

# Stereotype Threat & Pedagogies for Minimizing its Effects

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Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2016



ECOLOGY AND  
EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Project Overview

- As scientists, we study how changes in climate and our physical environment alter biodiversity and species interactions in an ecological community. However, we lack a venue where we can discuss how the academic climate affects the diversity of ecologists and evolutionary biologists in academia. Therefore, we created a discussion group on how stereotype threat, unconscious bias, and privilege influence interactions that faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates have in the classrooms and research labs of the Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology.
- We led a reading and discussion group during Winter 2016 on the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion in biology classrooms and labs
- We discussed stereotype threat as it came up in our readings of *Whistling Vivaldi* and a few corresponding academic papers. *Whistling Vivaldi* is a great introductory text on stereotype threat, its consequences, and impact on undergraduate students' experiences in the field/discipline
- 6 meetings of 90 minutes each

## Participants

### Discussion Organizers and Co-Leaders

- Jo Kurdziel
- Cindee Giffen
- Marian Schmidt
- Susan Cheng

### Members of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

- 6 faculty
- 3 post-docs
- ~6 graduate students
- 1 staff member
- 1 undergraduate



Pictured L to R: Cheng, Kurdziel, Giffen, and Schmidt

## Key Insights

### Participant Interests:

- The scientific nature of *Whistling Vivaldi*
- A safe teaching circle, support group, or space to talk about broad teaching and mentoring concerns
- Learning about experiences of other participants in their classrooms

### Participant Quotes:

- "This reading group has become a valuable outlet to discuss and learn about important issues that we do not get a chance to talk about in the department."
- "It has been so interesting and challenging to have these conversations as we all bring our own social identities and comfort (or lack thereof) to discussion and reflect on how things work in our classrooms and beyond"
- "The group has been very important in reaching collective understandings of how issues related to inclusiveness affect everyone and how it affects classroom learning."

### Going Forward:

- Continue meeting and read *The Difference* and/or other literature related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion issues and participants' interests
- Summarize a 45-minute presentation to share findings with the department
- Q & A with a social scientist? Co-sponsor a seminar speaker whose research is DEI related?

## Artifacts

- 2-3 page summaries:
  - Stereotype threat
  - Classroom Climate
  - Values Affirmation
  - Course Structure and Materials
  - Providing constructive feedback



**Article**  
**Gender Gaps in Achievement and Participation in Multiple Introductory Biology Classrooms**  
Sarah L. Eddy,<sup>1\*</sup> Sara E. Brownell,<sup>2\*</sup> and Mary Pat Wenderoth<sup>3</sup>

**Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students**

**DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE**  
**A recipe for change: Creating a more inclusive academy**

### For a Diverse Faculty, Start With Retention

Recruiting underrepresented faculty without fixing retention problems creates a revolving door, not long-term change, writes Kerry Ann Rockquemore.

By Kerry Ann Rockquemore // January 6, 2016

**Elite male faculty in the life sciences employ fewer women**

Jason M. Sheltzer<sup>1</sup> and Joan C. Smith<sup>2\*</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, <sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, <sup>3</sup>School of Management, and <sup>4</sup>Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520

### Article

**Increasing Persistence in Undergraduate Science Majors: A Model for Institutional Support of Underrepresented Students**

Brit Toven-Lindsey,<sup>1</sup> Marc Levis-Fitzgerald,<sup>2</sup> Paul H. Barber,<sup>3</sup> and Tama Hasson<sup>4</sup>

**How To Actually Be An Ally To Students Of Color On College Campuses And Beyond**



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Males Under-Estimate Academic Performance of Their Female Peers in Undergraduate Biology Classrooms**

Daniel Z. Grunspan<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Sarah L. Eddy<sup>3\*</sup>, Sara E. Brownell<sup>4</sup>, Benjamin L. Wiggins<sup>1</sup>, Allison J. Crowe<sup>5</sup>, Steven M. Goodreau<sup>6</sup>



**Strength in diversity**

Richard B. Freeman and Wei Huang reflect on a link between a team's ethnic mix and highly cited papers.

## Resources

- Whistling Vivaldi* by Dr. Claude M. Steele



**whistling vivaldi**

how stereotypes affect us and what we can do

CLAUDE M. STEELE

"This is an intellectual odyssey of the first order—a true tour de force."  
—WILLIAM C. BOWEN

### Constructive feedback in cross-race interactions

Janet B. Ruscher,<sup>1</sup> Devin L. Wallace,<sup>1</sup> Kristin M. Walker,<sup>1</sup> and Lindsay H. Bell<sup>1</sup>

### Reducing the Gender Achievement Gap in College Science: A Classroom Study of Values Affirmation

Akira Miyake,<sup>1\*</sup> Lauren E. Kost-Smith,<sup>2</sup> Noah D. Finkelstein,<sup>2</sup> Steven J. Pollock,<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey L. Cohen,<sup>2</sup> Tiffany A. Ho<sup>2</sup>

### The Mentor's Dilemma: Providing Critical Feedback Across the Racial Divide

Geoffrey L. Cohen  
Claude M. Steele  
Lee D. Ross

TEACHING FOR RETENTION IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND MATH DISCIPLINES: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY

Marie Kendall Brown  
Chad Hershock  
Cynthia J. Finelli  
Chris O'Neal

## Next Steps



- A new book for the reading group: *The Difference*
- Working group or other support for folks to share syllabi, course policies, assignments, and strategies for inclusive teaching