

AN ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH TO DIVERSITY TRAINING

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Diversity training is situated in a cultural context characterized by sociopolitical polarization, complex and fluid social identities, social movements, and debates over its appropriateness. Yet, we lack theories on the drivers of diversity learning and transfer that consider both unique workforce composition characteristics and contextual changes. Diversity training researchers have focused primarily on static aspects of training design and content while largely ignoring the role of the learner. Because these oversights have fueled persistent questions about the effectiveness of diversity training, we offer a learner-centric, process-based model of diversity training that acknowledges the broader context in which it is situated and its influence on trainee motivation, learning, and transfer. We consider the interplay among the design factors, learning context, and learner characteristics in the pre-training, training, and post-training environments, and explore the self-regulatory mechanisms through which trainees can guide their learning. We close by discussing how our process model of diversity training changes our understanding of past research and redirects future research, and we apply the model to several prototypical diversity learner personas to demonstrate how it can be used in practice to personalize diversity training and address barriers to its effectiveness.

Because diversity initiatives are a widespread feature of current organizations, diversity training has emerged as a foundational component of such efforts. Almost all Fortune 500 companies and half of all U.S. mid-sized companies offer diversity training to their employees (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018), approximately an 8 billion USD business annually (Kirkland & Bohnet, 2017). This saturation of diversity training has occurred gradually, as corporations, military sectors, and higher education institutions within the United States have been conducting some form of diversity training since the 1960s. Originally developed to address workplace discrimination in response to equal opportunity legislation, diversity training became a tool for imparting knowledge of the law and company policies while also protecting against civil rights lawsuits (Anand & Winters, 2008). In response to demographic changes in the workforce and, subsequently, a need for increased learning about and sensitivity toward such differences in the workplace (Paluck, 2006), diversity training has shifted toward assimilating women and

underrepresented groups into corporate cultures, reducing prejudice, and facilitating positive intergroup interactions at work (Pendry, Driscoll & Field, 2007). Diversity training has also come to be viewed as a business imperative—specifically, building skills and competencies that enable employees to value and use differences for improved decision-making to fuel business growth, profitability, and success (Anand & Winters, 2008). More recently, as organizations' diversity agendas have grown to incorporate an emphasis on inclusion, as opposed to just representation (see Nkomo, Bell, Roberts, Joshi, & Thatcher, 2019), diversity training has increasingly focused on behaviors to inhibit workplace exclusion and facilitate a sense of belonging across all employee groups.

As the purpose and intended outcomes of diversity training have evolved over time, the context in which such training is situated has changed as well. For example, while diversity initiatives originated from antidiscrimination legislation within the United States and have primarily focused on the

social categories of gender and race, current workforces are characterized by a broader range of identities, including gender identity, country of origin, sexual orientation, religion, and generation. Further, as the representation of individual identity has become more complex and fluid, greater attention has been given to how aspects of such identities combine and interact to create and reinforce systems of privilege and disadvantage (Nkomo et al., 2019). At the same time, greater sociopolitical polarization has ensued as groups debate issues of representation, power, and status within society. Overt negative attitudes and backlash against others based on social group memberships have rematerialized, spurring an increase in regressive policies and hate crimes (Konrad, 2018; Ng & Stamper, 2018). There has also been an increase in social movements, such as MeToo and Black Lives Matter, to address hostile, offensive, oppressive, or violent actions against members of specific groups (Nkomo et al., 2019).

The science and practice of diversity training have not kept pace with these contextual shifts. The findings of research on diversity training effectiveness across organizations varying in size, age, and industry have revealed the vulnerabilities of this training, which include defensiveness, blowback, and lack of behavioral change (Chang et al., 2019; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). These outcomes, as well as debates over the general appropriateness of diversity training, have elicited harsh criticism of and resistance to diversity and inclusion training efforts, including an executive order that barred federal agencies and contractors in the United States from engaging in related training (Fix, 2021). Although context should influence theory development, progression in diversity training research and theory has stagnated in recent years, fueling persistent questions from scholars and practitioners alike regarding its overall effectiveness. Thus, a limited understanding of how to address both the unique characteristics of organizational workforces and the distinctive challenges that surround diversity training creates a need for stronger theorizing on the processes that drive diversity learning and transfer in these unique training contexts.

We offer a process-based model of diversity training that acknowledges the broader context in which it is situated and its influence on trainee motivation, learning, and transfer. Despite advances in the science of training (see Bell, Tannenbaum, Ford, Noe, & Kraiger, 2017; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012), which have highlighted the importance of what

happens before, during, and after the training event to training effectiveness, consequential insights have remained largely siloed from the diversity training literature. As a result, our understanding of diversity training effectiveness has been limited to the training event itself, focusing on static aspects of training design and content. Further, with an emphasis on program design in terms of activities and other delivery decisions to achieve training objectives, the role of the learner has been relatively ignored within the diversity training literature. At the same time, because the training literature has rarely examined strategies for learning and training in the context of diversity training, these literatures have evolved relatively independently. Therefore, we bridge these bodies of literature to inform and advance our existing knowledge base regarding how diversity training can be a useful lever for enhancing individual capabilities for interacting with others in diverse work environments, and for creating and maintaining more inclusive organizational cultures.

We begin by appraising current perspectives on diversity training and highlighting prevailing limitations to the study of the topic. We then introduce a process model of diversity training that articulates how design factors interact with learner characteristics in the pre-training, training, and post-training environments to influence effectiveness. Acknowledging that the challenges of diversity training primarily center on getting employees to participate in, learn from, and apply such learning, we draw on active learning theory and consider the self-regulatory processes critical at each stage of the training process to the development and transfer of diversity competencies and skills. As a result, we offer a more learner-centric and adaptive perspective on diversity training that articulates how greater personalization may be leveraged to improve its utility. We conclude by discussing how our process model of diversity training changes our understanding of past research and redirects future research, and we apply the model to several prototypical diversity learner personas to highlight how it might be used in practice to address common barriers to diversity training effectiveness.

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY TRAINING

Diversity training researchers have primarily sought to understand its effectiveness by focusing on training design or features related to diversity content and coordination (Roberson, Kulik, & Tan, 2013).

For example, based on meta-analytic evidence of stronger effects for diversity training of longer duration, with distributed spacing and interdependent training tasks, researchers have concluded that greater learning occurs within designs that offer multiple, interactive routes for learning (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry, & Jehn, 2016; Kalinoski, Steele-Johnson, Peyton, Leas, Steinke, & Bowling, 2013). Similarly, because larger effect sizes for diversity training are found in designs that include active forms of instruction (Kalinoski et al., 2013), learning is presumed to occur through experiential approaches that allow trainees to immerse themselves in learning experiences to better understand their own diversity behavior (Paluck, 2006; Raelin, 1997). Research has also highlighted the importance of mastery experiences, such as behavioral scripts and video examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, for enhancing trainees' confidence in their abilities to engage in diversity-related interactions (see Avery, Richeson, Hebl, & Ambady, 2009; Combs & Luthans, 2007). It has been argued that because such diversity training designs activate trainee self-efficacy and other aspects of self-concept that enhance diversity learning and transfer, more positive training outcomes are likely to occur (Combs & Griffith, 2007).

While diversity training research has suggested the choices and activities in which individuals engage during training influence learning outcomes (Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O'Brien, & McGuire, 2016), it has also revealed that training designs can have unintended—specifically, negative—consequences. For example, Robb and Doverspike (2001) found backfire effects of sexual harassment training such that men with a greater inclination for harassment experienced more deleterious attitudes after completing the training. Likewise, in a study of a cultural awareness program delivered in a correctional setting, the results showed that inmates developed a heightened awareness of differences between racial and ethnic groups, as well as a greater desire to be around their own racial or ethnic ingroups post-training (Baba & Hebert, 2005). As other diversity training studies have revealed differences in learning outcomes based on interactions between training design and trainee characteristics, such as demographic characteristics and pre-training attitudes (see Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004), researchers have postulated that a primary focus on the design features of diversity training may be insufficient for engendering behavior change. Instead, they have argued for process approaches to diversity training that also account for pre- and

post-training factors to better understand when and how positive changes in trainees' learning outcomes occur.

Assessments of trainee readiness have been relatively absent from the diversity training literature, as training content tends to be uniformly designed for and delivered across employees of organizations regardless of their specific needs (Chrobot-Mason & Quiñones, 2002). However, a few studies have provided evidence that the incorporation of trainee characteristics into diversity training models can influence training effectiveness. For example, in a study of diversity training attraction across two organizational contexts, Kulik, Perry, Roberson, and Parker (2007) found that trainees' competence levels prior to the training positively affected their interest in additional training and the likelihood of attending a voluntary training session. Relatedly, the results of a study of diversity training group composition revealed that trainee reactions to training design were influenced by the extent of their prior experience with training on diversity issues (Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2001). Because research has also highlighted the potential impact of factors related to trainee interest and motivation on learning and transfer (see Kalinoski et al., 2013; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2003, 2009), the development of diversity training theory is needed that moves beyond trainees' fit to the learning environment and accounts for variability in who they are, what training they need, and how they react to training.

Post-training factors that influence learning transfer have also gone largely unobserved within the diversity training literature. One exception, by Roberson and colleagues (2009), examined trainees' use of various cognitive and behavioral transfer strategies following diversity training, and showed skill-based learning to be a significant predictor of transfer. The findings also suggested the supportiveness of work unit transfer climate to be influential to trainees' use of transfer strategies. Yet, as other studies have shown contrary results regarding the effects of work environments on diversity training transfer (see Hanover & Cellar, 1998), greater consideration of mechanisms that stimulate (or deter) the application and adaptation of diversity learning to the job is warranted. Accordingly, we reconceptualize diversity training using a "person by design by environment" lens (see Baldwin & Ford, 1988) to capture and understand the relationships among various factors that affect positive transfer of such training.

Conceptualizing diversity training as a system, we introduce a more unified, learner-centric and

dynamic approach to the study of diversity training. We assume that training effectiveness is dependent upon the interplay between different aspects of the learning environment and learners, who are active participants in learning processes and have different starting points. Consistent with research suggesting that training effectiveness is enhanced when learners have opportunities to initiate and guide their own activities and efforts to develop new knowledge and skills (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009), we examine the self-regulatory processes that characterize how people direct their efforts before, during and after diversity training. We draw upon the Adaptive Learning System (ALS) training framework developed by Kozlowski, Toney, Mullins, Weissbein, Brown, and (Bell, 2001), which is an active learning model for understanding *why* and *how* learning occurs from training. The framework considers three component processes—cognition, motivation, and affect—that enable individuals to successfully navigate more learner-controlled training contexts that underlie the development of adaptive expertise (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). More specifically, the framework articulates how individuals focus their attention, direct their efforts, and manage their affect to facilitate learning. Thus, the ALS provides a useful framework for us to advance theory regarding mechanisms that enhance diversity training effectiveness.

A SELF-REGULATORY PROCESS MODEL FOR DIVERSITY TRAINING

We propose a model that supports the learner through the entire diversity training process. Specifically, we examine the inductive mechanisms through which diversity learning occurs and subsequently offer insights into how organizations can prepare learning conditions, create supportive training environments, and facilitate transfer to work contexts (see Salas et al., 2012). The integration of a learner-centered approach and a process orientation enables us to articulate the critical self-regulatory considerations at each stage of the diversity training process. However, our framework is not designed to cover every consideration surrounding the design, delivery, and implementation of diversity training. Instead, we focus attention on those factors that offer the greatest utility for addressing the root causes of several pervasive and persistent diversity training challenges to stimulating trainee interest in learning and supporting the acquisition and transfer of new skills. As shown in Figure 1, we explore cognitive, motivational, and affective mechanisms at each

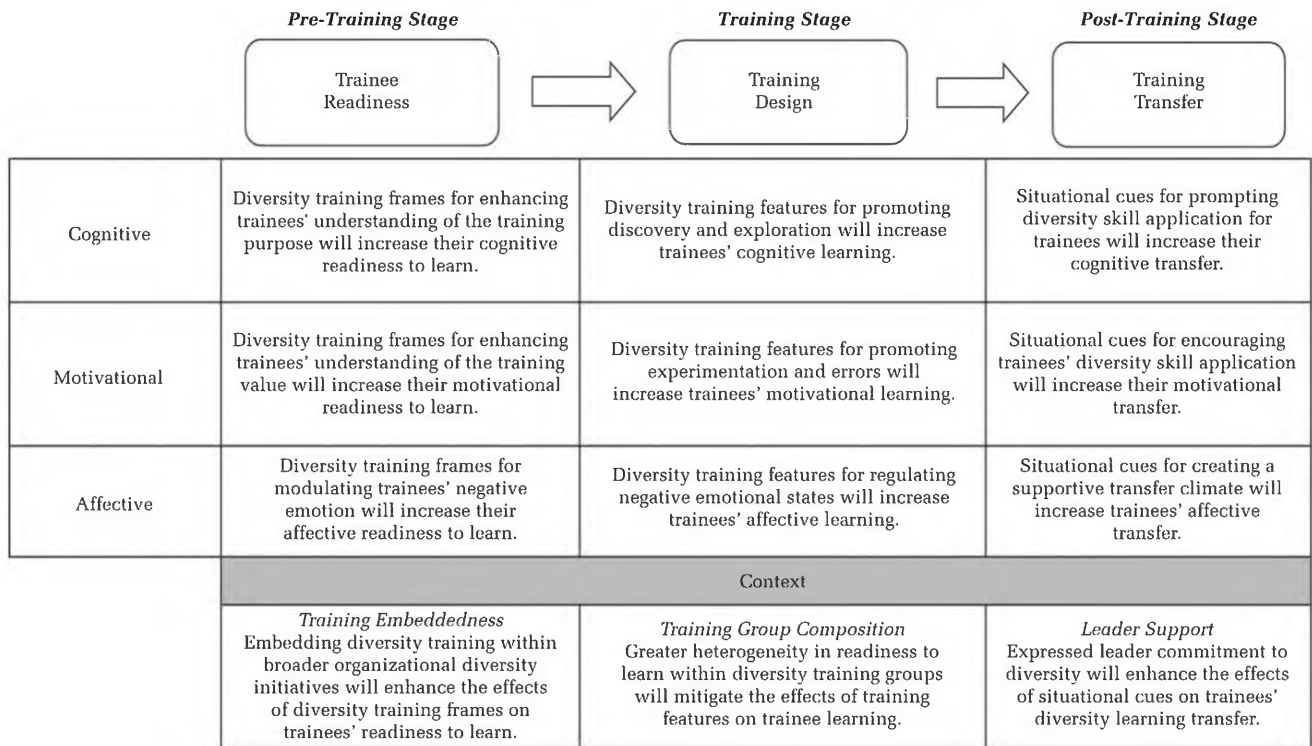
stage of the diversity training process and how they can be engaged to enhance trainee readiness, learning, and transfer.

Pre-Training Stage

Needs analysis is an important pre-training activity, as it specifies the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required for employees' effective job performance and subsequently establishes a set of training objectives to guide training design (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Comprised of assessments to determine what type of training is needed as indicated by an organization's objectives and performance standards and employee readiness for that training (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992), needs analysis is considered to be critical to the design and implementation of effective diversity training programs (Chrobot-Mason & Quiñones, 2002). Because organizational analysis is useful for identifying business goals, resource bases, and other situational features that can facilitate learning and transfer, the diversity training literature has emphasized these concerns as most important (see Roberson et al., 2013). Consequently, factors that influence how learners get to and engage with diversity training have been relatively ignored. Because research on the delivery of diversity training has suggested that the ways in which it is defined and communicated impact how trainees approach the program (Chrobot-Mason & Quiñones, 2002; Holladay, Knight, Paige, & Quiñones, 2003; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004), we theorize that these factors help to address individual differences in trainees' capabilities for learning irrespective of training design. Drawing from the ALS training framework (Kozlowski & Bell, 2006; Kozlowski et al., 2001), we define "diversity training frames" as cues or goals given to trainees that shape their orientation and intentions as they approach and progress through the training. Here, we consider diversity training frames for activating self-regulatory processes that enhance trainee cognitive, motivational, and affective readiness to learn.

Cognitive readiness. Metacognition is an essential element of active learning that involves exerting control over self-monitoring and self-regulatory processes and includes planning, monitoring, and revising goal-appropriate behavior (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). As the mechanism through which individuals set goals for learning and develop strategies for engaging with training tasks, activating metacognition is important for directing trainees' attention to critical learning content (Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully, & Salas, 1998). Salas and colleagues (2012)

FIGURE 1
A Self-Regulatory Process Model for Diversity Training



underscored a clear understanding of training objectives as essential to training effectiveness given that this ensures the right people attend the training and enter with appropriate expectations, which subsequently enhances trainees' readiness to learn. We anticipate that an understanding of the purpose(s) of diversity training, including what will be covered and what should be learned, is vital for moving individuals from the pre-training to the training stage. Specifically, with pre-training information on the intent of employees' diversity skill enhancement, trainees can acquire greater knowledge of the learning domain and mentally prepare for diversity training. Diversity trainees may gain an awareness of the relevant elements of diverse work environments and skills needed to effectively navigate such environments. Using this information, they may establish goals for diversity skill acquisition and devise plans for how to approach diversity training to improve the likelihood of goal achievement. Accordingly, we expect that diversity training frames for enhancing trainees' understanding of the training purpose will increase their cognitive readiness to learn.

Motivational readiness. Research has suggested that learners will differentially allocate their attentional resources to training according to their

motivational choices (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Specifically, the motivation to develop (rather than to demonstrate) skills has been shown to produce higher levels of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, which influence how learners allocate their attention and efforts toward learning (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008; Brown & Ford, 2002). As cues that emphasize self-referenced improvement and the malleability of ability encourage the adoption of a learning orientation (Kozlowski & Bell, 2006), we posit that such signaling within diversity training contexts is imperative to trainees' motivation to learn. For example, consistent with research showing that framing training as a growth opportunity positively influences trainees' pre-training characteristics (see Quiñones, 1995), framing diversity training as an opportunity for trainees to build on their current skill levels may increase their willingness to attend the training. Further, such framing may lessen the likelihood that employees actively avoid training due to the belief that their diversity skill deficits will be exposed. Other framing for establishing the benefits of diversity training, such as highlighting congruence between the training and job effectiveness or career progression, may shift trainees' motivational focus to diversity skill development and mastery. Having an awareness of the

personal or organizational significance of diversity training, trainees may be more apt to view the training context as one for skill acquisition rather than skill demonstration. Therefore, we anticipate that diversity training frames for enhancing trainees' understanding of the training value will increase their motivational readiness to learn.

Affective readiness. While trainees may experience performance anxiety and other stressors in training contexts (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008), research has suggested that diversity training is considered to be distinctive given that it tends to provoke more emotion compared to other types of training (see Bezrukova et al., 2016). Diversity issues, and even the term "diversity," tend to elicit intense and often negative emotional reactions, since such concepts tap into aspects of the self-concept including identity, values, and esteem (Paluck, 2006). Further, diversity training delivery methods often involve some form of confrontation, which is intended to prompt trainees to uncover their attitudes and causes for behavior (Roberson et al., 2013), although these experiences can be stressful for trainees and result in guilt and antagonism (see Stewart, Crary, & Humberd, 2008). While emotions may have some expressive value in learning contexts (see Keith & Frese, 2005), they have been shown to lower learner self-efficacy and divert attentional resources away from learning processes (Chen, Gully, Whiteman, & Kilcullen, 2000). Therefore, diversity training frames for alleviating employees' negative feelings in the pre-training environment may enhance their prospects of actually engaging in the training. For example, consistent with the findings of research showing that social support influences participation in development activities (Hurtz & Williams, 2009; Noe & Wilk, 1993), supervisor and peer support may be important for diminishing employees' misgivings about diversity training. Similarly, because other research has shown pre-training motivation to be influenced by training reputation (see Fecteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995), having others share their positive experiences with diversity training may help to mitigate some of the anxiety and other negative feelings trainees are likely to experience. Overall, we expect that diversity training frames for modulating trainees' negative emotion will increase their affective readiness to learn.

Moderating effects of diversity training embeddedness on trainee readiness. We propose that embedding diversity training within an organization's broader diversity initiatives is likely to strengthen the effects described above. Because the

findings of training research have revealed that giving learners information, prior to training, about the organizational purpose of training and how the content relates to organizational objectives helps to shape their expectations and offers direction for approaching the training (Hicks & Klimoski, 1987), we expect that diversity training embeddedness may shape the impact of diversity training frames. Consistent with Cox's (2001) diversity change model, which stresses the importance of system alignment between diversity training and other diversity-related initiatives, the findings of diversity training research suggest the incorporation of these programs into a larger training curriculum or system of diversity-supportive policies and practices within organizations influences their perceived and actual effectiveness (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Rynes & Rosen, 1995). With higher effect sizes for learning outcomes than standalone training initiatives (Bezrukova et al., 2016), we surmise that the alignment of diversity training with other diversity initiatives reinforces the purpose and value of the training. As a result, trainees are likely to have a clearer understanding of diversity training expectations and a stronger impetus for engaging in the training, which will bolster the effects of diversity training frames on cognition. Further, because situating diversity training within a broader system of diversity management policies and practices prevents the programming from being a one-off circumstance, employees may not be as hesitant or uneasy about the training. We suggest that this approach will strengthen the effects of the diversity training frames on affective readiness. We expect that embedding diversity training within broader organizational diversity initiatives will also strengthen the effects of diversity training frames on trainees' readiness to learn.

Training Stage

Although prior research has focused disproportionate attention on the design of diversity training, the design features that have been examined generally do not reflect contextual shifts in current work environments or advances in our understanding of instructional principles. Specifically, because workforces have become increasingly diverse, diversity training is needed to develop employee skills for respecting and valuing differences and interacting constructively with others regardless of group membership (Pendry et al., 2007). At the same time, given the range of diversity-related issues that employees might face at work and the uncertainty that

surrounds such interactions, training that gives learners opportunities to develop adaptive solutions for interacting across people and situations is crucial. Salas et al. (2012) also argued that beyond valid training strategies that provide learners with useful information and an environment in which to practice newly acquired skills, it is important to integrate opportunities for transfer-appropriate processing that promote self-regulation. Accordingly, we consider features of diversity training that activate self-regulatory processes for enhancing trainee cognitive, motivational, and affective learning.

Cognitive learning. Given the multifaceted and dynamic nature of diversity in the workplace, research has suggested that diversity training approaches for reflecting upon and broadening one's current level of awareness are critical for learning (Celik, Abma, Klinge, & Widdershoven, 2012; De Meuse, Hostager, & O'Neill, 2007; Reynolds, 2010). These approaches, like training on unconscious bias or the business case for diversity, are considered to initiate the first phase of personal change, though there is little empirical evidence to support learning benefits beyond declarative knowledge (Roberson et al., 2013). Active learning theory also suggests that an awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes are essential to the exertion of cognitive effort and subsequent learning in training contexts (Ford & Kraiger, 1995). However, researchers have emphasized the activation of trainee cognitive self-regulatory learning processes, such as metacognition and mental models (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). Accordingly, research has suggested that the creation of interactive and adaptive learning environments that allow learners to formulate their own representations of knowledge, and that test the adequacy of their mental models, enhances their likelihood of learning (Greco, Charlier, & Brown, 2019).

We anticipate that diversity training features for promoting discovery and exploration will activate learners' cognitive self-regulatory processes related to metacognition, mental models, and effortful processing. For example, giving learners responsibility for examining diversity training content and identifying where to allocate their efforts based on work demands or their individual needs may aid in the development of action-oriented mental models for navigating diversity at work. Similarly, providing trainees with a variety of diversity scenarios, yet minimal structure (i.e., instructing them to explore and understand the scenarios to discover the best approaches for handling each situation) may be useful for promoting inductive learning. Because

research has revealed dynamic knowledge construction to occur when trainees relate learning content to their existing knowledge base and infer new ideas and relationships (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008), we intuit that providing learners with opportunities to compare their approaches to diversity-related situations with those of others and to understand the implications of different courses of action may further facilitate inductive learning about what is needed to successfully navigate diverse work environments. Therefore, we propose that diversity training features for promoting discovery and exploration will increase trainees' cognitive learning.

Motivational learning. With the goal of enhancing people's motivation and skills for interacting with diverse others (Pendry et al., 2007), diversity training research has emphasized training designs that allow participants to practice appropriate diversity-related behavior (Roberson et al., 2013). Yet, while researchers have underscored interactivity as the key mechanism through which these designs activate learning (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013), active learning theory suggests that opportunities to develop task mastery are essential to trainee motivation and learning (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008). Contrary to trial-and-error approaches to learning, training approaches that allow learners to make observations and informed choices about cause-and-effect relationships influence how they approach, interpret, and respond to training activities (Greif & Keller, 1990). More specifically, opportunities to test, modify, and retest their ideas and solutions help learners to develop adaptive self-efficacy and competence beliefs about their ability to be successful in the training context and drives their motivation to learn (Brown & Ford, 2002).

We anticipate that diversity training features for promoting experimentation and errors will activate learner motivation in the form of mastery state orientations and self-efficacy (see Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). Consistent with existing diversity training research, designs that allow learners to practice behaviors across various diversity-related situations may enhance their likelihood of navigating such situations in the work environment. Extending this perspective, we also speculate that opportunities to experiment with different behaviors and receive feedback on the appropriateness or effectiveness of these behaviors may help them to identify areas of improvement for more effective performance. Based on findings that encouraging errors or positively framing them as contributory to learning and self-improvement is effective for facilitating the adoption of a mastery mindset (Ivancic & Hesketh, 1995), we

reason that similar approaches may focus learners' attention on attempting and identifying behaviors appropriate for interacting in diverse work contexts. Because diversity contexts are often fraught with apprehension associated with saying or doing the wrong things (Roberson et al., 2013), designs that welcome experimentation and positively frame faults as learning opportunities may normalize mistakes in these contexts and enhance learner beliefs in their own diversity capabilities. As a result, trainees may experience less evaluative pressure and be buffered against becoming demotivated in the face of challenges associated with diversity. Accordingly, we propose that diversity training features for promoting experimentation and errors will increase trainees' motivational learning.

Affective learning. In training contexts, emotional states serve as signals of what is occurring or anticipated and provide insight into appropriate action given task demands and other features of the learning environment (Ford, 1992). Positive emotions are considered to provide situational feedback to motivate trainees toward learning, while negative emotions caution trainees about the learning experience and indicate the movement of personal resources away from task engagement (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). In diversity training contexts, which prompt learners to engage in self-examination in terms of their beliefs, attitudes, and other causes for behavior in intergroup contact situations, negative emotions often emerge as an indicator of experienced anxiety due to the nature or content of the training and derail the learning process (see Roberson et al., 2013). Accordingly, training designs that facilitate the monitoring and regulation of such affect and other destructive response tendencies in diversity training contexts may be essential for affective learning with regard to emotional regulation, reduced anxiety, and negative effect (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009).

We expect that diversity training features for regulating negative emotional states will activate learner affect management. While it is not unusual for trainees to experience the frustration and anxiety that come along with learning a new skill (see Kanfer & Heggstad, 1999), these experiences may be compounded by the negative emotions that can be associated with diversity or imbued in diversity training. Because negative affect may distract learners from the training content and subsequently impede performance (Chen et al., 2000), diversity training features that engage learners in confronting, tempering, and modifying their emotions may be effective for

refocusing attentional resources and enhancing learning. For example, opportunities to recognize physical triggers and physiological indicators of negative responses to diversity-related experiences may facilitate the development of skills for regulating the emergence and impact of these responses in their interactions with others. Further, having psychologically safe spaces in which to practice strategies for eliciting and maintaining positive reactions to various diversity-related situations may enhance the likelihood that learners are able to effectively handle such situations in the work environment. Design features can facilitate the maintenance of desirable emotional states and the mitigation of undesirable emotional states within diversity training. For instance, providing trainees with heuristics to increase the frequency of positive thoughts and reduce the frequency of negative thoughts, or encouraging trainees to engage in positive self-dialogue (see Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989), may be useful for addressing the emotional barriers to trainee engagement. Consequently, we propose that diversity training features for regulating negative emotional states will increase trainees' affective learning.

Moderating effects of training group composition on trainee learning. We propose that the composition of diversity training groups will moderate the effect of diversity training features on trainee learning. Researchers have debated how the composition of diversity training groups will influence training outcomes. For example, some have argued that more heterogeneous groups allow for a broader range of perspectives and experiences to be explored, while others have posited that more homogeneous groups help to create more psychologically safe environments in which trainees can freely discuss their ideas and opinions (see Roberson et al., 2013). Most of these arguments have been based on the demographic composition of diversity training groups in terms of gender, race, and age, although the findings provide weak evidence of direct effects of group composition on learning outcomes (see Bezrukova et al., 2016). Research has shown group composition to have interactive effects, such that diversity training outcomes are higher when trainees have prior diversity training experience, leading the researchers to speculate that those with greater experience may better leverage homogeneous diversity training contexts to generate and practice strategies for managing diversity (Roberson et al., 2001). Yet, because training group composition was not found to influence diversity training effectiveness for those with limited prior experience, the authors concluded that

learning may occur regardless of compositional context (Roberson et al., 2001). We reason that those without prior diversity training experience may feel less comfortable with expressing themselves and challenging others in more heterogeneous training contexts, which may reduce trainees' willingness to take risks and engage in discovery processes to question their mental models, thus reducing the utility of training design features aimed at promoting discovery and exploration. Similarly, individuals may experience a greater need to prove themselves in the presence of others with prior diversity training experiences, thereby motivating them to adopt more of a performance orientation toward the training (see Elliott & Dweck, 1988), and thereby reducing the effects of training design features focused on promoting experimentation and errors. This need to demonstrate diversity competence may also increase trainees' experienced anxiety and trigger other negative responses, undermining training design features aimed at helping trainees regulate negative emotional states. We infer that similar patterns will emerge for those who have less experience with, or lower receptivity to, diversity, thus highlighting a need to consider how people are assigned to diversity training groups. Overall, we expect that greater heterogeneity in readiness to learn within diversity training groups will mitigate the effects of training features on trainee learning.

Post-Training Stage

Although the goal of diversity training is to enhance individuals' interactions with others back on the job and ultimately improve individual, team, and organizational performance, prior research has focused very little attention on the transfer of learning from diversity training. Most studies have considered the immediate outcomes of training in terms of knowledge gain or cognitive learning and attitudes or affective learning (see Bezrukova et al., 2016; Roberson et al., 2013), while few have examined behavioral measures of training effectiveness and even fewer have endeavored to understand factors that may enhance or inhibit diversity training transfer. This omission is an important one given that research has clearly shown that learning does not guarantee transfer, but the transfer of learning is influenced by a variety of factors associated with the trainee, training intervention, and broader work environment that encourages trainees to use their acquired skills on the job (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010). This research has shown characteristics

of the work environment to be particularly important for the transfer of open skills, which give trainees options in terms of whether and how to apply learning to the job (Blume et al., 2010) and are similar to those addressed by diversity training. Setting up environments for transfer and success is also considered to be critical for diversity training given the potential for significant obstacles to transfer, including resistant or unsupportive coworkers, weak accountability mechanisms, and the potential risk and embarrassment associated with incorrect application (see King, Gulick, & Avery, 2010; Paluck, 2006). Accordingly, we consider situational cues for facilitating trainee cognitive, motivational, and affective transfer from diversity training to work contexts.

Cognitive transfer. Research has shown that because learning decays quite rapidly if unused, it is important to ensure the trainees have ample opportunity back on the job to use what they have learned (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Salas et al., 2012). Establishing these opportunities is particularly critical for diversity training, as research findings highlight faster rates of decay for all learning outcomes except for cognitive learning (Bezrukova et al., 2016). To facilitate transfer, training researchers have emphasized the use of situational cues, or task and social prompts that remind trainees of the training context and provide opportunities for them to use acquired learning (Blume et al., 2010). Accordingly, we presuppose that these cues may be useful for creating conditions similar to those experienced in diversity training and showing trainees where and how acquired skills might be applied. For example, leaders may help to identify or create structured opportunities, such as special projects or stretch assignments, for employees to use diversity training back on the job. Further, they may work collaboratively with employees to establish goals for how to use learning in the future, thus continuing to build on the goal-setting process initiated during the pre-training stage. The establishment of communities-of-practice that allow individuals to interact, pose questions, and discuss challenging situations associated with diversity (see Blume et al., 2010) may also serve as a way for them to continue refining and updating their mental models over time. Overall, we anticipate that situational cues for prompting diversity skill application for trainees will increase their cognitive transfer.

Motivational transfer. Blume and colleagues (2010) also highlighted the use of consequences, or rewards, punishment, and positive and negative feedback from both managers and peers, as important

environmental characteristics for facilitating learning transfer. Based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1986), experienced or observed consequences from the demonstration of skills on the job are assumed to reinforce further application of learning. While limited attention has been given to the actual effects of consequences on diversity training transfer, a few studies have explored how trainees' perceptions of consequences influence such transfer (see Hanover & Cellar, 1998; Roberson et al., 2009). Still, due to mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of perceived consequences, researchers have deliberated on related factors that might motivate diversity training transfer. For example, the importance of employees being aware of consequences, as well as managers' ability to recognize skill application and confer consequences, might be important for diversity training transfer (see Roberson et al., 2013). Debriefings can also be a valuable tool in the post-training environment to provide trainees with feedback on skill application, which can serve as an opportunity for self-correction or reinforcement of what is working. Thus, we expect that situational cues for encouraging diversity skill application will increase motivational transfer.

Affective transfer. Although scant research has considered specific environmental characteristics to facilitate affective transfer from diversity training, we presume that situational cues may also be effective for establishing positive transfer climates. In particular, the environmental characteristics that remind trainees of the affect-management strategies learned in diversity training and sustain their ability to employ such strategies may drive affective transfer. For example, nudges to prompt trainees to remember the importance of identifying their reactions to diversity-related situations and adjusting them as appropriate may encourage trainees to continue using these strategies in the work environment. Similarly, creating peer support networks or other forums for trainees to reflect on and discuss their affective responses to diversity situations with others may help to enhance their self-efficacy and acquire additional skills for affect management. Positive consequences for trainees who demonstrate positive or constructive emotional responses, or attempts to mitigate negative or destructive emotional responses, in interactions with diverse others may further reinforce adaptive affect in future situations. Therefore, we expect that situational cues for creating supportive transfer climates will increase trainees' affective transfer.

Moderating effects of leader support on trainee learning transfer. Consistent with research findings that have highlighted manager support as a key

situational characteristic that influences trainee motivation (see Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000), we suggest that manager support enhances the effects of situational cues on trainee learning transfer. Diversity researchers have asserted that leadership commitment signals the importance of diversity training for successfully addressing an organization's diversity issues and meeting its core business objectives (Cocchiara, Connerley, & Bell, 2010). An implied link to organizational strategy may also signal a long-term investment in diversity management and, more specifically, in employee development. Further, leadership commitment may be useful for role modeling the behaviors needed for facilitating diversity-related change in the work environment (Ng & Wyrick, 2011). These arguments follow those of Cox (2001), who reasoned that leader commitment is critical for establishing the necessary objectives and conditions for achieving diversity change. Such commitment includes the significance of diversity management efforts, which facilitates the motivation of others to engage in these efforts.

Because support from leaders may signal the value of diversity learning and situate it within an organization's strategy, it may bolster the effects of situational cues aimed at promoting transfer. Diversity learners prompted to engage in skill application may be more likely to experiment with various behaviors, even if doing so results in mistakes, as leaders communicate the value of applying learning to achievement of organizational goals and, subsequently, to individual success. The active and visible demonstration of leadership support among top leaders may also role model self-efficacy for developing and demonstrating diversity skills, as well as behaviors for effective diversity management. Accordingly, situational cues for encouraging trainees' diversity skill application and creating a supportive transfer climate may be more effective for motivating trainees to find opportunities. Thus, we propose that expressed leader commitment to diversity will enhance the effects of situational cues on trainees' diversity learning transfer.

Measuring Diversity Training Effectiveness

Our model proposes that diversity training effectiveness will be enhanced by focusing on what happens not only during but also before and after the training. Importantly, we believe that such a systematic approach to diversity training is essential in today's organizational contexts characterized by increased diversity and fluidity because it provides

individuals with knowledge and skills that can be adapted across novel situations. Accordingly, we argue that methods of measuring diversity training effectiveness also need to evolve alongside the changes to how we design and deliver diversity training. Specifically, our model has important implications for *when* and *how*, and in *what way*, we evaluate diversity training effectiveness.

Prior research has focused almost exclusively on assessing the effects of diversity training during or at the end of training, with much less focus on pre- and post-training assessments. For example, only six of the 96 studies included in Kalinoski et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis examined the effects of diversity training on individuals' on-the-job behaviors. In addition, the authors noted that it is difficult to disentangle the effects of diversity training on attitude change because most studies do not account for trainee attitudes prior to training. Our model, in contrast, proposes that diversity training effectiveness is influenced by what learners experience at all stages of the diversity training process, which has important implications for the timing of measurement. For example, our model highlights that the effects of diversity training on individuals' learning will be influenced by their pre-training cognitive, motivational, and affective readiness, thus underscoring the importance of conducting a pre-training person analysis (Chrobot-Mason & Quiñones, 2002). Likewise, our model details the many factors that can influence the transfer of diversity training, pointing to the need for research that examines linkages between proximal outcomes (e.g., the acquisition of diversity-related knowledge and skills) and distal outcomes (e.g., work performance in diverse settings; Kalinoski et al., 2013). Examining the long-term effects of the diversity training strategies we propose is particularly important in light of the fact that certain components of the active learning approach, such as making errors, may lead to lower observed performance during training but long-term benefits in terms of transfer performance (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009).

Our model has important implications for not only *when* diversity training is evaluated but also *what* is measured. Kraiger, Ford, and Salas (1993) developed a multidimensional classification scheme for evaluating training consisting of cognitive, skill-based, and affective learning outcomes, which has since triggered research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of training through an expanded array of learning constructs, including metacognitive activity, self-efficacy, and skill retention (Ford, Kraiger, & Merritt,

2010). Most diversity training studies, however, have relied on a unidimensional measure of effectiveness, typically operationalized via trainee attitudes (Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Roberson et al., 2013). Researchers have also noted that some outcomes commonly measured in the broader training literature, such as reactions, have been neglected in diversity training research (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Our model highlights the need for more comprehensive, multidimensional evaluations of diversity training that examine its effects on cognitive, motivational, and affective outcomes. Broadening the scope of diversity training outcomes may also be important for identifying its potential unintended consequences. Leslie (2019), for example, noted that diversity training is often associated with decreased discrimination toward targets but also decreased representation of targets. Narrow, unidimensional measures of diversity training effectiveness are unlikely to reveal such contradictory outcomes.

Finally, our model can be used to guide changes in *how* diversity training is evaluated. Researchers have noted, for example, that most diversity training studies have relied on individuals' self-assessments of knowledge and skill (e.g., Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Roberson et al., 2013). A meta-analysis by Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, and Bauer (2010), however, found that self-assessments of knowledge are more indicative of learners' motivation and satisfaction than their cognitive learning. Kalinoski et al. (2013) also found stronger effects for self-report measures than nonself-report measures, which they suggested may be due to social desirability bias. These findings point to the need for alternative, as well as more objective, measures of diversity training effectiveness. As noted by Kraiger (2002), the purpose of evaluation should determine which types of measures are included in an evaluation effort. If the goal is to evaluate cognitive learning, for example, then knowledge tests should be used to assess diversity training effectiveness (Sitzmann et al., 2010). Motivational learning, in contrast, may be assessed by examining pre-post changes in trainees' goal orientations or self-efficacy (Ford et al., 2010), and Kalinoski et al. (2013) suggested that implicit measures can be used to assess the attitude change resulting from diversity training. Ideally, as discussed above, future studies will employ multiple measures to triangulate the effects of diversity training.

DISCUSSION

Diversity training has become an essential building block in organizations' efforts to facilitate

positive intergroup interactions, improved decision-making, and a sense of belonging among an increasingly diverse workforce (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). However, developments in the science and practice of diversity training have been outpaced by shifts in work environments that have accentuated identity-based differences and complicated interaction across dimensions of difference (Nkomo et al., 2019). As the outmoded nature of diversity training has led scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers to voice concerns and criticisms about its appropriateness and effectiveness, we theorize a new approach to diversity training. Specifically, we offer a learner-centric, process-based model of diversity training that explains how design features, learning context, and learner characteristics interact before, during, and after training to influence its effectiveness. Drawing on advances in active learning theory (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009), we argue that diversity learning and transfer are maximized when training activities and the broader context engage and support critical cognitive, motivational, and affective self-regulatory mechanisms at each stage of the diversity training process. This learner-centered approach serves to elucidate specific strategies that can be used to overcome ubiquitous barriers to diversity training effectiveness that stem from the challenges involved in convincing people to attend the training, ensuring they learn while there, and bolstering application of the learning back in the workplace. Below, we discuss three important theoretical implications of our model for future diversity training research. In addition, we acknowledge several potential boundary conditions of our model and examine how it can be applied in practice to overcome the challenges associated with several prototypical diversity learner personas.

Theoretical Contributions

Diversity training as an iterative process. Contemporary training theories view successful training as an iterative process rather than a discrete event. In their review of the science of organizational training and development, Salas et al. (2012: 79) summarized, “Taken together, these studies illustrate the importance of viewing training ‘as a system’ and not a one-time event. This system must take into account what happens before, during, and after training.” Yet, the event-based view has dominated both the study and practice of diversity training, as illustrated by the fact that its effectiveness has been understood largely through elements of its design, such as the

duration of the training and the instructional activities in which individuals engage (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013).

Our process-based model removes the blinders that have kept attention focused narrowly on diversity training events, and in turn opens up new avenues for research to examine how diversity training effectiveness is influenced as much, if not more, by what learners experience both before and after the training event. Regarding the pre-training stage, for example, our model highlights that future work should investigate how the expectations communicated about diversity training, including what will be covered and what should be learned, influence trainees’ goal-setting and subsequent metacognitive activity (Salas et al., 2012). The importance of incorporating expectations and goals into future diversity training research is underscored by a meta-analysis by Sitzmann and Ely (2011), who found that goal level was the strongest predictor of self-regulated learning in work-related training and education. Drawing on research showing that how training is framed influences how individuals approach it (e.g., Kozlowski & Bell, 2006; Quiñones, 1995), we recommend that researchers examine how different types of signals and cues (e.g., those focused on learning vs. performance) in the pre-training environment influence diversity trainees’ attitudes and motivational levels. Finally, in light of the finding that diversity training often provokes fears and anxieties (Bezrukova et al., 2016), future research should also investigate strategies for mitigating these negative emotions not only during training but also in the pre-training environment, where they can influence individuals’ decisions about whether to engage in diversity training (Colquitt, et al., 2000).

Prior research has provided evidence that many of the learning outcomes associated with diversity training decay over time (Bezrukova et al., 2016). We recommend that researchers examine how characteristics of the post-training environment influence the retention and transfer of diversity training. Given that diversity training is often designed and delivered without the benefit of an upfront needs assessment (Chrobot-Mason & Quiñones, 2002), many trainees may struggle to connect what they have learned to their jobs. Future research would benefit from a more comprehensive investigation of post-training strategies on diversity training transfer, such as creating opportunities to perform or embedding reminders in the environment, to increase the application and retention of diversity training (Blume et al., 2010). Trainees need to not only be

able to recognize appropriate transfer opportunities but also be motivated to apply what they have learned in diversity training. Further, because the few studies that have examined factors that might motivate diversity training transfer have produced mixed findings (e.g., Hanover & Cellar, 1998; Roberson et al., 2009), researchers should investigate how the situational cues (e.g., nudges, prompts) and consequences (e.g., rewards, feedback) proposed in our model can be used to create a positive diversity training transfer climate.

In addition to focusing much-needed attention on what happens before and after diversity training, our research highlights meaningful new directions for research on its design and delivery. Most importantly, our model examines the self-regulatory processes that underlie learning during diversity training, thus encouraging research to move beyond simply identifying which design elements are important to better understanding *how* these elements influence diversity training effectiveness. As an example, several meta-analyses have shown that the duration of diversity training is positively related to learning outcomes. This finding has typically been attributed to the fact that longer programs provide more opportunity for trainees to interact with members of other groups (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013). However, our model suggests potential alternative explanations for this finding, yoked to the quality of the learning experience, which future research should explore. For example, longer diversity training programs provide trainees with more opportunities to explore the learning domain and practice in a variety of scenarios, which should enhance the coherence and breadth of their mental models (Frese et al., 1988; Greco et al., 2019). The duration of diversity training programs may also have symbolic value (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Lengthier programs are likely to be interpreted as a sign that such initiatives are organizationally important and supported, which can enhance trainees' motivational and affective learning (Cox, 2001). Ultimately, our model contributes to organizational research aimed at understanding the process pathways through which different diversity training design elements exert their effects on learning outcomes. As such, our work lays the foundation for a more robust theory of diversity training effectiveness that integrates a learner-centered approach and a process orientation.

One size of diversity training does not fit all. Trainee characteristics have been one of the most extensively studied areas in the field of training and

development (Bell et al., 2017), yet have received only limited attention in diversity training research. Although only a few diversity training studies have examined the effects of trainees' personality (e.g., need for cognition; Hogan & Mallott, 2005) and cultural attributes (e.g., Holladay & Quiñones, 2005), more attention has been devoted to the effects of trainees' demographic attributes (e.g., age, gender, race), but findings have been weak or inconclusive (e.g., Bezrukova et al., 2012; Bezrukova et al., 2016; Kalinoski et al., 2013). Overall, studies have expressed limited interest in understanding how trainees approach and respond to learning during diversity training, which has fueled a "one-size-fits-all" approach to such training in which trainees are viewed as passive, and relatively interchangeable, recipients of instruction.

Our theorizing challenges this approach by setting forth a more learner-centric view of diversity training in which effectiveness is maximized when training activities can be personalized to meet the cognitive, motivational, and affective needs of different learners throughout all stages of the training process. Accordingly, our model can serve as the backdrop for future research aimed at increasing our understanding of the role of trainee characteristics in diversity training. For example, research has shown that individuals vary in their natural, or trait, level of anxiety, which influences how prone they are to experience increased anxiety when faced with a stressful situation (Spielberger, 1977). This finding suggests that some trainees may naturally be more susceptible to the stress and anxiety commonly provoked by diversity training, and that strategies for modulating negative emotions, such as peer support and positive self-dialogue, may be more important for supporting the learning of some trainees than others (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). Similarly, studies have found that an individual's propensity to engage in active learning is influenced by not only aspects of training design but also individual differences (e.g., Bell & Kozlowski, 2008; Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, & Beaubien, 2002). A meta-analysis by Payne, Youngcourt, and Beaubien (2007), for example, found that individuals higher in trait learning orientation set more challenging goals, engage in more effective learning strategies, and are more inclined to seek feedback. Thus, diversity training strategies, such as encouraging errors, may be more impactful among trainees who are not naturally predisposed to adopt a learning mindset (i.e., have low trait learning orientation). Strategies enacted to support the retention and transfer of diversity training will also need

to be tailored to meet the needs of different trainees. Blume et al. (2010), for example, found that a number of trainee characteristics positively predicted training transfer, including cognitive ability, conscientiousness, pre-training self-efficacy, and motivation. Thus, situational cues that remind and encourage trainees to apply what they have learned in diversity training may be more critical for supporting transfer among trainees lower in these characteristics.

As alluded to by the preceding discussion, our model also broadens the scope of relevant trainee characteristics beyond the demographic attributes typically examined in diversity training research to date (Bezrukova et al., 2016). In particular, our model acknowledges the need for research to investigate how the effects of different diversity training strategies are conditioned on trainees' capabilities (e.g., cognitive ability, experience with diversity), personality traits (e.g., openness to experience), motivational constructs (e.g., goal orientation), attitudes and emotions (e.g., anxiety), and perceptions (e.g., perceived leader support; Bell et al., 2017). In addition, future research should investigate how differences in demographic group composition interact with individual differences, such as experience with diversity and receptivity to diversity, to influence trainees' learning in diversity training contexts.

Putting diversity training in context. Over the past few decades, training research has increasingly acknowledged the important influence of the broader context on trainee motivation, training transfer, and, ultimately, training effectiveness (Bell et al., 2017; Salas et al., 2012). In contrast, the role of context has received minimal attention in the diversity training literature. Bezrukova et al. (2016) showed that diversity training has stronger effects when it is integrated as part of a package of diversity-related efforts (vs. standalone), but they did not find significant overall differences based on setting (organizational vs. educational) or attendance requirements (mandatory vs. voluntary). Kalinoski et al. (2013) found that the effects of diversity training are stronger in studies where the trainer is a manager or supervisor (vs. other internal staff member) and in studies conducted in the field (vs. the lab) and with employee (vs. student) participants. Overall, diversity training research has systematically examined only a limited number of contextual factors, many of which are more indicative of research design decisions than environmental conditions.

We attempt to galvanize future research on the effects of diversity training context by identifying environmental characteristics that may moderate the

effects of critical activities that take place before, during, and after diversity training. For example, building on the meta-analytic findings of Bezrukova et al. (2016) and the theorizing of Cox (2001), we propose that the extent to which diversity training is embedded within an organization's broader diversity initiatives will influence its effectiveness. However, we extend prior work by highlighting that diversity training embeddedness should specifically serve to strengthen the effects of pre-training interventions on trainees' cognitive, motivational, and affective readiness. In contrast, when trainees return to the job following diversity training, we argue that leader support will represent a particularly salient determinant of the extent to which they transfer their learning (Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). In particular, leader support signals the value and importance of diversity learning (Cocchiara et al., 2010), which should serve to enhance the effects of situational cues and consequences on the transfer of learning from diversity training.

Future work should not only examine the contextual factors highlighted in our model but also seek to identify other environmental conditions that shape the effects of diversity training. A meta-analysis by Joshi and Roh (2009) found that the performance outcomes associated with relations-oriented and task-oriented diversity are influenced by contextual factors at multiple levels, including industry (e.g., service vs. manufacturing industries), occupation (e.g., majority-male vs. gender-balanced occupations), and team (e.g., short-term vs. long-term teams). Given that these factors serve to either constrain or bolster the effects of diversity, future researchers must take them into account when evaluating the impact of diversity training on key performance criteria. Joshi and Roh (2009), for example, suggested that training aimed at changing diversity-related behaviors may be more impactful in service than in manufacturing settings given the direct contact with customers and the high costs of interactions based on negative categorizations. Roberson (2019) also highlighted the need for future studies to incorporate sociocultural influences, such as historical or political factors, that can affect perceptions of, and reactions to, diversity. Indeed, as we have highlighted throughout this review, questions about the legitimacy of diversity training, as well as calls for new models and approaches, have become particularly acute in light of recent and salient shifts in the sociocultural context (e.g., social movements, polarization of diversity-related mindsets; Nkomo et al., 2019).

Limitations and Boundary Conditions

Our theory is agnostic to the specific type of diversity training being delivered, in part because the active learning principles we leverage have been used to facilitate the acquisition of a variety of knowledge and skills (Keith & Wolff, 2015). However, prior research has provided evidence that the focus of diversity training can influence its effects. In particular, Bezrukova et al. (2016) found that diversity training focused on developing awareness had smaller effects than diversity training focused on building skills (i.e., behavioral), or training that combined both awareness and behavioral components. Similarly, researchers have suggested that active learning approaches are likely to yield greater benefits when the goal of training is the development of complex, adaptive skills as opposed to routine knowledge and skills (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). Accordingly, our model may be more pertinent to diversity training focused on complex skill-building rather than more basic knowledge and awareness, and future research is needed to test the generalizability of our propositions.

Our model also does not distinguish among the different modes of delivering diversity training, most notably in person and online. Kalinoski et al. (2013) found that diversity training mediated by a computer had a much smaller effect than training delivered in person. However, it is important to note that very few of the studies they reviewed (only four) examined online diversity training. Active learning approaches are considered particularly appropriate for self-directed learning environments, such as online training, because they help employees to make effective use of the control they are given over their learning (Bell & Kozlowski, 2009). Hence, although our model should apply across different delivery environments, the principles we put forth may be especially important for helping employees navigate online diversity training.

As acknowledged by our discussion of training embeddedness, diversity training programs rarely exist in a vacuum and instead are part of a larger ecosystem of organizational diversity initiatives. Thus, although the focus of our model is a single diversity training program, future research would benefit from a holistic approach that considers the interplay across diversity training experiences, as well as between training and other diversity initiatives (Leslie, 2019). For example, if trainees have a positive and successful diversity training experience, does it spill over to their readiness for future

programs? Such an effect would be conceptually similar to the notion of individual readiness for teamwork and enthusiasm for teaming put forth by Eddy, Tannenbaum, and Mathieu (2013); positive team experiences prepare members for future team assignments and engender positive feelings about working in teams. Roberson (2019) also called for research to examine the cumulative impact of different diversity training programs, as well as studies that examine the “bundled” value of combinations of different diversity programs (e.g., training, task forces, employee resource groups) on organizational outcomes.

Implications for Practice

The diversity training literature has acknowledged that, often, the individuals who need diversity training the most are those who do not believe in it (e.g., contest its meaning and value) and, hence, resist attending (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006). Therefore, we consider prototypical forms of challenge to learning that have been an ongoing impediment to diversity training effectiveness (Chrobot-Mason, Hays-Thomas, & Wishik, 2008). We begin by discussing two common diversity learner personas or individual sources of challenge to learning: the resistant trainee, which describes an opposition or defensiveness to engaging in training; and the anxious trainee, which derives from a level of anxiety or fear when diversity training topics are raised. We also discuss a third diversity learner persona, the overconfident or overzealous trainee, which is more about how they engage with the learning as opposed to an unwillingness to participate, and is often overlooked as a form of conflict. Consequently, it is important that we understand these different types of learners, the source of their challenge to learning, and the strategies to overcome them. We apply our model across these different types of trainees by focusing on the interaction of a trainee persona and a self-regulatory component to elucidate specific self-regulatory strategies before, during, and after training that can be used to enhance diversity training effectiveness (see Figure 2).

The defensive trainee: Strategies for cognitive transfer. Overt defensiveness to diversity training, expressed by targeted trainees, is part of the prevailing and persistent challenge for such training given that defensive trainees are likely to refuse to accept that diversity training is necessary, to challenge the trainer, and to express ongoing opposition. Defensive trainees are a group of potential learners who do not see value in diversity training due to limited

FIGURE 2
Diversity Training Effectiveness: Applying Our Self-Regulatory Process Model Across Trainee Personas

<i>Prototypical Trainee Personas</i>	Diversity Training Challenges and Self-Regulatory Strategies	Getting Them to the Training	Getting Them to Learn	Getting Them to Apply
<p>The Defensive Trainee Does not see the value in diversity training. Does not believe that they or the organization has a diversity problem. May view diversity training as a compliance exercise rather than a genuine effort to advance diversity and inclusion</p>	Key Challenges	Given low perceive valence, will avoid attending unless forced to do so, in which case they will be resentful of having to participate in “useless” training.	Need to increase their awareness and update their mental models, which will be challenging given their resistance to engaging with the training material.	Even if they manage to gain new knowledge and skills, they will be less likely to apply them if they don’t see the value in doing so.
	Cognitive Transfer Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-training assessments or exercises • Provide information on diversity training content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow trainees to set personal goals and order training topics • Induce errors or provide negative models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use examples or exercises during training that relate to trainees’ specific application context • Have trainees create action plans
<p>The Anxious Trainee Views diversity training as personally risky or threatening. Believes that training may undermine currently enjoyed status or privilege, lead to shame or guilt (cognitive dissonance), give rise to conflict or discomfort, or lead to embarrassing mistakes or missteps or expose ignorance</p>	Key Challenges	The perceived threat of participating in diversity training will outweigh any potential benefits and lead them to avoid participating. Mandatory attendance will spark significant anxiety.	Anxiety or fear of failure will lead them to adopt an avoidance orientation that will limit their active engagement with the training material.	Even if they manage to gain new knowledge and skills, they may lack the efficacy to apply them or may see the risks of doing so to outweigh the benefits.
	Affective Transfer Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge fears and provide goals for managing • Provide models of others who have successfully navigated the diversity training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask trainees to identify emotions experienced at different points in the training • Have trainees rehearse responses to emotionally triggering situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide reminders post-training to encourage affect management • Create support networks or communities
<p>The Overconfident Trainee Views diversity training as an opportunity to demonstrate their expertise or expose others’ lack thereof. Sees diversity training as less of an opportunity to learn and more as a chance to demonstrate what they know. Views themselves as cotrainers or facilitators</p>	Key Challenges	Enthusiastic about attending the training, but for the wrong reasons.	Prove orientation will lead them to resist efforts to update or challenge their knowledge or mental models.	Even if they manage to gain new knowledge and skills, they may revert to prior behaviors which they have failed to unlearn.
	Motivational Transfer Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame diversity training as an opportunity • Communicating purpose and value of the training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frame errors as critical to learning • Provide learning-oriented feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align rewards and recognition • Leader and peer follow-up and encouragement

belief that actual changes can be made or that their organization will experience little benefit from diversity training (for a review, see Wiggins-Romesburg & Githens, 2018). Furthermore, defensive trainees are likely to believe they will not benefit personally from diversity training (Holladay et al., 2003). Such skepticism may be driven by a lack of receptivity to diversity or diversity initiatives, and may unintentionally provoke greater resistance.

Because trainee readiness may be influenced by a lack of self-awareness regarding one's diversity knowledge, pre-training assessments or exercises may help defensive trainees understand their competence levels and, subsequently, the need for diversity training. Such assessments aim to find similar priorities, values, and goals to help support the resistant trainee's effort to identify a path forward. Providing information on diversity training content may also help defensive trainees to better understand the personal and organizational value of the training. Yet, they should be made aware that diversity training is not a cure-all, and be given comprehensive information on the content to aid in understanding the specific purpose of the planned training. Strategies for promoting discovery and exploration of diversity training content may reduce trainee defensiveness to content engagement. For example, allowing defensive trainees to set personal goals and sequence training topics (with guidance from facilitators) may help to focus their attention on specific areas of interest or development. Scenarios or case studies that offer approaches differing in effectiveness may also help defensive trainees identify inaccuracies in their mental models and motivate their efforts to correct or revise their thinking. Cognitive transfer strategies that employ examples of how diversity learning can be applied to the work context, or having trainees create action plans (e.g., both short-term and long-term) for applying their learning, may help to enhance the perceived value for, and likelihood of, transfer.

The anxious trainee: Strategies for affective transfer. Challenge stems from emotional reactions that come from anxiety and can affect a trainee's willingness to learn. The anxious trainee may perceive diversity training as personally risky or threatening, and experience feelings that such training will undermine privileges currently enjoyed or that what they say during diversity training could be taken out of context and appear insensitive (Wiggins-Romesburg & Githens, 2018). Furthermore, diversity training can make the anxious trainee feel guilty about their ascribed status within the organization, making it

disturbing to confront their own biases and prejudices (Nemetz & Christensen, 1996). Alternatively, they may experience emotional reactions that can come from expectations of being singled out, used as an example, or asked to speak on behalf of a cultural group in diversity training (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2008).

Because trainee readiness may be influenced by the perceived threat of participating in diversity training, acknowledging fears associated with the training or providing trainees with goals for managing their emotions may help them reduce discomfort as a barrier to being involved in the training. Many researchers have acknowledged the importance of having trainees reflect on and dissect their own thought patterns regarding diversity, tolerance, racism, and other related topics (e.g., Pendry et al., 2007; Smith & Percy, 2019). For example, journaling has been frequently suggested as an effective tool for encouraging anxious trainees to reflect on their attitudes and thoughts (Brewis, 2019). Affective transfer strategies for eliciting and maintaining positive emotions or for reducing and managing negative emotions within the diversity training context—such as asking trainees to identify their emotions throughout the training—may be useful for validating their reactions, and may reduce their apprehensions associated with content engagement. In this way, the anxious trainee is able to view diversity training as more of a sensemaking process and can engage in an active learning process that involves reflection to gain understanding and to recognize anxious behavior and emotions. Additionally, providing anxious trainees with opportunities during the training to rehearse their responses to emotionally triggering situations may help to develop both comfort and skills for managing diversity-related experiences at work. Once such trainees are back in the work environment, providing them with reminders of emotion-regulation strategies or creating communities to encourage and support the use of such strategies may increase the likelihood of training transfer.

The overconfident trainee: Strategies for motivational transfer. In contrast to the defensive and anxious diversity learner personas, the overconfident diversity learner persona reflects how the trainee engages in diversity training as opposed to being unwilling to participate in learning. Overconfident trainees comprise a group of potential learners who view diversity training as an opportunity to demonstrate, rather than develop, their competence. Consequently, this form of challenge to diversity training is often overlooked. Because overconfident

trainees consider themselves particularly knowledgeable about, or experienced with, diversity, they may focus on their contributions to the training rather than on what might be personally gained from it. They may also see diversity training as an opportunity to compare and highlight their competency level relative to others' (see Kulik et al., 2007).

Although trainee readiness may be high, it may be for the wrong reasons. If overconfident trainees have prior experiences with diversity training, focusing them on the training as a learning opportunity, providing information on how its content can enhance work performance, or encouraging them to set learning goals may strengthen the personal value of the training. Strategies for promoting the development of a mastery orientation and learning effective strategies for navigating diversity-related situations may help to manage trainee overconfidence in diversity training. For example, framing errors as important to learning may negate the feeling of having to get everything right during training and increase the willingness of overconfident trainees to take risks and view mistakes as part of the learning process. Additionally, providing overconfident trainees with learning-oriented feedback may increase their willingness to experiment and challenge their mental models. Because overconfidence could cause trainees to revert to prior attitudes and behaviors, motivational strategies that encourage the application of learned competencies may prevent regression from occurring. Leader and peer support, or recognition and rewards for demonstrating new diversity skills, which develop the overconfident trainee's ability to engage in ongoing active learning about others and themselves and continuously practice their newly developed skills and competencies on the job, may increase the likelihood of transfer.

It is important to note that although we paired each persona with a self-regulatory process that accounted for key diversity training challenges unique to that particular persona, the challenges experienced across trainees are rarely this discrete. Many variations of these interactions can be present. For example, a trainee may be both resistant to and anxious about one or all stages of diversity training. Furthermore, diversity training strategies that include all self-regulatory processes may be employed to increase trainee effectiveness. Given that trainees may manifest hybrid personas in which beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are prevalent to differing degrees, we suggest that multiple approaches be simultaneously evaluated and deployed to enhance diversity training effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Although diversity training theory and practice have not kept pace with societal and organizational changes, they represent a turning point and provide an opportunity to advance theory on processes that drive diversity learning and transfer. Drawing from the diversity training and active learning literatures, we develop a process-based model of diversity training that recognizes how organizational conditions and the broader context in which training is situated may influence a trainee's motivation, learning, and training transfer. We consider the interplay among the design factors, the learning context, and learner characteristics in the pre-training, training, and post-training environments. We also explore the self-regulatory mechanisms through which learners can guide their own learning at each stage of diversity training. To illustrate the practical value of our approach, we apply our learner-centric process model to several prototypical diversity learner personas to highlight how our model might be used to address barriers that center on getting learners to participate in, learn from, and apply diversity training. It is our hope that our model encourages future work aimed at further evolving and modernizing this critical component of organizations' diversity initiatives.

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