclusion in one's own ethnic group. *Public regard* refers to how positively or negatively individuals think *others* view their ethnic group. Others' evaluations of individuals' ethnic groups may be an important component influencing feelings of inclusion in environments with same- and cross-ethnic peers (Sellers et al., 1997).

One marker of an inclusive school environment may be students' success in developing intimate relationships, such as friendships with same- and cross-ethnic peers (Kiang, Witkow, Baldelomar, & Fuligni, 2010). At the same time, forming both same- and cross-ethnic friendships (i.e., diverse and not one type at the expense of the other) may promote students' feelings of inclusion in their broader school environment (O'Brien, Mars, & Eccleston, 2011). For many, friendships with same-ethnic peers allow the development and maintenance of inclusion in their ethnic group (Hamm, 2000; Tsai & Fuligni, 2012). In addition, with the rapid growth of ethnic diversity in the United States (Colby & Ortman, 2015), cross-ethnic friendships may take on added significance for students (Echols & Graham, 2013). For example, students with cross-ethnic friendships have been found to be more integrated into their school environments (Kawabata & Crick, 2015; Richeson & Shelton, 2007). Given that *both* same- and cross-ethnic friends are likely to contribute to a student's feeling of school inclusiveness, empirical evidence

of how ethnic identity may promote each type of friendship is described in the next sections.

Empirical Support for Ethnicity Identity Promoting Inclusion

Centrality

Research suggests that increasingly defining oneself as a member of a particular ethnic group is related to inclusion as indicated by same-ethnic friendship (Hughes et al., 2006; Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013). In a study of Asian American and Latin American high school students, centrality was found to be associated with increases in belonging and exploration of ethnic identity, which were associated with having more same-ethnic friends (Kiang et al., 2010). Similarly, in a sample of Asian, Latinx, and Black ninth graders, adolescents with more same-ethnic friends also reported higher centrality (Douglass, Mirpuri, & Yip, 2017).

However, there is also support for the notion that higher centrality is related to inclusion as indicated by *cross*-ethnic friendships. Students feeling a strong sense of attachment to their own ethnic group may feel more confident and secure in branching out to befriend other ethnic classmates (Phinney et al., 2007) and may be more willing to hear perspectives from other ethnic groups (Graham et al., 2014). A study of Latinx, Asian, and Black college freshmen found an association between achieved identity, considered similar to centrality, and more positive attitudes toward other ethnic groups (Phinney et al., 2007). Another study found an association for Black, Asian, Latinx, and multiethnic students between their centrality before entering college and their later cross-ethnic friendships in college (Lewis & Nishina, 2018). Further, ethnic resolution, conceptually similar to centrality, was associated with having more ethnically diverse friends 6 months later in a sample of Asian, Black, Latinx, multiethnic, and Native American middle school students (Rivas-Drake et al., 2017). Thus, being securely grounded in one's ethnicity as a part of the self may result in students being more ready and able to befriend peers outside of their ethnic group.

Regard

Fewer studies have examined private and public regard as they relate to inclusion as indicated by friendship outcomes (Rivas-Drake et al., 2017). However, there is reason to expect that friendship outcomes may be associated with each regard dimension (Douglass, Yip, & Shelton, 2014). For example, individuals with more positive feelings about their ethnic group (i.e., private regard) may be especially likely to feel inclusion with their ingroup and

form same-ethnic friendships (Phinney et al., 2007). A study of Latinx and Black middle school students found support for this (Graham et al., 2014), where private regard was related to same-ethnic friendships. In addition, individuals who believe that members of *other* ethnic groups perceive their ethnic group in a positive manner (i.e., public regard) may be likely to interact and befriend both same- and cross-group members (Hamm, 2000; Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013) and may feel greater inclusion because of friend group diversity. Further, those with higher public regard are likely to perceive fewer discrimination experiences and have positive cross-ethnic contacts (Sellers et al., 1998), and therefore may feel a greater sense of inclusion via these positive peer experiences.

In sum, each dimension of ethnic identity has been found in previous research to differentially relate to indicators of school inclusion for ethnic minority youth. Higher levels of centrality may be associated with both same- and cross-ethnic friendship. Higher levels of private regard may also be associated with same-ethnic friendship and inclusion with one's own ethnic group, but previous empirical work does not yet support an association with cross-ethnic friendship. Higher levels of public regard, like centrality, may be associated with both same- and cross-ethnic friendship. And so, promoting positive ethnic identity for ethnic minority youth may help students form friendships with both same- and cross-ethnic peers at school, which may in turn result in feelings of inclusiveness and integration for all students within the broader school environment.

Because ethnic identity can be impacted when ethnicity is salient, schools may be able to provide opportunities for ethnic identity development for ethnic minority students. These practices can simultaneously provide opportunities for all students to learn about other ethnic groups in multiple ways. Many practices that can be implemented may not actually require any extra training for teachers but may require for them to expand or adjust their curricula to acknowledge and teach from works from diverse voices. For example, a course like Social Studies could be an ideal context for promoting the acquisition of historical knowledge for students to learn about their own ethnic group and the ethnic groups of their peers. In addition, in other courses, teachers could supplement standardized course material with inclusive examples in the classroom, such as by displaying, celebrating, and engaging with artwork, literature, and activities that originate from ethnic minority cultures. For schools that have theater, drama, or band programs, plays and concerts could be put on in which students perform pieces that were written, directed, or composed by ethnic minority artists. As schools and teachers develop and implement curricula that promote positive ethnic identity development for ethnic minority

students, they may concurrently foster an inclusive environment in which students value the interactions with and ethnic differences of peers from ethnic groups other than their own.

Improving Inclusiveness via Diversity/Multicultural Training and Cooperative Learning

Even if proximity to ethnically diverse peers, opportunities to interact with ethnically diverse peers, and promoting positive ethnic identity were sufficient for facilitating a positive and inclusive climate for youth of all ethnic backgrounds, the fact remains that the majority of public schools in the United States are segregated and contain an unbalanced ethnic distribution in both urban (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003; Richards & Stroub, 2018) and suburban (Stroub & Richards, 2017) settings. As a result of unbalanced school ethnic compositions, some students may lack opportunities to develop positive ethnic identities. In unbalanced schools, students may also have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of other ethnic groups and more limited opportunities to develop intergroup attitudes towards others in positive ways. These students also appear to experience less inclusion as a function of the school composition (e.g., more peer victimization and loneliness, and fewer cross-ethnic friendships) than students attending more diverse schools (e.g., Juvonen et al., 2006, 2018).

As described in the previous section, facilitating students' positive ethnic identity development may be one way to promote feelings of inclusion both through public regard and via friendships with both same- and cross-ethnic peers. Another approach is to provide proactive diversity and multicultural training to promote school inclusion. This training can be not only important because of the growing ethnic diversity within the K-12 school population as whole but also necessary—perhaps even more so—in school contexts where ethnic group representation is unbalanced. The opportunity costs in such settings extend to both those in the numerical minority and majority. Students in the numerical minority feel unsafe and anxious (Juvonen et al., 2006) and students in the numerical majority may not feel pressured to seek out interactions with out-group members (Bellmore, Nishina, Witkow, Graham, & Juvonen, 2007). The result is a school context where all students may miss exposure to different others and skills that promote inclusivity in multicultural school settings and beyond.

What Does Diversity and Multicultural Training Entail?

To date, most psychological interventions designed to promote interethnic relationships among youth have focused

on primarily reducing prejudice and discrimination (Aboud et al., 2012; Pfeifer, Spears Brown, & Juvonen, 2007). Although this is important to improve school climate, we believe that a different frame, one that promotes positive diversity and multicultural attitudes, can be useful to extend beyond those goals by promoting "values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding … that is needed for establishing positive and constructive relationships" (Barrett, 2018, p. 95). In Barrett's (2018) recent review of what steps schools have taken to promote such goals, teaching approaches such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, culturally inclusive curricula, and social-goal oriented approaches (e.g., encouraging cross-ethnic friendships and intercultural contact) have been verified to promote intercultural competence and inclusivity with empirical studies. Because these approaches can be applied in a developmentally appropriate manner across the age range, variations of multicultural and diversity training can be employed across the entire K–12 grade span.

Training for Teachers and School Staff

Focusing efforts on training school staff and teachers is one way to shift the climate of a school. Such efforts are important because they recognize that even as the overall U.S. school population is increasing in ethnic diversity, teachers are likely to be White (Egalite & Kisida, 2018). This diversity gap between students and teachers has been investigated as a factor of students' social experiences in school. The findings show that benefits exist for congruence in student–teacher ethnicity; students who share the ethnicity of their teachers have more positive perceptions of their teacher and school work (Egalite & Kisida, 2018) compared with students with a mismatch.

Training teachers is one way to address this incongruence between the ethnic background of teachers and students. Teachers can set the tone for the climate within the classroom both through their own interactions with students and through modeling adaptive prosocial behaviors. Sleeter (2001) reviewed 80 studies on how (White) teachers were being prepared for working in culturally diverse (predominantly non-White) classrooms and concluded then that very little research actually tested which strategies were effective in preparing teachers to be culturally responsive. Among the strategies used include recruitment and selection of more ethnically diverse preservice teachers, community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences (e.g., working in diverse communities as part of preservice experiences), and multicultural education (i.e., courses that preservice teachers take to learn to become aware of and actively engage with issues about race, ethnicity, and culture in teaching contexts). These strategies likely hold promise, but just as Sleeter lamented the lack

of rigorous evaluation of these approaches in 2001, two decades later we face the same reality.

Cooperative Learning Approaches for Students

There is no doubt that a focus on staff and teachers is needed to promote inclusivity through modifications to classroom and school climates and norms. But that approach rarely seeks inclusion among peers as its chief end, and even when it does, it can yield only indirect effects on students. For outcomes that more directly promote positive cross-ethnic peer relationships, such as acceptance and friendship, the approaches should be more student focused.

The most well-known student-focused intervention is the Jigsaw Classroom (Aronson, 1978). The Jigsaw Classroom was designed in the 1970s in response to racial tensions occurring in the public schools of Austin, Texas, following the dismantling of school segregation. Its key tenant is to promote student interdependence through deliberate cooperative—rather than competitive—learning environments. As part of its design, and consistent with contact theory (Allport, 1954), students are required to work together with many different classmates to pursue common goals. Initial studies demonstrated effects of increased liking across ethnic groups, increased liking of school, and better school performance by ethnic minority students within the school (Aronson & Bridgeman, 1979; Sharan, 1980). Cooperative learning contexts have also been described by students themselves in qualitative investigations of the factors perceived as essential to promoting positive peer interactions that extend across ethnic groups in high school (Conchas & Noguera, 2004). The Jigsaw Classroom approach continues to serve as a model for in-school programs and is a free resource to the public (see https://www.jigsaw.org/).

We were unable to find published accounts of modern tests of the Jigsaw Classroom approach's efficacy for promoting liking and inclusion across ethnic groups. We view this as a critical oversight. The demographic shifts in favor of increasing ethnic diversity—in terms of number of groups and potential for greater balance between them—would not only make such tests relevant today but also allow for testing the approach's efficacy in varying levels of ethnic diversity. It would be intriguing to investigate, for example, whether higher levels of ethnic diversity not only promote inclusivity as argued in the first part of this paper but also amplify the effects of cooperation. If so, that would point to the extra consideration that is required in less diverse settings to maximize the success of cooperative learning experiences. However, there is reason to expect promising effects of cooperative learning experiences in general. As just noted, Moody (2001) found integrated sports teams on school campuses

(potentially a different type of cooperative learning endeavor) was associated with a higher prevalence of cross-ethnic friendships within the school.

Our investigation of the research literature suggests that focused evaluations on cooperative learning are absent because researchers are not attending to inclusivity as an outcome in settings where cooperative learning is used. More importantly, focused evaluations are absent because it appears that the challenges involved in implementing cooperative learning mean that it is not being used as frequently as would be expected (Baloche & Brody, 2017). Implementing cooperative learning requires intentionally training teachers in both preservice and continuing education settings through modeling and practice, as well as facilitating the development of (pro)social skills students need to work together (Page, 2017). Schools and teachers may perceive this level of investment prohibitive, but because the dividends may include both learning and social yields, we advocate for making and evaluating the investment.

Remaining Needs for Understanding the Efficacy of Diversity/Multiethnic Training

Interventions that provide training to the adults in schools so that they are able to accept and affirm students of all ethnicities, and interventions that modify the opportunities that peers have to interact with, get to know, and depend on one another seem promising for promoting inclusivity. For instance, Vang et al. (2019) examined an ethnically diverse sample 10th-grade students' perceptions of school interracial climate, as measured by peers, teachers, and the overall school supporting/encouraging cross-ethnic interactions and celebrating diversity. Stronger perceptions of interracial climate were associated with a greater sense of school belongingness for all students regardless of ethnic background. But as just reviewed, there are few empirical evaluations of intervention or training efforts. Evaluation of the components together and separately is needed to specify which components are essential and how extensive their effects are. Moreover, evaluations need to consider potential negative effects of the trainings. There is evidence that high school students exposed to a multicultural intervention in social studies classes subsequently felt that the lessons were useless and reported mostly negative reactions to the lessons; students explained that they were already not prejudiced and that the lessons were redundant to their experiences living in a diverse context (Whitehead & Wittig, 2004). As we currently do not know whether or how these diversity/multiethnic trainings change patterns in peer relationships, attitudes, behaviors, and/or the overall school inclusiveness and whether these operate differently in different contexts, such evaluations are essential to success.

We are also quite limited in understanding how to intervene in out-of-classroom contexts despite calls for adopting whole school approaches to valuing diversity (Barret, 2018). Especially in secondary school contexts, extracurricular settings can be important to the formation of cross-ethnic friendships, social identities, and intergroup attitudes (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2017; Moody, 2001). These outcomes result even when the activities (e.g., sports) are not related to multiculturalism, diversity, or social justice. But it is also likely that student organizations and student-led activist movements that focus on these themes will even more strongly promote inclusivity among peers (Hope & Spencer, 2017). Teen activists report that such involvement provides them feelings of having "a place to go," a sense of having "power in numbers," "skilling up" in competencies related to working in groups/teams, and the realization that they are "in it together" with their peers (Montague & Eiroa-Orosa, 2017). Thus, as noted in the opening section of this article, students themselves value developing social skills that enable them to work with a wide range of peers. These competencies not only relate to the here and now of their current in-school experiences but also are social skills (similar to academic skills) they can carry with them from grade to grade and continue to refine across school transitions and into the workforce.

Facilitating Social Competence and Prosocial Behaviors Can Improve Inclusiveness

As just described, interventions to promote or improve inclusiveness with ethnic diversity have tended to focus on diversity related issues (e.g., discrimination, multiculturalism), or race and ethnicity specifically (Barrett, 2018), as particularly face valid approaches. However, some schools, districts, or stakeholders may be resistant to employ diversity-focused interventions or are not willing to admit to a need to focus on diversity-related inclusiveness directly. Regardless of whether a school is motivated to engage with inclusiveness directly, we argue that general support for social competence and prosocial behaviors, including social problem-solving, in school contexts can also improve inclusiveness for ethnic diversity indirectly by giving students skills needed to be sensitive in response to others. Further, such support can be provided in schools that are less diverse, are changing demographically, or are interested in improving a variety of social-related behaviors simultaneously. Trainings focused on prosocial behaviors, rather than diversity or inclusivity, are likely to be particularly useful for younger children who do not have an adultlike understanding of the meaning of racial and ethnic differences (see Quintana, 1998) and thus are less able to benefit from interventions targeted to these features specifically. For all children and

adolescents, learning to relate to peers in a sensitive and caring manner is a foundation on which interventions that are more focused on diversity related issues can build.

Training Social Competence and Prosocial Behaviors

A broad promotion of prosocial behaviors within classroom and school contexts typically works toward developing social competence, often defined as children's ability to be well liked (Cillessen & Bellmore, 2011) or to be able to form positive, successful social relationships (Fabes, Gaertner, & Popp, 2006). Socially competent children are prosocial, cooperative, and able to respond appropriately to the needs of other children (Cillessen & Bellmore, 2011). They can also navigate challenging social situations, such as when disagreements or conflicts arise in an interaction. Although there are cultural differences in what makes a child well liked (e.g., aggression: Chen, Lee, & Chen, 2018), as well as behaviors that vary in the strength of association with being well liked across cultures, there are also some fairly universal correlates such as prosocial (e.g., being nice and kind) and cooperative behaviors (see Asher & McDonald, 2009; Chen et al., 2018). Focusing on these universals suggests that children should be able to learn skills that are valued regardless of the specific ethnic composition of the peer group. Further, across cultures, socially competent children and adolescents should possess skills that allow them to both recognize and modify their behaviors appropriately to allow for positive interactions with others from diverse backgrounds (i.e., flexibility and adaptability), whether that diversity stems from race and ethnicity or another characteristic. Such skills are also directly related to 21st-century skills expected to be important for later success in the workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).

Within any setting or context, peers regulate one another's behavior through their evaluations and patterns of reinforcement (Chen, 2012). Socially competent children may be able to regulate and reinforce the behaviors of their peers so that individual variations, such as might stem from cultural differences, are allowed to flourish. Similarly, socially competent children may be able to adjust their own behaviors such that they can function well in a variety of settings and with a variety of peers. Training of prosocial skills may not even be needed for every student in a school for the training to be effective because of the ways in which peers regulate one another's behaviors. Indeed, work by Paluck and others (e.g., Paluck, 2011; Paluck & Shepherd, 2012; Paluck, Shepherd, & Aronow, 2016) has provided evidence that social skills may be able to spread through an entire network of classmates without the need to specifically train every student. For example, in Paluck (2011), a small group of students were designated as "peer trainers" and were trained to confront prejudicial behaviors in their classmates. These behaviors were found to spread to other students in their schools who had not taken part in the initial trainings through behavioral contagion of behaviors and norms (Paluck, 2011).

Developmental Considerations for Training and Assessing Social Competence and Prosocial Behaviors

Sociometric status (i.e., the number or percentage of a student's peers who nominate the student as someone they like or dislike) can be used as an indicator of social competence in childhood during the elementary school years, measuring the child's acceptance or rejection among peers. However, the construct of social competence itself is more complex in adolescence spanning the middle and high school years (Englund, Levy, Hyson, & Sroufe, 2000) and requires navigating group dynamics beyond which may be captured by individual peers' liking or disliking of a classmate. Thus, adolescents also need skills that can support social functioning ranging from resilience in the face of stressful situations and empathy (e.g., Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) to self-regulation, executive functioning (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), and problem-solving (Lewis & Nishina, 2018). As in childhood, these types of skills are likely to relate to an adolescent's ability to negotiate various and varied social situations by recognizing the effect their behavior has on others and by modifying their behavior in context-specific ways (e.g., Dawson, Shear, & Strakowski, 2012; Nilson & Bacso, 2017). Indeed, students who more frequently used problem-solving skills to cope with stress before entering college reported forming more cross-ethnic friendships after the transition to college (Lewis & Nishina, 2018). Given the more advanced strategies available to adolescents, and the more complex social situations they are likely to encounter, different types of trainings are likely to be appropriate compared with earlier in childhood.

The early years of school (i.e., preschool and early elementary school) and adolescence (i.e., middle and high school) are both critical periods for focusing on social competence skills, and it may be important to offer interventions during both stages of development given the change in complexity of the peer group over time. The early years of school are important because they may represent the first time in which children are exposed to large groups of nonfamilial peers (Fabes et al., 2006) and friendships first develop (Bierman & Erath, 2006). Given that social behaviors are quite stable through childhood (Howes, 1983), the preschool and early school years may also be important in setting children on a positive

trajectory, or on correcting what could otherwise be a negative trajectory.

Adolescence may be key because the transition to both middle and high school often coincide with increased exposure to diverse groups of peers, given that these schools tend to draw from larger surrounding areas than more neighborhood-based elementary schools (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007), as well as a growing awareness of societal racial views and thus what these differences represents (Quintana, 1998). It is during this time of life that adolescents also become more focused on peers in general. Thus, in middle and high school, students might have the first opportunity to practice using their social skills more flexibly to navigate this more complex world. Given the diversity that these students will likely encounter in their adult lives, developing social skills that allow them to adapt to changing social contexts may be particularly important to begin practicing during adolescence.

Training of prosocial behaviors and social competence in preschool and elementary school settings often involves presentations of skills for students to model, such as social problem-solving or conflict resolution techniques, providing behavioral examples and opportunities to practice these behaviors, and feedback on their implementation of the skills (see Bierman & Erath, 2006; Voegler-Lee & Kupersmidt, 2011, for summaries of successful programs). These techniques may be facilitated by a teacher as part of a regular classroom, or provided by therapists for individual students who have been identified as having challenges in their social behavior (Bierman & Erath, 2006; Voegler-Lee & Kupersmidt, 2011). In later childhood and adolescence, interventions to train social competence may focus on executive functioning, self-regulation, and kindness to others, which may be promoted through mindfulness training (see Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). In addition to being associated with increases in empathy and perspective taking, mindfulness-focused programs may also provide benefits in terms of academic motivation and achievement (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; see also Durlak et al., 2011). Thus, there is little risk to focusing on these skills, with the potential for big rewards in a variety of domains. Like programs for younger children, social and emotional learning interventions for older children and adolescents can take place as part of a regular school curriculum and can be delivered by a classroom teacher (Durlak et al., 2011). Thus, much like facilitating ethnic identity development or providing cooperative learning experiences, social skills training can be embedded into regular classroom practice by students' teachers to reach all students.

Given their broad focus, interventions focused on social competence and prosocial behaviors present an opportunity to impart lifelong benefits to children and adolescents. As members of a multiethnic society, it is crucial that children and adolescents are able to relate well to people with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives (Myrick & Martorell, 2011). Prosocial behaviors and social problem-solving may be considered as foundational skills on which more targeted training surrounding diversity and inclusivity can build. That is, for schools that are invested in issues surrounding diversity and inclusivity, interventions focused on both social skills and inclusivity at once are likely to provide the biggest gains. Students who have already experienced gains in social competence may be the ones most able to be receptive to focused training on issues related to diversity. Some schools and teachers, particularly those focused on older grades, may be reluctant to focus on social competence because of increased emphasis on standardized testing and academic outcomes. However, this attitude may be misguided because research points to links between social competence and academic gains (Durlak et al., 2011; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Thus, interventions focused on prosocial behaviors may achieve benefits far beyond just social competence, making them desirable to stakeholders interested in academic gains above all. Drawing attention to these links, and to the benefits of teaching to the "whole child," may help counter arguments that schools need to focus exclusively on academic tasks as face-valid predictors of academic success.

CONCLUSIONS

Contributing to inclusiveness, having the ability to work with individuals from different backgrounds, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability to new situations, and possessing social competence are all considered 21st-century skills youth are expected to need for the future (NCREL & Metiri Group, 2003). Part of the emphasis on the ability to work in ethnically diverse groups stems from U.S. population projections of increasing ethnic diversity (i.e., more evenly balanced representation of groups; Colby & Ortman, 2015). This projection stands in contrast with relative ethnic segregation observed in U.S. schools (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003; Richards & Stroub, 2018; Stroub & Richards, 2017). These trends are likely explained by a variety of social and political factors (Reardon, Grewal, Kalogrides, & Greenberg, 2012), such as parent attitudes, bussing practices, academic tracking, residential segregation, and similar issues beyond the scope of this review. However, to the extent that these broader societal factors can be addressed, schools might become more representative of the ethnic distribution in the local, regional, or broader nationwide population.

In the preceding sections, we focused on a wide array of factors that can be employed in concert to promote

inclusive school environments for ethnic diversity. First, we suggested that schools can maximize the possible benefits of ethnic diversity by providing settings in which many groups are present and they are relatively evenly represented. We noted that for ethnic diversity to be promotive of positive outcomes, such as inclusivity, classes and extracurriculars should be similarly diverse as the broader school composition (Juvonen et al., 2018). We acknowledge that composition alone is not the sole solution to improve inclusivity for ethnic diversity in school settings. In fact, it is important to note that theory suggests initial attempts at increasing diversity may be met with social conflict as a function of shifting demographics (e.g., Allport, 1954). Nonetheless, access to ethnic diversity in schools is an important place to start.

In addition, because not all schools will be able to create ethnically diverse environments for their students, we described three other methods that schools can employ to facilitate inclusion. We suggest that these approaches could be important regardless of school ethnic composition. For example, we described how improving ethnic identity for ethnic minority students might improve their social functioning in general. However, we specifically made the case that improving ethnic centrality (how important being a member of an ethnic group is to a person) and public regard (how positively an individual believes *other* group members feel about their group) could actually promote the formation and maintenance of *both* same- and cross-ethnic friendships. Subsequently, these social relationships can contribute to positive interracial climate and ultimately contribute to feelings inclusivity within the school for *all* students (Vang et al., 2019).

We also presented approaches designed to specifically address multiculturalism and diversity, which can be implemented even when school or classroom diversity is not high. Here, we distinguished between training for teachers to improve their cultural competence when working with students from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and classroom practices—namely, cooperative learning—that could be implemented and led by teachers to improve inclusivity among students. Both of these approaches can shift social norms (e.g., treatment of different ethnic groups, openness to collaborations in diverse groups) within a classroom or school to value diverse others and their unique contributions to the school community.

Finally, we argued that in the absence (or preferably in the presence) of ethnicity/diversity-oriented interventions, facilitating prosocial and problem-solving behaviors can be a way to improve social competence and inclusivity among students, as they relate to important skills that can help youth overcome challenges that might arise in cross-ethnic interactions. We suggested that such interventions could be carried out by teachers in the classroom and

need not reference diversity. They could also be carried out with only a subset of the student population and allowed to filter to the rest of the school via peer contagion.

Throughout the sections focused on boosting the prosocial behaviors, experiences, and identity of individual students, we articulated three key interrelated themes that are important to revisit. First, the interventions and approaches proposed are not implemented to the detriment of other students in the school or classroom (e.g., bolstering the ethnic identity of ethnic minority students is not expected to negatively impact White students). Second, we suggested that even interventions that target individual students (or groups of students)—for example, by strengthening students' ethnic identity, multicultural understanding, and social competence—ultimately impact the overall social climate and norms of inclusion of the school. Individual students who are more secure in their identity, better prepared to understand different others, and confident in their social skills are more likely to contribute to an inclusive school environment for all students. Finally, each section of this article focused on bolstering skills and strengths that are not context specific. In that respect, similar to other academic skills, students are expected to carry these with them to new social situations, such as across grades and school transitions, into the community, and into the workforce. Although to our knowledge, there is no empirical evidence to support the transfer of social skills and behaviors from school to the workforce, there is evidence that students' prior social experiences and skills may carry over across school transitions (e.g., Lewis & Nishina, 2018). From our perspective, there is no reason to expect that students would not continue to build on these skills after they transition to the workforce.

We reviewed four important methods to promote a sense of inclusion for ethnic diversity in school settings, and we maintain that these components should actually be implemented in a multipronged approach in conjunction with one another. We also suggest that these components can and should be considered at multiple levels. For example, using just the example of ethnic composition, state and national educational and residential policies can be crafted in ways that consider school ethnic composition. Local district leaders and parents of students within those districts can consider ways to align school composition with the broader regional demographics. Individual schools can examine their scheduling and classroom assignment practices (e.g., tracking) to determine whether the school's diversity is reflected across classrooms. They can also observe whether extracurricular activities and after-school opportunities are equally accessible to students from all ethnic backgrounds within a school. Finally, in specific classrooms, teachers can structure cooperative learning activities such that students gain

experience working in many different configurations of students to reflect the diversity of the classroom.

We recognize that it is difficult for a given school with limited resources to fully employ all four of the methods for promoting inclusiveness described in this article. Nevertheless, striving for inclusiveness is important. There are ways in which these components could be creatively combined and/or carried out within only a single level (i.e., state/national, district, school, classroom) of implementation. For example, administrators could examine whether they are capitalizing on the ethnic diversity in their school by having their classrooms and extracurricular activities reflect the overall school diversity while providing additional teacher training to carry out cooperative learning activities. Schools could implement a combined intervention that strengthens the ethnic identity of ethnic minority students and simultaneously presents multicultural training so that students can learn about *other* groups, thus increasing the likelihood of cross-ethnic friendships. Teachers could receive initial and ongoing cultural competency training to better respond to diverse students' needs in a respectful manner but also to more effectively implement culturally relevant practices and support ethnic identity development within the classroom. Students' prosocial and cooperative skills could be honed in conjunction with participation in Jigsaw Classrooms to further improve interaction quality and learning in ethnically diverse learning groups. Note that in many cases, individual teachers can address the four components by augmenting teaching practices already in place in the classroom (e.g., how group assignments are structured; supporting ethnic identity development and including diverse examples in instruction; facilitating and modeling prosocial behaviors).

We also presented developmental considerations. It appears that school and classroom diversity, multicultural/diversity training for teachers and staff, and training of prosocial skills for all students can be beneficial regardless of age group, provided age-appropriate considerations are taken—particularly in the case of social skills. For example, development of prosocial and conflict resolution behaviors at younger ages can have powerful carryover effects as children typically have the same grademates across the elementary school years. These carryover effects, in the form of social reputation, buffer students against the challenges they often face across the transition to middle school when they are exposed to many more peers across the school day.

However, many of the studies related to ethnic composition in school settings and ethnic identity development appear to examine students during the adolescent years. As just noted, adolescence is a time when a number of developmental changes coincide to bring issues of ethnicity into greater focus. Cognitive skills develop so that students may better understand the complex and nuanced aspects of racial and ethnic inequities and interactions. Youth may also be more sensitive to social cues related to diversity, numerical representation/balance, and power between different ethnic groups in their school. At the same time, they may be thinking about their own ethnic identity and who they are in relation to others. Important to note, adolescence is a time when they begin to more strongly orient themselves toward peers. The confluence of these changes may make it more likely for conflict to arise among students (e.g., self-segregation, discrimination). However, given that adolescence is also a time of great fluidity, it may serve as a critical period to address issues of race, ethnicity, and inclusivity in schools.

The rationale for improving inclusivity for ethnic diversity in schools is strong. Schools remain an important setting in which youth can practice their prosocial and social problem solving behaviors, gain new knowledge from peers, and have needs for belongingness met. Through repeated exposure and practice, youth have opportunities to engage with others who differ from them on a host of different characteristics, including ethnicity. Not only can this relate to feelings of satisfaction and social efficacy in the moment (i.e., within the current school setting), but these experiences can also inform future social interactions and social adaptability in college (e.g., Lewis & Nishina, 2018), communities, and workplaces. We began this article by highlighting the fact that the workplace of the future will benefit from employees who possess 21st-century skills—flexible thinkers who possess teamwork skills and can engage in collaborative work efforts (e.g., U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Those companies and workplaces that can successfully recruit and maintain diverse employees are likely to be the most competitive in the field and may in the future best represent the perspectives and ideologies of the populations they serve. Simultaneously, we believe that desirable, inclusive workplaces will attract the most talented individuals who value openness, forward-thinking, and collaboration as important drivers of creativity and innovation and who can continue to promote environments of inclusiveness.

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