

# Read All About It

BOOK CIRCLES AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TOPICS IN DIVERSITY

Erin K. Gorter & Christian Gomez-California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

## Why, Why, Why

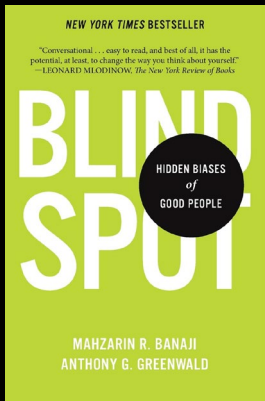
- Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) topics are pressing need in California (Matt Patton, personal communication, June 23, 2020)
- American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE) (2017) called for strengthening of inclusive culture within organization
- DEI critical in learning spaces (Howard, 2010), yet perceptions of DEI topics vary in the eyes of school-based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers (Lavergne et al., 2012)
- Book circles are effective and allow for peer interaction (Blanton et al., 2019)

To transform, educators need to "evaluate others' points of view constructively and respectfully"

(Hale & Fisher, 2013, p. 11)

How DID they do it?!

**Selection:** Reading ideas were selected from state agricultural education leadership. The facilitator selected the final title.



**Scheduling:** State teaching listserv was used to poll teachers for ideal day and time for meeting. Interested teachers signed up via a Google form to be included in future correspondence. Calendar invitations and reminders were sent via email.

**Implementation:** Main Zoom room with breakouts for smaller discussions. Suggested questions were provided to guide sessions. All participants reconvened in main room for closing comments from each break-out room.

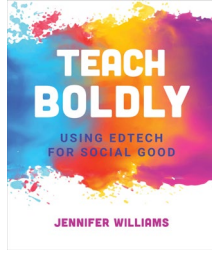
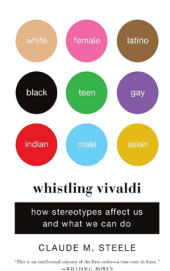
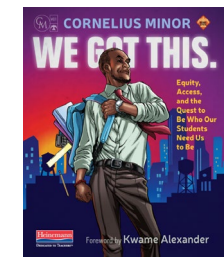
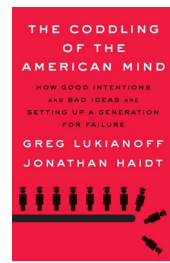
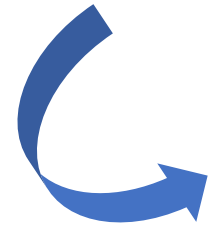
## This one's on us...

There are no costs associated with implementation of book circles, other than participants being willing to purchase their own books. Access to a web-based meeting application, such as Zoom is needed.

## The IMPLICATIONS...

75 teachers signed up 20-30 attended at least 1 or all 4 sessions

4 additional book circle sessions have been held since the inaugural session in July of 2020 and have included additional titles



## Project facilitators say:

Future events will include additional titles across a breadth of topics. Changes will include establishing a single meeting time, encouraging those to participate without completing book, and providing links to foster reading strategies. Those planning to host their own book circles should make sure to frame meetings with statements for

"This is a space for discourse not debate"

"The only person I can change is me"

"Make sure all have opportunity to share"

## Our Sources Say...

American Association for Agricultural Education. (2017). *2017-2019 Strategic plan*. <http://aaaeonline.org/resources/Documents/National/AAAE2017-2020StrategicPlan.pdf>

Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. Delacorte Press.

Blanton, B. S., Broemmel, A. D., & Rigell, A. (2019). Speaking volumes: Professional development through book studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 57(3), 1014-1044. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219867327>

Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 9(3/4), 381-391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>

Hale, J. A., & Fisher, M. (2013). *Upgrade your curriculum*. ASCD.

Howard, T. C. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms*. College Teachers Press.

Lavergne, D. D., Jones, W. A., Lark, A., & Elbert, C. D. (2012). The effect of teacher demographic and personal characteristics on perceptions of diversity inclusion in agricultural education programs. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 53(3), 84-97. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2012.03084>

Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2018). *The coddling of the American mind: How good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure*. Penguin Press.

Minor, C., & Alexander, K. (2019). *We got this: Equity, access, and the quest to be who our students need us to be*. Heinemann.

Steele, C. (2010). *Whistling Vivaldi: And other clues to how stereotypes affect us*. W.W. Norton & Company.

Williams, J. (2019). *Teach boldly: Using edtech for social good*. International Society for Technology in Education.