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# A Scoping Review of Diversity Training for Teachers: The Potential for School Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

Pervasive disparities in educational outcomes suggest the need to train teachers to better support minoritized students by leading inclusive, equitable, and multicultural classrooms. Given the potential benefits of teacher training in antiracist and culturally responsive instructional practices, we synthesized the available research on diversity training for both pre- and in-service teachers by conducting a scoping review of the literature. The results revealed a reliance on preservice teacher samples, qualitative designs, and self-report, immediately collected, attitudinal measures. The narrow scope of the available evidence base limits our ability to evaluate the extent to which diversity training for educators is reaching its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. In advancing recommendations for future research, we advocate for the potential of school psychologists to use school-wide data to inform the development of diversity-related programming, implement evidence-based practices via ongoing consultation, and evaluate the effectiveness of these trainings in reference to meaningful student outcomes.

## IMPACT STATEMENT

The current review evaluated the extent to which diversity training among educators is effective in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among students. Given the limitations of the available literature base, we advocate for school psychologists to leverage their expertise to better support the research and practice of diversity-related programming in school settings. Such work is instrumental toward promoting social justice and aligned with school psychologists' ethical obligation to better support minoritized students (García-Vázquez et al., 2020). To facilitate these efforts, we end with a **roadmap** for the field to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective school-based diversity training.

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diversity training, culturally responsive teaching, school psychology

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Research suggests that educational practices continue to systematically disadvantage large numbers of students from diverse backgrounds (Mills et al., 2019). For example, disparities are evident and pervasive across educational outcomes, including school achievement (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017), referrals for special education (Kramarczuk Voulgarides et al., 2017), disciplinary practices (Harper et al., 2019), and students' perceptions of school belonging and school climate (Morris et al., 2020). These longstanding disparities suggest that school systems often sustain systemic inequities by perpetuating racist policies, which create barriers for minoritized students to reap the benefits of education (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Saleem & Byrd, 2021).

Disparities in educational settings are maintained, in part, because school staff from a variety of backgrounds are susceptible to possessing biases, which may impact their behaviors toward minoritized students (Kumar et al., 2015). For example, a recent investigation of a large national dataset suggests that teachers hold racial biases that reflect those

of the broader population. On average, teachers—regardless of demographic group—hold racial biases that favor White people over Black people (Starck et al., 2020). These biases have troubling implications for Black students; researchers have found that counties with teachers who expressed larger anti-Black biases had greater racial disparities in student test scores and suspension rates (Chin et al., 2020). Biases among teachers contribute to disproportionality in educational outcomes (Santiago-Rosario et al., 2021) and systematically disadvantage minoritized students (La Salle et al., 2020). Thus, the need to address educators' biases through training and professional development is paramount to achieve greater equity in schools (Fallon et al., 2021).

The need for teachers to develop skills related to the promotion of greater equity among students is intensified given that U.S. public schools are becoming increasingly diverse (La Salle et al., 2020). According to the Pew Research Center (2021), greater proportions of the student population are identifying as Hispanic/Latino/Latina,

Asian or Pacific Islander, and multiracial. In 1997, the majority of students (63%) enrolled in public schools identified as White, whereas today, White students make up a smaller percentage (48.7%) of the student population (Chen, 2019). Despite the rapid diversification of the student body, teacher demographics continue to remain predominantly White, female, and middle class (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). This potential mismatch in the cultural background of students, relative to teaching staff, can create additional challenges to overcome in the teaching of students from diverse backgrounds (Skepple, 2015).

Although schools are increasingly characterized as multicultural, multilingual, and multiracial (Ponciano & Shabazian, 2012), educators often hesitate to implement antiracist and multicultural teaching practices due, in part, to a lack of training (Arneback & Englund, 2020; Botelho & Rudman, 2009). As a result, many teachers may be unintentionally introducing discontinuity between a learner's home and school environment (Nieto & Bode, 2012), perpetuating social constructions of power (Gay, 2002), and further disenfranchizing minoritized students from the educational system (Nganga, 2020).

To better serve students from minoritized backgrounds, many have advocated for teacher preparation and professional development to promote egalitarian instructional practices (e.g., Chu, 2014). These practices may include antiracist strategies, which aim to increase awareness of inequities, critically examine dominant social norms, and encourage collective action to counteract racism in society (Arneback & Jämte, 2022). Additionally, culturally relevant pedagogy may be incorporated, which includes focusing on student learning and academic success, integrating instructional lessons that better represent nondominant cultures, and developing students' cultural competence to assist them in developing positive ethnic and social identities (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

To support antiracist and culturally responsive practices, many teacher preparation programs include coursework, explicit training, and professional standards aimed at bolstering teachers' skills related to egalitarian instructional practices. However, many teachers, including new graduates, report feeling underprepared to step up to the challenge of creating inclusive classrooms (Chiu et al., 2017), which suggests that current teacher preparation procedures are likely insufficient to promote egalitarian practices among teachers (Rowan et al., 2021).

One approach for augmenting in-service teachers' capacity for antiracist and culturally responsive practices is the provision of professional development. Scholars of diversity training suggest that although the literature is underdeveloped, explicit training in bias reduction and the promotion

of inclusive practices demonstrates great promise for promoting more equitable outcomes among minoritized individuals (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Devine & Ash, 2022). In support of this, several studies have found that explicit teacher training can be leveraged as a tool to address racial disproportionately in educational outcomes (Gion et al., 2022; Gregory et al., 2016; McIntosh et al., 2018).

## The Present Study

### Purpose

The primary purpose of the present study is to synthesize the available literature on training aimed at mitigating bias and promoting culturally responsive practice among pre- and in-service teachers. These trainings are often aimed at fostering cultural awareness (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010), reducing bias (Whitford & Emerson, 2019), cultivating more positive multicultural attitudes (Gay, 2002), and developing skills in culturally relevant pedagogy among teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Although these goals often characterize a variety of practices with different names (e.g., antibias trainings, cultural competence, multicultural education, diversity education), for the purposes of this paper, we will use the term diversity training (DT) for educators to refer to trainings, coursework, and programs aimed at preparing teachers to effectively support increasingly diverse learners.

Many examples of effective DT found in the literature are the result of collaborative relationships among teachers and consultants within the education field. School psychologists are trained in culturally responsive practices (Malone & Ishmail, 2020), concerned with aspects of classroom climate (Cefai & Cavioni, 2015), and provide consultation to promote effective classroom management (McKenney et al., 2017). Therefore, we situated our current review within the context of the field of school psychology.

Increasingly, school psychologists have been called upon to advocate for social justice within schools (Jimerson et al., 2021), which is defined as both a process and goal related to advocating for and ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources at both the individual and systems level (Malone & Proctor, 2019). Given the long history of exclusionary and racist practices within U.S. schools (Blaisdell, 2016), as well as social, economic, and political systems designed to advantage White individuals (Coates, 2014), this call to action requires dismantling practices, structures, and policies that support the false superiority of White people (McKenney, 2022; Sheridan & Garbacz, 2021).

School psychologists can promote more equitable outcomes among students by better supporting the research and practice of DT for educators. In so doing, school psychologists can promote antiracist instructional practices and

enable students to access more culturally responsive classroom instruction (Jones et al., 2013; LaForett & De Marco, 2020). Therefore, a secondary goal of the literature review was to identify a road map, specific to school psychologists, to work toward strengthening the available evidence base to implement more effective DT practices among teachers.

## Study Aims

Although there are prior reviews on DT for teachers, these reviews have often been circumscribed in their scope. For example, a larger narrative review of the multidisciplinary DT literature only integrated a small handful of studies on teachers (Devine & Ash, 2022). A recent meta-analysis of DT excluded much of the relevant literature base by using strict inclusion criteria (Bezrukova et al., 2016). In addition, prior systematic reviews using teacher samples have only included studies that examined trainings specific to social justice (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016), inclusion for students with disabilities (Lautenbach & Heyder, 2019), and sexual and gender diversity (Francis, 2017).

Prior systematic reviews of DT for educators have also been restricted to samples of preservice teachers and advanced conclusions relevant to teacher education (e.g., Rowan et al., 2021). However, these reviews cannot shed light on the research and practice of DT for in-service teachers within the context of professional development, which can be an important source of continued education. Conversely, reviewing only the literature on DT for in-service teachers may neglect important information regarding the ways in which teachers' proclivity for bias is approached in teacher preparation and emerging teachers' baseline exposure to culturally responsive practices. Therefore, an additional review of the literature was necessary to consider diversity-related training for both pre- and in-service teachers in tandem. By using expansive inclusion criteria, we aimed to better capture the available literature base to include trainings in both antiracist and culturally responsive teaching practices and advance well-informed recommendations for improvement.

## Research Questions and Overview

In the following review, we examined the multidisciplinary literature surrounding the practice of DT for educators to synthesize the goals, practices, and outcomes associated with trainings aimed at preparing educators to effectively address their biases and better lead multicultural classrooms. In so doing, we strived to better inform the field of current DT practices for teachers, note limitations of the extant literature, and advocate for future research. This

literature review was guided by the following questions: 1) What is the content of DT for pre- and in-service teachers within the literature? 2) What research methodology is most frequently used to evaluate DT among teachers? 3) What evidence is available to support the practice of DT for educators? 4) What gaps are evident in the literature on DT for pre- and in-service teachers?

The present study represents a scoping review of the literature on DT for both pre- and in-service teachers, which was guided by established reporting guidelines (Moher et al., 2009; Munn et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2015; Tricco et al., 2018). A scoping review was determined to be a more appropriate methodology than a systematic review to answer the above research questions for three reasons. First, given the amorphous and expansive literature base on DT (Devine & Ash, 2022), a broad set of inclusion criteria was deemed necessary to better understand the DT literature that specifically targets both pre- and in-service teachers. Second, the purpose of the review was to describe the research and practices of DT for educators, rather than identify effective practices as would be done in a systematic review (Munn et al., 2018). We were interested in synthesizing the available literature base, rather than assessing best practices, in part, because the available literature utilized mostly qualitative data, which limits the ability to statistically aggregate research findings.

Our final reason for selecting a scoping review as our methodology was that a scoping review enabled us to survey a range of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research findings (Peters et al., 2015). In so doing, we aim to broaden the information reviewed to represent more diverse epistemologies, methodologies, and perspectives (Grapin & Fallon, 2022; Newell, 2022). Qualitative studies have frequently been excluded from previous reviews (e.g., Bezrukova et al., 2016) but represent an important vehicle for social justice-oriented research (Lyons et al., 2013). Specifically, qualitative research can better account for cultural context (Ponterotto, 2002), while encouraging reciprocal relationships among researchers and relevant stakeholders (Hill et al., 2005).

## METHOD

Readers interested in accessing the data and learning more about search and coding procedures can do so on the Open Science Framework website.<sup>1</sup>

### Search Strategy

We chose PsycInfo and ERIC to search the available literature. This search was restricted to include peer-reviewed

academic journal articles published in English between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000, and February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Consistent with prior research (Devine & Ash, 2022), we selected articles published in the year 2000 and later. Many scholars note that the year 2000 marks the beginning of the DT boom (e.g., Anand & Winters, 2008), which has been largely attributed to the release of *Workforce 2000* by the think tank, Hudson Institute. Based on demographic trends in the workforce, the publication projected DT as a market imperative in the year 2000 (Johnson & Packer, 1987).

Because DT is often used as an umbrella term to describe a wide variety of educational trainings, practices, and programs (Devine & Ash, 2022), we used a variety of search terms in surveying the available literature (see Table 1). Given that more equitable instructional practices can include both antiracist and culturally responsive practices, our selection of search terms was intended to be broad and encompass key terms used in the literature to identify articles relevant to our research questions. For example, the search term bias captured articles relevant

to unconscious, implicit, explicit, or racial bias; cultural training included articles relevant to cultural humility, responsiveness, competence, and sensitivity training.

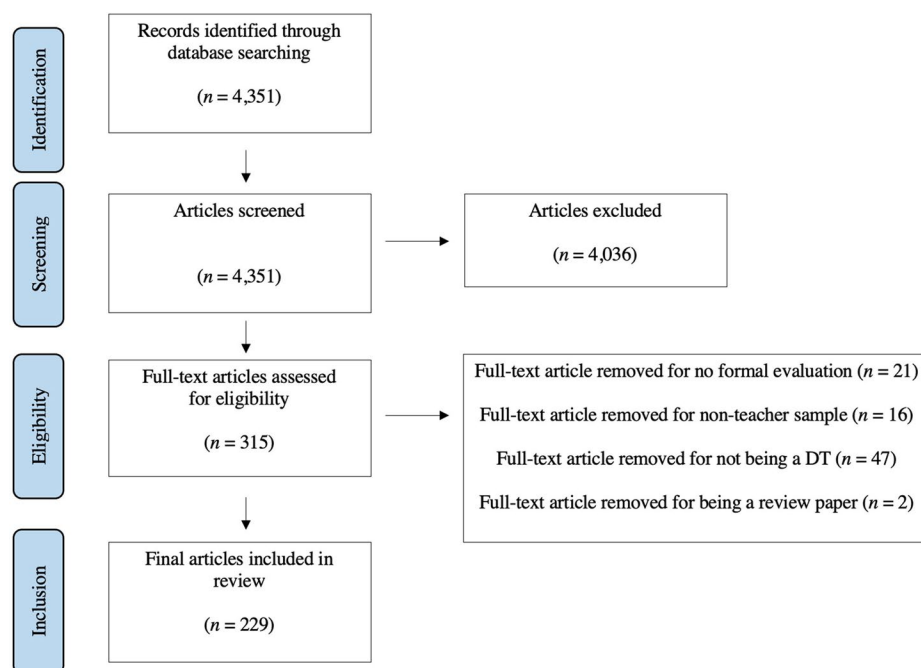
### Screening Procedure

Using the EBSCOhost interface, the first author screened the titles and abstracts of all the articles that appeared during our search strategy. During screening, articles were selected to be evaluated for coding based on a priori inclusion criteria. Specifically, included articles used either pre- or in-service K–12 teachers as their participants, were conducted in an applied setting (i.e., school), and evaluated DT programming, rather than brief experimental manipulations. Broadly, DT is aimed at fostering inclusivity and often encompasses both instructional and experiential training methods (Paluck, 2006). Instructional activities include lectures, videos, and reading material aimed at raising awareness of biases, the benefits of inclusive behaviors, policies against discrimination, and the harmful perpetuation of stereotypes and misconceptions of minoritized groups. Diversity-related experiential activities emphasize a participatory approach to building skills relevant for effective intergroup interactions by employing group discussions, role playing exercises, practice communicating with others from diverse backgrounds, and cultural immersion opportunities. The final sample included 229 articles (see Figure 1 for PRISMA flowchart of the full procedure).

**Table 1.** Search Terms Used for the Present Review

| Sample                | Search Terms                             |                       |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
|                       | Targeted outcome                         | Intervention          |
| Teach* AND<br>Educat* | Divers* AND<br>Cultur*                   | Train*<br>Educat*     |
| School staff          | Multicultur*<br>Rac*<br>Antirac*<br>Bias | Reduc*<br>Sensitivity |

**Figure 1.** PRISMA Flow Diagram Detailing Identification, Screening, and Inclusion of Articles



## Article Coding

Articles were coded following a similar procedure from a recent narrative review of the DT literature (Devine & Ash, 2022), which included DT studies from business, health care, and higher education. First, articles were cataloged based on the author's name(s), institution, publication year, journal, title, and keywords. Included articles came from journals such as, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Equity and Excellence in Education*, and *Multicultural Education*. Common key words included preservice teachers, cultural competence, and diversity.

Then, articles were coded for a total of 16 different variables, which were selected based on prior reviews of the DT literature (e.g., Bezrukova et al., 2016). These variables included the research design used, the setting in which the study was conducted, the duration of the training, the purpose of the research, the kind of training employed, sample size, outcome measures, and results (see Table 2). Each of these variables were evaluated separately, which made it possible to distinguish between diversity-related coursework provided to preservice teachers as part of their training curriculum vs. DT delivered to preservice teachers outside the university classroom. Interrater reliability coding was obtained for 7 variables of every included article (43.75% of the data) by the second author, which correspond to the variables reported quantitatively throughout the review. The decision to obtain interrater reliability for the quantitative variables was guided by the procedures of prior research (Devine & Ash, 2022) and enabled us to increase confidence in the accuracy of the descriptive statistics reported. Interrater agreement was determined to be adequate ( $M = 95.57\%$ , range 92.58% to 99.13%; see Open Science Framework for more information).

## RESULTS

Below, we provide a narrative summary of the literature on DT for both pre- and in-service teachers, organized by methodological features. These results are also summarized using descriptive statistics (see Table 3).

### Intervention Content

#### Intervention Aims

Although many studies included a broad definition of diversity and culture, other trainings specifically targeted concerns related to race (e.g., Tanghe, 2016), body size (Tingstrom & Nagel, 2017), sexual and gender diversity (e.g., Elsbree & Wong, 2007), disability status (Stamopoulos, 2006), and English language learners (e.g., Torok & Aguilar, 2000).

**Table 2.** Article Coding for the Present Review

| Variable             | Article Coding  |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
|                      | Definition  | Possible Codes  |
| Design*              | Scientific design (coded for most rigorous design feature)                            | Correlational, experimental, pre-post, qualitative, and quasi-experimental  |
| Setting*             | Where the research was conducted  | University classroom or field (i.e., school, or related setting)  |
| Purpose              | The explicit purpose of the study   | Recorded from the manuscript  |
| Target               | The specific target of the training related to student demographics                   | Culture, disability status, immigration status, language, sexuality, race, etc.   |
| Training type        | How the researchers defined their training  | Diversity training, cultural competence, cultural immersion, field placement, multicultural education, service learning, etc. |
| Training description | Description of the training evaluated in the study                                    | Recorded from the manuscript  |
| Mode                 | How the training was implemented  | Online, in-person, or both  |
| Duration             | How long the training lasted  | Ranged from 1 hour to multiple years  |
| Selection            | How participants were selected to receive the training                                | Mandatory, voluntary, or unknown  |
| Sample*              | Training participants   | Preservice, in-service, or both   |
| N*                   | Sample size (accounting for attrition)  | Ranged from 1 to 2,746 participants   |
| Measure*             | Primary kind of outcome assessed  | Attitudes, behavior, knowledge, or qualitative  |
| Self-report*         | Whether the study only included measures self-reported by participants                | Yes or no   |
| Follow-up*           | The amount of time, in days, between intervention and the last evaluation of outcomes | Ranged from 0 to 2,920 days   |
| Outcomes             | A list of the outcomes evaluated in the study   | Recorded from the manuscript  |
| Results              | The obtained findings from the study  | Recorded from the manuscript  |

\*Indicates that the variable was coded by two independent researchers and assessed for interrater agreement.

### Intervention Approach

Much of the literature on DT for educators included general trainings aimed at increasing awareness of bias and learning about culturally responsive practices. For example, trainings were aimed at raising awareness about how diversity and culture are relevant to educational outcomes (Acquah et al., 2020), learning about students from diverse backgrounds (Pohan et al., 2009), and understanding the influence of biases among teachers (Nganga, 2020).

In contrast to more knowledge-based trainings, a smaller number of trainings enabled teachers to practice

**Table 3.** Summary of the DT Literature for Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

| Methodological Features of Included Studies                  | Percent of Sample | Number of Studies |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Research Participants  |                   |                   |
| Preservice teachers  | 79.04%            | <i>n</i> = 181    |
| In-service teachers  | 17.90%            | <i>n</i> = 41     |
| Pre- and in-service teachers                                 | 3.06%             | <i>n</i> = 7      |
| Sample sizes   |                   |                   |
| 0-49 participants  | 62.01%            | <i>n</i> = 142    |
| 49-99 participants   | 18.78%            | <i>n</i> = 43     |
| 100-499 participants   | 16.59%            | <i>n</i> = 38     |
| 500+ participants  | 2.62%             | <i>n</i> = 6      |
| Intervention Setting   |                   |                   |
| University class   | 83.41%            | <i>n</i> = 191    |
| Field setting  | 16.59%            | <i>n</i> = 38     |
| Research design  |                   |                   |
| Qualitative  | 58.52%            | <i>n</i> = 134    |
| Prepost  | 23.58%            | <i>n</i> = 54     |
| Correlational  | 7.86%             | <i>n</i> = 18     |
| Quasi-experimental   | 7.42%             | <i>n</i> = 17     |
| Experimental   | 2.62%             | <i>n</i> = 6      |
| Outcomes of interest   |                   |                   |
| Qualitative  | 58.07%            | <i>n</i> = 133    |
| Attitudes  | 31.88%            | <i>n</i> = 73     |
| Knowledge  | 5.68%             | <i>n</i> = 13     |
| Behavior   | 4.37%             | <i>n</i> = 10     |
| Kind of outcome  |                   |                   |
| Self-reported  | 96.07%            | <i>n</i> = 220    |
| Immediately collected after DT (i.e., no delayed assessment) | 86.90%            | <i>n</i> = 199    |

more culturally relevant pedagogy (Bravo et al., 2014), gain skills for interacting with and engaging diverse learners (Shultz, 2020), and incorporate culturally valid classroom assessment procedures (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2017). These trainings were directed at addressing biases and promoting inclusive practices relevant to a variety of minoritized identities.

## Intervention Participants and Context

### Participants

Studies included in the review examined DT primarily for preservice teachers (*n* = 181; 79.04%), in-service teachers (*n* = 41; 17.90%), or both (*n* = 7; 3.06%). Studies had variable sample sizes, ranging from 1 to 2,746 participants, with a median of 33 (*M* = 99.79, *SD* = 300.33).

### University Classroom Settings

Consistent with a greater emphasis on preservice teachers, researchers most frequently conducted DT within a university classroom context (*n* = 191; 83.41%). Diversity-related content was most frequently infused in courses on sexual education (Gursimsek, 2010), family and community involvement in education (e.g., Waddell, 2013), English as a second language (He, 2013), multicultural education (e.g., Acquah & Commings, 2013), and foundations of education (e.g., Frederick et al., 2010). Much of

this coursework included opportunities for more active learning via student teaching, tutoring, or visiting schools during study abroad programs (e.g., Oh & Nussli, 2021), as well as service-learning opportunities (e.g., Connor, 2010), and required practicum (e.g., Bravo et al., 2014).

### Field Settings

A smaller number of studies were conducted in the field (*n* = 38; 16.59%), which were more variable in terms of their intervention approach. For example, Johnson et al. (2021) developed and evaluated a scaffolded teacher study group, which examined African American history for social studies and English language arts educators. To address the underachievement of Latino/Latina children, another school implemented a cultural competence professional development series, which emphasized the importance of partnering with families (Colombo, 2007). In addition, Nicholson et al. (2007) created a 5-day workshop for middle school teachers that combined both diversity and technology training to pique the interest of underrepresented students in the information technology field.

## Research Designs

### Qualitative Methods

The majority of studies included took a qualitative approach to examine the impact of DT (*n* = 134; 58.52%). This was accomplished by descriptively analyzing data collected via semi-structured interviews (e.g., Yuan, 2018), focus groups (e.g., Padua & Gonzalez Smith, 2020), course discussions (e.g., Malewski et al., 2012), student journals (e.g., Brown, 2004), and reflective papers (e.g., Landa & Stephens, 2017). Approaches for analyzing qualitative data included coding for emerging themes using open and axial coding (Kim & Choi, 2020), constant comparative method (Athanasios et al., 2012), and multiple case study analysis (Parkhouse et al., 2016).

### Quantitative Methods

Other studies examined the utility of diversity-related programming via correlational designs (*n* = 18; 7.86%). These studies found a positive correlation between the amount of DT a teacher received and their attitudes toward sexual diversity (Richard, 2015), their self-reported cultural competence (DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008), and their attitudes toward students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Flores & Smith, 2009).

Of the studies that delivered and quantitatively evaluated DT for pre- and in-service teachers, most (*n* = 54; 23.58%) used a pre- and post-test design. These studies

frequently had preservice teachers complete self-report measures on the first and last day of the semester in a course with diversity-related content (e.g., Szabo & Anderson, 2009). Studies also used a quasi-experimental design ( $n = 17$ ; 7.42%), which compared groups of preservice teachers with differing amounts of practicum experience (Wiggins et al., 2007) and different sections of a course who received and did not receive diversity-related content (e.g., Chatters & Zalaquett, 2018). Finally, a minority of studies used an experimental approach to investigate the effects of DT for educators ( $n = 6$ ; 2.62%). For example, Whitford and Emerson (2019) found reduced anti-Black implicit bias among preservice teachers randomly assigned to complete a perspective-taking intervention relative to those in a control group.

### Outcomes of Interest

Researchers' primary outcomes of interest were most often qualitative ( $n = 133$ ; 58.07%), followed by quantitative measures of pre- and in-service teachers' attitudes ( $n = 73$ ; 31.88%), knowledge ( $n = 13$ ; 5.68%), and behavior ( $n = 10$ ; 4.37%).

### Data Collection

The majority of studies evaluated outcomes only immediately following the provision of DT ( $n = 199$ ; 86.90%). Studies that used delayed assessment ranged from one week (Dotger, 2010) to eight years (Oh & Nussli, 2021) following the DT. Several studies provided persuasive evidence of the long-term impact of a training. For example, Nicholson et al. (2007) found that in-service teachers' increased commitment toward promoting the interest of underrepresented groups in information technology fields persisted when evaluated at the end of the academic year.

### Self-Reported Outcomes

Most studies included in the review relied exclusively on self-report measures ( $n = 220$ ; 96.07%). Frequently used attitudinal measures included the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (e.g., Akiba, 2011), Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scale (e.g., Middleton, 2002), and the Intercultural Development Inventory (e.g., DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008). In completing these scales, educators rated the extent to which they were aware of cultural differences in the classroom, whether they adapted their teaching practices to accommodate the needs of students, and their endorsement of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Other studies examined educators' beliefs in their ability to effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds using the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self Efficacy

Scale (e.g., Frye et al., 2010), the Teacher Efficacy in Engaging Families Scale (e.g., Amatea et al., 2012), and the Teacher Efficacy Scale (e.g., Kyles & Olafson, 2008). Some studies used self-report scales that required teachers to self-report knowledge of diversity-related content following a DT. This included their knowledge of multicultural education (Acquah & Commins, 2013), their self-reported affective learning (Simonds et al., 2008), and their knowledge of cultural diversity (Brown, 2004).

### Direct Outcomes

A minority of studies examined measures that did not rely on participants' self-report ( $n = 9$ ; 3.93%). These studies examined teachers' ability to correctly identify instances of racial discrimination (e.g., Holmes et al., 2019) by assessing preservice teachers' responses to fictitious student files (e.g., Dotger, 2010), and their use of effective teaching practices during teaching observations (e.g., Bravo et al., 2014). No studies examined student-centered outcomes—such as students' perceptions of belonging, classroom climate, or their relationship with their teacher—to assess the effectiveness of diversity-related initiatives.

### Research Findings

#### Supportive Findings

Most studies presented evidence in favor of the utility of DT for both pre- and in-service teachers. Specifically, analyses of open-ended responses in qualitative studies reviewed suggest that diversity-related experiences and content were related to preservice teachers' ability to challenge stereotypical beliefs (Cooper, 2007), perceptions of students from multicultural backgrounds (Almarza, 2005), and their understanding of the ways in which culture influences teaching and learning (Hare Landa et al., 2017). Correlational studies revealed that in-service teachers who studied abroad during their education had greater self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms (Mo et al., 2021), and in-service teachers who experienced professional development in multicultural education had more positive perceptions of school climate (Choi & Lee, 2020).

Studies that compared responses prior to and following diversity-related coursework found that preservice teachers conceptualized students' problems in less blaming terms (Amatea et al., 2012), increased their willingness to work in diverse communities (Fitchett et al., 2012), and enhanced their self-reported cultural competence (He, 2013). Researchers that employed a quasi-experimental design found that education students who completed a bullying prevention and prejudice reduction training as



part of their coursework had more favorable attitudes toward members of minoritized groups than students without such training, and these gains were sustained when evaluated two months later (Chatters & Zalaquett, 2018). Experimental research also provided evidence for the benefits of DT on preservice teachers' use of culturally responsive teaching practices, relative to those in the control group (Bravo et al., 2014).

### **Null Findings**

Some studies found null results when examining the influence of DT on the attitudes of both pre- and in-service teachers. For example, Holmes et al. (2019) found that participants who completed a diversity-related program did not demonstrate more ethical sensitivity compared to those in an active control group. Contrary to hypothesis, Baadte (2020) found that teachers who underwent a training intended to reduce stereotyping did not evaluate minoritized students more favorably than those who did not receive the training.

### **Mixed Findings**

Finally, some studies revealed a more complicated pattern of results, which suggests the importance of examining moderating factors when evaluating DT for educators. For instance, Cicchelli and Cho (2007) found that a multicultural teacher education course and service-learning experience improved White preservice teachers' multicultural attitudes but did not influence the attitudes of preservice teachers of color. Conversely, Kyles and Olafson (2008) found that in-service teachers with monocultural schooling and life experiences demonstrated less growth during an urban school field placement than those with more multicultural experiences.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Review of the Research Findings**

In what follows, we note general patterns that emerged in the literature on DT for educators; however, these represent generalizations and readers should note important exceptions to these trends included in our description of the results. Throughout our scoping review, we found that studies most often evaluated DT broadly aimed at educating preservice teachers about cultural diversity within a university setting. Diversity-related content was typically delivered via traditional coursework, including lectures, readings, assignments, and small group discussions. However, instructional practices also included experiential activities, service learning, and cultural immersion, which provided preservice teachers an opportunity to gain

embodied knowledge and tangible skills relevant to working with students from diverse backgrounds.

Regarding evaluation, most studies qualitatively assessed preservice teachers' learning and reactions to diversity-related content via semi-structured interviews, written reflections, and focus groups. Researchers who implemented quantitative measures mostly used a preposttest approach, in which preservice teachers' diversity-related attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge were assessed on the first and last day of the course. Most studies reported supportive findings regarding the impact of DT on preservice teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and perceived preparation relevant to engaging in egalitarian instructional practices.

### **A Roadmap for School Psychologists**

Given that this review of the literature revealed a reliance on preservice teacher samples, it is not clear the extent to which in-service teachers have exposure to diversity-related training upon entering the profession. If educators are primarily receiving instruction in culturally responsive practices during their preservice training, then in-service teachers will likely have vastly different degrees of competence in working with learners from culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, absent the classroom context, many preservice teachers may struggle to apply DT lessons in their teaching, which could create barriers to the sustainability of effects.

In considering suggested next steps, it has become clear that the field of school psychology could deeply contribute to the understanding of DT for teachers. In what follows, we advance some future directions for the development, implementation, and evaluation of DT based on gaps identified in the available literature. Although there is a great deal left to learn about best practices in DT, there remains a number of exemplary studies, programs of research, and theories from which to draw upon in considering potential next steps for school psychologists interested in crafting an improved science and practice of DT in school settings

### **The Development of DT for School Settings**

Throughout our review of the literature, we found that a majority of studies were conducted within a university classroom setting with preservice teachers. Such a finding likely reflects that most included studies were conducted by researchers involved in teacher education and students within their courses represent an easily accessible research participant pool. However, the use of undergraduate student samples may considerably limit the utility of the literature on DT for a general teacher education audience as

a function of sample demographics (Henrich et al., 2010) and teaching experience.

Given that DT is most often implemented during teacher preparation, instructional strategies may lack applicability to a particular school setting. To address this, many scholars have recommended taking a problem-based approach to the development, implementation, and evaluation of diversity-related content (e.g., Campbell & Brauer, 2020; Carter et al., 2020). Such an approach necessitates the tailoring of DT content to better address barriers to inclusion identified during data collection within that context. In so doing, practitioners avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and can prioritize DT content that is relevant to the population served. School psychologists represent ideal interventionists for DT in school settings because they can provide structure to DT content due to their understanding of the challenges faced by a school district regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Given their training in data-based decision making and embodied understanding of school climate, school psychologists are prepared to address these challenges in the development of DT for teachers and related school personnel (Fallon et al., 2021; Garro et al., 2021).

Many studies evaluating DT for teachers are not clear regarding the extent to which instructional content, strategies, and implementation are informed by the available evidence base. Although the DT literature for educators is wanting, it does provide some guidance for how to craft empirically-based programming that addresses specific concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. The social psychological literature, for example, is ripe with empirically based methods for reducing prejudice, including taking the perspective of discriminated others (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000), creating structured experiences for positive intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), and communicating pro-diversity social norms (Murrar et al., 2020). Research also suggests the long-term effectiveness of scaling up bias reduction strategies into a diversity training program for mitigating bias (Devine et al., 2012), promoting more inclusive behaviors (Forscher et al., 2017), and improving organizational climate (Carnes et al., 2015).

School psychologists are trained to refer to the empirical literature and rely on evidence-based practices when working with children and youth. The field continues to develop a burgeoning evidence base for practices designed to promote more equitable outcomes among students. For example, schools with a substantial cultural mismatch between teachers and the children, youth, and families served may benefit from utilizing family-school partnerships to inform their understanding of student culture, facilitate collaborative teacher-parent relationships, and

improve the fit between home and school contexts (Colombo, 2007; Garbacz, 2019). Disparities in students' academic achievement may signal the need to target teachers' biases in student evaluation (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007) by training teachers to create and use more objective grading rubrics (Quinn, 2020). Schools that demonstrate disparities in indicators of student belonging may implement programs aimed at community building, including greeting students regularly (Cook et al., 2018) and cooperative learning activities, like jigsaw classrooms (Aronson & Patnoe, 2011).

### ***The Implementation of DT in School Settings***

There are also concerns regarding the sustainability, effectiveness, and durability of intervention effects when DT is delivered over the course of a single session or semester. Although more research is needed regarding the appropriate dosage of DT necessary to yield beneficial effects, research suggests that a one-and-done approach may not be sufficient to address complex concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Devine & Ash, 2022). Given that most studies that evaluated DT for teachers did so over the course of a single semester of diversity-related content, it is not clear the extent to which teachers are receiving ongoing education that is meaningfully embedded in their teacher preparation and professional development.

Scholars suggest that DT should be implemented as part of a comprehensive plan that includes continuing professional development, policy reform, and top-down support from school leadership (Carter et al., 2020; Devine & Ash, 2022). School psychologists can be instrumental in this process through ongoing consultation, technical support, and coaching in more equitable practices over time (Fallon et al., 2021). In support of this, DT-related consultation by school psychologists has been shown to be an effective means for creating sustainable and systemic changes (Gregory et al., 2016), and is associated with the promotion of more equitable teaching practices (Gion et al., 2022; McKenney et al., 2017).

However, effective interventionists also need to contend with their own biases prior to implementing diversity initiatives. School psychologists are not immune to internalized racism; we cannot expect to meaningfully lead teachers in bias reduction without first putting in the work to confront bias within ourselves. We must reckon with and challenge the ways in which norms within the field may uphold social constructions of power that serve to disadvantage those from minoritized groups (McKenney, 2022). To be successful agents of change, DT organizers, facilitators, and leaders must acknowledge their own

vulnerability to bias, continually modify their understanding of diversity-related concepts, and effectively model antiracist and culturally responsive action.

One of the inherent challenges of delivering DT is addressing, and subsequently overcoming, participant resistance (Carter et al., 2020). Many studies in the literature on educators reported concerns regarding participants' willingness to engage with diversity-related content (e.g., Grant et al., 2018), which presents a challenge to practitioners seeking to use DT as a tool to promote more equitable outcomes among students. To truly promote social justice, school psychologists will need to be prepared to redistribute unearned power and dismantle systems that uphold White supremacy. Beyond addressing their own participation in inequity, school psychologists should be prepared to effectively manage resistance and discomfort that may arise among those learning about White privilege (Gorski & Erakat, 2019). Fortunately, school psychologists are familiar with challenges associated with teachers' reactance in consulting relationships and are trained in persuasion and motivational interviewing techniques to work with reluctant teachers (Eckert et al., 2014; Gonzalez et al., 2004). Such skills may prove fruitful when engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in school settings (Darensbourg et al., 2010; Venner & Verney, 2015).

### **The Evaluation of DT in School Settings**

Our review of the literature revealed a lack of rigorous methodology when evaluating the effectiveness of DT for educators (Rao, 2005). For example, the vast majority of studies evaluated outcomes immediately following the provision of diversity-related content. Without engaging in delayed follow-up assessment, researchers are unable to understand the durability of intervention effects and the extent to which DT among teachers is affecting their classroom practices longitudinally.

Further, there was a great deal of homogeneity evident in the literature on DT for teachers, which can constrain new theoretical and methodological developments. For example, most studies included in the review used qualitative designs with teacher participants. To strengthen the available evidence base, future researchers should engage in mixed methodology with student participants, which can provide causal evidence regarding the benefits of DT for students while capturing a more comprehensive picture of their experiences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Such work is imperative, because qualitative research affords the opportunity to center the perspectives of participants from diverse backgrounds (Smythe & Murray, 2000), who are often neglected in research (Boden-Albala, 2022).

Future researchers conducting qualitative work could further improve their studies through trustworthiness procedures, such as those outlined by Amankwaa (2016).

In addition, our findings were consistent with other reviews of the literature on DT (e.g., Devine & Ash, 2022), which suggest a reliance on immediately collected, self-report, and attitudinal measures. Although the use of these outcomes can provide an important first step in validating a particular DT approach, they are insufficient for assessing whether a DT is effective. It is not clear the extent to which teachers' self-reported cultural competence, self-efficacy, and knowledge of diversity-related topics are associated with more equitable teacher practices. Research has found a substantial disconnect between participants' self-reported attitudes and their actual behaviors (Paluck et al., 2021), which suggests that utilizing teachers' attitudes as evidence of improvement following DT is likely imprudent.

Instead, these trainings must be evaluated with respect to the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals that guide implementation (Devine & Ash, 2022). Future researchers should center the perspectives of minoritized students by examining outcomes related to the extent to which minoritized students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported by their teachers as a function of DT. This can be accomplished by measuring aspects of student belonging, cultural acceptance, and student-teacher relationships as a function of DT implementation.

To evaluate whether school-based diversity-initiatives are promoting more equitable outcomes among students, researchers and practicing school psychologists should increase their use of behavior-based measures when evaluating the success of their trainings (Barclay et al., 2022). For example, DT studies that did not rely on self-report examined teachers' practices via responses to diversity-related student scenarios (e.g., Turnšek, 2013) and structured classroom observations (Bravo et al., 2014). Other researchers have examined how disparities in student outcomes may vary as a function of DT (McIntosh et al., 2021; Okonofua et al., 2022). Although such assessments represent a huge undertaking, school psychologists have the prerequisite skills (e.g., student assessment, behavioral observation, and school-wide monitoring) to assess whether a DT is promoting better outcomes for minoritized students.

### **DT in School Psychology Practice**

In an effort to make tangible our suggestions for school psychologists, we turn to the approach of McIntosh and colleagues, which actualizes many of our recommendations

for the design, implementation, and evaluation of DT in school settings. Our intention in describing this approach is not to prescribe a specific intervention, but rather to reference a successful program of research to provide an example for how school psychologists could better incorporate DT into service delivery.

McIntosh and colleagues designed ReACT (Racial equity through Assessing data for vulnerable decision points, Culturally responsive behavior strategies, and Teaching about implicit bias and how to neutralize it) with a problem-solving approach to ameliorate disparities in disciplinary outcomes. ReACT is necessarily data-driven and context-specific; staff are guided to investigate their data to identify and understand the factors surrounding disproportionality in disciplinary outcomes within their school. Specifically, this analysis is deployed to identify vulnerable decision points (VPDs; Smolkowski et al., 2016), or the conditions in which school staff may be particularly vulnerable to the expression of bias in their interactions with students. For example, research suggests that teachers may be more susceptible to bias when cognitive resources are limited (McIntosh et al., 2014).

Once VPDs are identified, the intervention includes a year-long school-wide professional development series that is theoretically grounded and tailored to address school-relevant concerns (McIntosh et al., 2021). The training provides school staff with psychoeducation on the development, manifestation, and consequences of biases to foster awareness and motivate engagement. Next, school staff are equipped with culturally responsive strategies for promoting more equitable instructional practices including building more positive teacher-student relationships (Cook et al., 2018), bridging home and school behavioral expectations (Levenson et al., 2021), and neutralizing biased decision-making (McIntosh et al., 2014).

Importantly, ReACT is implemented within a multitiered system of support (MTSS), which has been championed as a framework for fostering greater equity in school settings (Malone et al., 2022). Embedding this professional development series within existing school-wide infrastructure allows interventionists to garner buy-in, improve treatment integrity, and augment sustainability (McIntosh et al., 2021). By supplementing existing systems to include an equity-focus, school psychologists engaging in this work can reduce response cost, preserve precious resources, and prioritize efficiency.

In documenting the success for this approach, McIntosh and colleagues have adhered to strong research standards including randomized controlled trials (2021) and delayed follow-up over time (2018). In addition, researchers have gathered both quantitative and qualitative research

findings to demonstrate the intervention's effectiveness and modify the intervention iteratively over time based on user feedback. Researchers using quantitative outcomes to evaluate ReACT have emphasized observable, student-centered, and consequential outcomes; ReACT has been found to reduce racial disparities in disciplinary outcomes (McIntosh et al., 2021). Qualitative findings suggest that the intervention was usable, acceptable, and feasible for teachers to implement within their classroom (Bastable et al., 2019).

### The Opportunity for School Psychology

McIntosh and colleagues' work is made possible by the multidisciplinary collaboration of researchers, practitioners, educators, and administrators within the field. Such partnerships are necessary to craft effective diversity-related programming aimed at promoting greater equity among students. This case example makes clear the ways in which school psychologists can apply their knowledge and skills within multidisciplinary teams to best meet the needs of students and families from diverse backgrounds. Further, involving school psychologists in the delivery of DT for teachers aligns well with the National Association of School Psychologists' 2020 Domains of Practice. Specifically, DT can be developed, adapted, and evaluated via data-based decision-making in collaboration with school administrators, teachers, and relevant stakeholders. DT can inform supports relevant to students' academic success, social-emotional well-being, and behavioral health.

The integration of DT into school settings, and the provision of DT as part of our roles as school psychologists, is not without precedence. Our suggestions to school psychologists to bolster teachers' capacity for more equitable instructional practices are guided by colleagues who have been instrumental in supporting antiracist and culturally responsive practice in school psychology (e.g., Blake et al., 2016; Grapin, 2017; Proctor & Romano, 2016). Such advocacy has sparked motivation to engage in social justice efforts and provided the groundwork for incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into the roles, ethics, and practice of school psychologists.

The increasing awareness of inequities and motivation to address bias within our field is encouraging and represents important first steps in bias reduction (Devine et al., 2012). In the wake of the racial reckoning of 2020 and amid calls to engage in antiracist efforts (García-Vázquez et al., 2020), school psychologists are increasingly rallying around the need to disrupt racist practices and promote cultural responsiveness in school settings. Despite

limitations in the literature, we remain optimistic about the potential for the field to promote greater equity in student outcomes and believe that DT represents a potentially fruitful avenue to effect change.

### Limitations of the Review

The results, conclusions, and recommendations advanced in this review should be considered alongside limitations. Specifically, this review represents a scoping approach, which cannot answer questions regarding the effectiveness of DT for educators (Munn et al., 2018); therefore, future research is needed to illuminate best practices in the field of DT for educators. Such research can inform more nuanced questions regarding DT practice, like how DT may need to be adapted as a function of teacher demographics, school locale, and student characteristics.

In conducting a scoping review, our findings did not include a risk of bias assessment, which is important for judging the integrity of a particular body of literature. In addition, our review did not survey any gray, or unpublished, literature (i.e., theses and dissertations), which would have enabled a fuller synthesis of the available literature and reduced the risk of publication bias (Conn et al., 2003).

This review of the literature also suggests a nebulous and sweeping definition of DT for educators. Although this finding is, in part, an artifact of the search strategy implemented, it is apparent that DT can represent a wide range of practices and there is little consensus in the literature regarding best practices. Moving forward, researchers should aim to articulate the goals, content, and theoretical mechanisms of change more clearly in the literature on DT. For example, throughout our review we collapsed across both antiracist and culturally responsive practice to evaluate the available literature on teacher training in more equitable and inclusive instructional practices. Future researchers may consider the extent to which training in antiracist and culturally responsive practices meaningfully overlap and diverge within the literature.

### CONCLUSION

Despite the potential for DT with educators to improve the experiences of minoritized students in school, our review revealed that the literature on DT practices for both pre- and in-service teachers demonstrates an overreliance on preservice teacher samples, university settings, self-report measures, and immediate follow-up. Given these limitations, conclusions regarding DT best practices for educators cannot be made at this time. To address the limitations of the literature, we advocated for the potential for

school psychologists to use school-wide data to inform the development of diversity-related programming, reference evidence-based practices to create DT, embed diversity-related programming in existing school structures, and evaluate the effectiveness of these trainings in reference to meaningful student outcomes.

Our study adds to the literature by summarizing relevant scholarship, noting potential future directions, and highlighting the opportunity for school psychologists to contribute meaningfully to the research and practice of DT in school settings. In an effort to improve the science and practice of DT in school settings, we have provided a roadmap to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective DT for educators. By advancing these recommendations, we aim to ensure that teachers feel better equipped to provide antiracist and culturally responsive instruction so that minoritized students feel better supported, respected, and valued in their classrooms.

### NOTE

1. The link to our Open Science Framework page: [https://osf.io/x73wb/?view\\_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35](https://osf.io/x73wb/?view_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35)

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### OPEN SCHOLARSHIP

This article has earned the [Center for Open Science](#) badges for Open Data and Open Materials through Open Practices Disclosure. The data and materials are openly accessible at [https://osf.io/x73wb/?view\\_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35](https://osf.io/x73wb/?view_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35). To obtain the author's disclosure form, please contact the Editor.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of the study are openly available in Open Science Framework at [https://osf.io/x73wb/?view\\_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35](https://osf.io/x73wb/?view_only=481b2567721c44279ac5da3d22dde35).

### DISCLOSURE

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