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This chapter identifies pedagogical strategies promoting equity for all students. Historical roots of Inclusive Excellence (IE), theories surrounding IE, and ways to affirm student identity are described, as well as factors that may interfere with the adoption of inclusive pedagogy.

How Do You Achieve Inclusive Excellence in the Classroom?

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In June 2003 the Supreme Court's decisions on University of Michigan admissions affirmative action cases challenged institutions of higher education to reconsider their diversity approaches and make diversity a more central component of educational excellence. Although the ruling of *Gratz v. Bollinger* (the University of Michigan undergraduate admissions case) disallowed quotas, the ruling of *Grutter v. Bollinger* (the Michigan law school admissions case) preserved "universities' right to consider race as one of several relevant factors in the admissions decision" (Steele 2010, 137–138). The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) responded with a vision of diversity as an educational resource, not just an outcome. Of primary concern in AAC&U's "Making Excellence Inclusive" initiative is an expanded understanding of diversity and a commitment to inclusion, defined as follows:

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions. (Albertine 2011, 4)

The ideals of inclusive excellence call for institutions of higher education to recognize that an inclusive campus requires inclusive classrooms. Instructors creating inclusive classrooms adopt a definition of diversity that considers the multiple social identities of themselves and their students and examines how these identities are constructed; critically reflect upon their own subjectivity as educators; and consider systemic issues in their society, institutions, and teaching practices that inhibit student success. This chapter uses different disciplinary approaches to examine pedagogical research and practices to promote equity for all students.

What Are the Historical Roots of Inclusive Excellence?

Historical tracing of K–16 reforms to address growing diversity in classrooms began with ethnic studies movements that focused primarily on curriculum changes to increase multicultural understandings by highlighting the achievements of various ethnic groups (Banks 1996). In addition to including more diverse voices in the curriculum, institutions of higher education sought to increase access for students of color by changing recruiting, admission, and hiring practices (Williams, Berger, and McClendon 2005). Although these efforts expanded access for underrepresented groups, it became obvious that these students had a profoundly different experience than white students once they arrived on campus.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, growing evidence of an achievement gap between minority and white students in higher education necessitated a fundamental change in the approach to diversity (Bauman et al. 2003). Although the total college enrollment of minority students increased, the college participation rate for white students remained significantly higher than the rates for minority students (Bauman et al. 2003). In addition, regardless of academic preparation and despite a wide variety of isolated retention efforts, African American and Latino students continually earned lower grades, progressed at a slower pace, and dropped out at higher rates than their White peers (Massey et al. 2003). These disparities are particularly apparent in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), which have low numbers of graduates from racial and ethnic minorities as well as underrepresentation of women in some STEM areas (Seymour and Hewitt 1997).

These disparities led to a call for culturally responsive pedagogy that recognizes that diversity is about more than “the other” and that actively engaging in issues of diversity requires educators to recognize the intersectionality of individual differences and group social differences that are highlighted in the inclusive excellence definition of diversity. In addition, social change becomes a central component of the curriculum as educators and students examine the systemic causes of social inequalities and the social construction of inequality around issues of race, gender, social class, and culture (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993). Inclusive excellence holds this

idea at its core as it strives for an educational environment where the goal is academic success for all students.

What Theories Inform Inclusive Excellence in the Classroom?

The framework of inclusivity through pedagogy has been articulated by scholars in the field of multicultural education (Banks 2004, 2006; Gay 2004; Nieto and Bode 2008; Sleeter and Grant 2006). The grassroots of these movements are found in the works of activist philosophers such as Freire (1970), Greene (1973), and Dewey (1916). As leading scholars reconceptualize the social constructs of race and racism, academics of other disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, are also turning to the expanded notion of multicultural education found in the research of culturally responsive pedagogy (American Anthropological Association 1998; Johnson 2006; Tatum 1997).

Proponents of culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2000), also known as culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 2009), argue that teachers need to incorporate the experiences and perspectives of students in the classrooms, being responsive to diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds in designing curriculum, learning activities, classroom climate, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and assessment procedures (Gay 2004).

How Can Identities Be Affirmed?

Adopting educational theory that embraces difference and multiplicity of identities requires a significant shift in classroom practices. This section explores strategies for affirming identities in the classroom and increasing both student and instructor awareness of the impact of identity on educational practices. One step to creating an inclusive classroom environment is focusing on student validation.

Validation theory (Rendón 1994) acknowledges that low-income, non-traditional, and first-generation students struggle with isolation, lack of role models, and self-doubt in their ability to complete college and need validation from faculty and others in the academic environment. This is consistent with sociological research arguing that socioeconomic status and environmental (neighborhood-level) factors are the most important determinants of educational outcomes (Coleman 1966) and that the lack of supportive role models is a key factor (Wilson 1987). Through interviews with 132 first-year college students, Rendón (1994) found:

low-income students suddenly began to believe in themselves as capable college learners not so much because of their college involvement, but because some person(s), in- or outside-of-college took the initiative to reach out to

them to help them believe in themselves and in their innate capacity to learn.
(14)

Validation theory offers a solution to stereotype threat, which is a fear of confirming negative stereotypes. Steele (2010) identified stereotype threat as a phenomenon contributing to disparate educational outcomes. Although a member of an underrepresented group may not be conscious of fear, the threat provides a mental distraction, with a larger effect on more important tasks. Classroom experiences that minimize or negate stereotype threat increase student success, whereas experiences that reinforce stereotypes produce a performance gap greater than what can be explained by academic preparation. Instructors who communicate high standards and the expectation that students can meet the standards help students at risk for stereotype threat (Steele 2010). This indicates to the students that they will not be judged by a stereotype.

Instructors can validate students by learning students' names, ensuring the curriculum represents student backgrounds, working as learning partners with students, giving students the opportunity to be successful, and telling students "You can do this, and I am going to help you." Validation theory has been adopted as an effective means to develop teaching approaches with concern for more inclusive and liberating pedagogy (Bragg 2001; Jehangir 2009; Nuñez, Murakami-Ramalho, and Cuero 2010; Rendón 2009).

Barnett (2011) surveyed community college students and found that faculty validation led to a stronger sense of academic integration and increased students' intent to stay in college. Faculty validation included four components: students feeling known and valued, caring instruction, appreciation for diversity, and mentoring. Of these, caring instruction was the most important and included behaviors such as faculty willingness to help students, students' perceptions that the instructor genuinely cares about their learning and how they are doing outside of the classroom, written feedback on assignments, and students' perceptions that their personal and family history is valued in class.

A values affirmation exercise encourages self-validation to counteract stereotype threat. This involves an early intervention; at the beginning of a semester students write about their values, not necessarily relating them to course topics. This opportunity for reflection on positive, personally connected ideas had a lasting impact on grades and reduced the frequency of stereotype thoughts for middle schoolers (Sherman et al. 2013; Steele 2010) and for women in introductory physics (Miyake et al. 2010). Further, students who were taught an expansive view of intelligence—that hard work results in improvement, rather than a fixed view, earned better grades (Steele 2010).

Instructors can also reduce stereotype threat by reinforcing students' nonstereotyped identities and by presenting role models who succeeded

against stereotypes (Steele 2010). Female students who interacted with female “experts”—reading a biography of a successful female engineer, taking tests administered by a female undergraduate math major, or having a female calculus instructor—demonstrated more interest in STEM fields and greater self-efficacy (Stout et al. 2011).

Although instructors play an essential role in reducing stereotype threat, productive engagement with fellow students in classroom and co-curricular opportunities can also lead to greater student success. According to Espinosa, “Women of color who persisted in STEM frequently engaged with peers to discuss course content, joined STEM-related student organizations, participated in undergraduate research programs, had altruistic ambitions, and attended institutions with a robust community of STEM students” (2011, 209). Common experiences of being part of a group and meeting high standards in group work allowed women of color in STEM to develop their identities as scientists (Carlone and Johnson 2007).

How Can the Curriculum Be Desegregated?

Another way to create an inclusive classroom is to select course texts representing multiple perspectives. Hurtado and colleagues (2012) examined the 2010–2011 Diverse Learning Environments survey and found that academic validation was higher in courses that include materials about privilege, race/ethnicity, or gender and in courses that include opportunities for intensive dialogue between students of different backgrounds. Whether choosing speeches to show in a public speaking class, texts to read in an English class, or art to view in a painting course, instructors’ material selections reflect their ideological positions with respect to diversity. In discussing methods for teaching diversity in U.S. western women’s history, Jackson-Abernathy (2011) notes that although traditional textbooks may not include many stories about women, collections of essays, articles, and primary source collections on women have increased dramatically and can be included in courses. Similarly, Campbell (1991) argues for greater inclusion of speeches by women in courses on American public address. A color-blind approach, ignoring the existence of diversity, is ineffective. People of color respond to information presented in ways that demonstrate an institution recognizes and values diversity (Steele 2010).

Consideration of the order of course concepts is essential for creating an inclusive classroom. Recognizing that weak mathematical skills keep many students out of physics, Gautreau and Novemsky (1997) rearranged a general physics course to present concepts first, before introducing mathematical tools for problem solving. This prepared at-risk minority students to outperform classmates in a subsequent term.

In addition to ensuring students have the skills to complete coursework, instructors should also consider the students’ knowledge of threshold concepts. Threshold concepts are ideas students must learn in order

to advance their knowledge in a particular subject area (Meyer and Land 2003). Once the threshold concept is understood everything else begins to make more sense (Perkins 1999). Cousin (2010) argues that threshold concept theory can help in the construction of an inclusive curriculum because it forces instructors to pare down the content of their courses. The theory assumes that threshold concepts are challenging concepts that need to be returned to again and again and need to be taught in different ways to accommodate different ways of learning.

For example, *sociological imagination* (Mills 1959) is a threshold concept in sociology (Fujieda 2009). Understanding it allows students to grasp the overall sociological perspective and understand many other concepts they will encounter in the field. Aminoff's (1995) "family history exercise" is an inclusive learning strategy designed to teach sociological imagination. It is based upon the premises that intercultural knowledge and competence start through a process of self-examination and that the "best learning occurs when the content speaks to the learners' own experiences" (155). To this end, students interview a family member about their family's history, cultural practices, and religious traditions. The effectiveness of this process is largely due to the intercultural communication facilitated by small group discussion of the results: "In sharing the completed papers with class members in a small group, students become acutely aware of the degree to which human behavior is culturally determined. This awareness is central to viewing human difference as positive rather than problematic" (156). This example also illustrates that some threshold concepts have the potential to lead to liberation, self-discovery, and empathy as students are encouraged to bring their own perspectives into the classroom.

Additionally, instructors can reveal elements of their own histories as learning resources in the classroom. Instructors need to be comfortable acknowledging they do not know everything or sharing how they felt the first time they personally confronted new knowledge or experiences. Students then have an embodiment of certain issues and a person experienced in publicly discussing sensitive topics. Consistent with this, Dolinsky (2012) indicates:

I am an adjunct faculty member who teaches sociology courses on gender and sexuality. Both of these topics speak broadly to social issues at the structural level and more specifically to students' personal identities. Each semester on the first day of class, I openly identify as a lesbian to my students. I am intentional about this, because I believe that heightened visibility of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] faculty helps normalize difference in the classroom and fosters awareness and understanding of marginalized identities. It is a personal choice, and not one that I think is better than any other decision around coming out, but I am heartened that students in my courses have not seemed at all phased [sic] by my decision to openly share my identity with them. (para. 1)

This approach is risky, as the lines of authority between professor and student may erode. In a collection of essays by what sociologist Patricia Hill Collins calls “outsiders within the academy,” instructors discuss how they reveal their personal histories in the classroom (Kingston-Mann and Sieber 2001). Revelation can lead to conflict, embarrassment, and debate that energizes the class but may not produce long-term learning. Nonetheless, the editors argue that these struggles are worthwhile; with a realistic understanding of the complexity involved with truly inclusive teaching, instructors can more clearly recognize “teachable moments” and potential for transformations in their classrooms.

Learner-centered teaching necessarily requires that teachers give up some of the professional authority inherent in the teacher-centered model, as the revised curriculum and classroom dynamic will likely involve some shifting of power from teacher to students and perhaps a change in role from expert to facilitator of collaborative learning (Hanson and Silver 1998). This is particularly true for efforts to achieve inclusive excellence, because a fundamental goal is to give voice and power to marginalized people. Teachers in more privileged positions face the challenge of not being able to offer their own outsider’s perspective and may fear that they lack credibility when discussing issues related to oppression and marginality. On the other hand, coming from a more privileged position affords the ability to offer a critical perspective while avoiding assertions of bias (“she just hates white people,” for example), providing another sort of credibility and the opportunity to model sociological imagination.

Which Pedagogical Strategies Improve the Classroom Experience?

Along with reconsideration of course curriculum and the identities of both students and teachers, inclusivity can emerge from pedagogical strategies as well. An instructor’s classroom communication behaviors can have a dramatic impact upon student learning. One important communication concept is *nonverbal immediacy*; behaviors such as eye contact, gesture, movement, smiling, and a relaxed body position convey more immediacy (Mehrabian 1969). Studies have found that instructor immediacy behaviors are important for students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds (McCroskey et al. 1996; Powell and Harville 1990; Sanders and Wiseman 1990) and that immediacy behaviors increase students’ intentions to persist in college (Wheless et al. 2011), and motivation to learn (Allen, Witt, and Wheless 2006). Similarly, student participation can be encouraged through instructors’ use of confirming communication behaviors such as responding to student questions and demonstrating interest in student learning (Sidelinger and Booth-Butterfield 2010).

With a diverse student body, difficult classroom conversations about race, religion, sexuality, class, and culture are almost inevitable (Armitage

2011; Berlak 1999; McKee 2002; Simpson 2006), and the way such topics are introduced is important. Majority students can experience an identity threat, an unconscious fear of feeling racist or being seen as racist when interacting with minority students, which can discourage student–student interaction. Steele (2010) observed that white students anticipating a racially sensitive discussion chose to sit farther from black discussion partners than from white ones. However, if they were told the discussion would be a learning opportunity, they chose similar distances for any discussion partners. Other strategies to bridge the distance were less successful; if students were told they would not be judged by what they said or that differences in perspective were valued, they still maintained a greater distance. Because of such complexity, Bomberger (2004) suggests guidelines for conversations about race: carefully defining and framing the topic, promoting active and respectful listening, modeling appropriate behavior, generating community guidelines for conversations, using personal narrative, anticipating and addressing defensiveness, and building community.

Many studies recommend incorporating “active learning” strategies requiring student participation rather than lecturing for an entire course (Herron and Nurrenbern 1999). A statistics professor demonstrated that combining short lectures with problem-solving practice resulted in better performance on the final exam; students in the course thought statistics was harder but had more confidence in their abilities than students traditionally taught (Carlson and Winquist 2011). Physics without lectures gives students hands-on experience with equipment and observations of physical phenomena (Laws 1991); starting with concrete activities before introducing abstract terms and concepts helped students of different backgrounds succeed. Active learning has been shown to produce more equitable outcomes. As the proportion of active learning increased in an introductory biology course, to the point of eliminating lecture, student performance improved, with the greatest effect for students with weak backgrounds, primarily students of color (Haak et al. 2011). The researchers hypothesize that students with weaker high school preparation have little experience with analysis or application of concepts, so problem-solving practice is crucial.

Most successful active learning strategies involve student–student interaction in the classroom. Treisman discovered that successful Asian American calculus students studied in groups outside of class, whereas unsuccessful African American students, who had good math SAT scores, struggled with homework alone. He created group learning sessions for the African American students, giving them challenging problems to work on; this intervention resulted in success in calculus (Treisman 1992). Students who worked together learned that they were as competent as their classmates, spent less time searching for algebra errors and more time learning calculus, and were less likely to drop out.

In-class group work is also key in the previously mentioned statistics, physics, and biology classrooms. Research in STEM classrooms shows that

problem-solving skills are improved by collaborative work; students help each other, but they also help themselves by verbalizing their ideas (Cooper et al. 2008). Collaborative learning can lead to the development of community among learners and between learners and teachers. According to Sanchez (2007), the “development of a trusting community of learners is vital for critical, inclusive, culturally conscientious . . . teaching” (50) in the social sciences as well. Consistent with Freire and the tradition of culturally responsive pedagogy, Sanchez argues that conscientious teachers recognize the importance of developing meaningful relationships and learning that extends beyond the classroom: “Understanding how to relate to others in a diverse group is preparatory to developing more complex social relationships as a member of a larger democratic society” (52).

According to Rosser (1997), assignment of students to groups by instructors is important in achieving inclusive excellence and helping to build such relationships. When students choose their own teams they tend to choose people like themselves, and minority students can feel left out. Although distributing minority students over the groups might expose majority students to minority perspectives, isolating a minority student may lead to the student dropping out of the group, class, major, and even college. Developing groups with a critical mass, or at least more than one individual of minority race or gender, leads to less isolation and exclusion.

“Peer instruction” refers to Mazur’s (1997) implementation of group learning. Students use a classroom response system to answer a complex multiple choice question (ConceptTest) based on their reading or a minilecture. If students disagree on the answer Mazur asks them to discuss possible answers with a neighbor before responding again. Requiring students to interact in the classroom in a noncompetitive situation and emphasizing conceptual understanding resulted in greater achievement and equity: better performance on a standard assessment (the Force Concept Inventory) for all students, and a decreased gender gap, when compared to traditional lecture presentations (Lorenzo, Crouch, and Mazur 2006). When the format was changed to be completely interactive by adding small group work, assessment showed further gains and an even smaller gender gap. More recent work showed that a calculus-based physics course taught using peer instruction retained more students in STEM majors than did a traditional lecture course (Watkins and Mazur 2013).

How Can Assessment of Student Work Be Reconsidered?

Instructors creating inclusive classrooms also consider how they evaluate students. For example, because stereotype threat increases for high-stakes assignments (Steele 2010), educators can start with low-stakes assignments to build confidence. Exams can be scheduled to help students succeed; Nelson (1996) observed that first-year students from weaker high school programs did not realize that professors would have higher expectations

for their work, so he started giving exams twice. They covered the same topics but had different questions and were separated in time. This allowed students who had initially underprepared to demonstrate mastery of the material and earn a better grade.

Another example comes from the field of composition, in which scholars and teachers have debated for decades how to manage the language habits of students from a wide variety of backgrounds. Although composition courses have traditionally taught and evaluated students' performance in "Standard English," alternative ways of allowing students to enact their own language have been proposed (e.g., Wible 2006). Center (2004) suggests that talking with students about contrastive rhetoric—"the exploration of the differences between preferred writing patterns of various cultures"—could offer a way to help students from diverse backgrounds to "move from a paradigm in which they are failing in 'explaining my opinion by my own words' . . . to a paradigm in which they are in charge of making a decision to explain their opinions in a form that makes sense to American readers" (303).

Dewey (1916) argued for giving students more control over how to demonstrate learning. Van Auken (2013) studied the impact of allowing students in a rural sociology course to choose the creative final product for semester-long research projects. Students created a wide variety of artifacts, including a scrapbook, a photo essay, a short story, paintings, dioramas, children's books, and an original song performed with self-accompaniment on guitar. According to Van Auken,

One student, who struggled mightily with writing papers throughout the semester, illuminated on the projector screen a picture he had drawn while he read a poem he had written about the meaning of the work and its connection to the nature of the family farmer from his group's case study. Another student—a quiet young woman with some limitations to her English ability—used my workshop prompt to consider a question that had become important over the semester, which for her was, "What is your ethnicity?" This spurred her to interview her immigrant mother and create an interesting photo essay about her ethnic group's traditional food system as compared to the industrialized Western system. Such students in particular seemed to respond well to this component of the semester project, while a variety of students indicated that they appreciated both the choice of format and the challenge of being asked to convey creatively their learning. (212)

Student choice yielded positive outcomes, including increased engagement and inclusivity as students delve into issues relevant to *them* and their culture, feel more comfortable participating in discussion, and take greater ownership of their learning (Van Auken 2013).

Giving students more chances to demonstrate their learning and more control over the ways in which they do so requires that instructors be

willing to change their methods and give up some control over the classroom, which can be barriers to the creation of inclusive classrooms.

What Factors Interfere with the Adoption of Inclusive Pedagogy?

As the many examples described here show, information about best practices for achieving inclusive excellence in college classrooms is widely available; however, educators experience barriers on personal and institutional levels that delay transformation of courses. According to Joseph (2012), efforts to make pedagogy inclusive tend to take three forms in Western higher educational systems:

1. The *economic rationalist* approach, capitalizing on increased diversity in society by diversifying the “customer” base through global expansion or increased online offerings
2. The *integrative* approach, tacking intercultural dimensions onto existing curricula, such as through a surface analysis of cultural differences
3. The *transformational* approach, a critical, sociological or social action-based (Banks 1979) method asking how knowledge works, why a particular curriculum is being used, and how it is structured based on race, class, gender, and other factors.

Joseph advocates the third approach, which hinges upon professors thoughtfully engaging in curricular transformation to create an inclusive and even liberating classroom environment. However, in an increasingly market-based society, the push for transformation often comes from disciplines and perspectives—such as sociology and feminist theory—on the margins, lacking the political power necessary to effect change. Teachers therefore need to use their own agency to confront the powerful structure of the status quo and create coalitions that can respond collectively (Joseph 2012).

Professors may need to reinvent their teaching to transform a course into an inclusive one. Few university instructors have formal training in pedagogy or a habit of reading educational journals and rely more on experience and observations than on published research (Henderson 2005). Training is time consuming, and along with the work of changing course content and pedagogy, competes with other demands on instructors’ time. A recent study (Considine et al. 2014) found a variety of barriers to implementation of new pedagogies. Educators had limited time to select new texts, revise lesson plans, and work closely with at-risk students, and they misjudged the amount of class time required for student-centered learning activities. Other pragmatic challenges included the expense for students of new texts and the difficulty of facilitating student interaction in a tiered lecture hall. Educators

also needed to adjust their self-concepts; although disciplinary expertise acquired in graduate school is a source of self-confidence for instructors, a limited introduction to inclusive pedagogy left them unsure of their abilities.

Institutional practices for teaching evaluations also influence the decision to change. Instructors have less incentive to change to learner-centered methods if they perceive a low weight for teaching effectiveness in personnel decisions; if they have had no formal training in pedagogy; or, if only traditional evaluations of teaching (numerical ratings and comments) are used rather than classroom observations, interviews of graduating seniors, or surveys of graduates' professional attainments (Walczyk, Ramsey, and Zha 2007).

What Further Research Should Be Conducted?

Although there are many publications describing effective ways to teach, and many organizations sponsor workshops for new instructors, many instructors have not tried any research-based active learning strategies, and not all who try one continue to use it. A survey of over 700 physics instructors found that those who are high users of such strategies “are more likely to read journals about teaching, attend talks and workshops about teaching, be female, be satisfied with meeting instructional goals, publish fewer research articles, and teach smaller classes” (Henderson, Dancy, and Niewiadomska-Bugaj 2012, 11). Class size did not have a significant effect on use of active learning, but instructors of large classes used fewer strategies. This study highlights some of the factors influencing adoption of inclusive pedagogy; however, additional research is needed on the individual and structural barriers to implementation.

In addition, we need more research that examines how multiple social identities (such as race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation) work together to create different experiences and needs in the inclusive classroom (Hurtado et al. 2012). Research has focused on one identity characteristic, such as race or gender, leaving a dearth of literature examining how these identities intersect as students and instructors interact. Likewise, we need more research on the intersection of multiple teaching strategies, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, where the literature on creating inclusive classrooms is limited.

Nevertheless, scholars of teaching and learning have identified an impressive diversity of curricular and pedagogical approaches that enable all types of students to reach their educational goals. Although the studies described here offer only a small sample, we hope they will inspire experimentation in the classroom and further exploration of the literature.

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