

Microaggressions in the Classroom: Creating Inclusive Spaces

Student Life Multicultural Center | Social Justice Engagement

Learning Outcomes

- Identify language and actions that may be harmful to students
- Gain valuable skills for communicating about diversity
- Understand the ways you can learn from and teach about diversity

Guidelines

- "I" statements
- Real examples
- Brave space
- Confidentiality

Core Concepts

- Intent vs. Impact
- Pile on Principle
- Explain Away
- In-Group vs. Out-Group Language



What is a microaggression?

Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile or negative messages toward marginalized group members (Sue, 2007).

Example

Breaking It Down...

- Intent
 - Satisfy our curiosity
- •Impact
 - Interrogation
- Best Bet
 - •"May I ask what your ethnicity is?"
 - •Believe people when they give you an answer

"What are you?" "Where are you really from?"



Example

Breaking It Down...

- •Intent
 - Compliment
- •Impact
 - Foreigner assumption
 - Racial profiling
- Best Bet
 - •Be cautious of assumptions

"Wow, you speak English really well!"

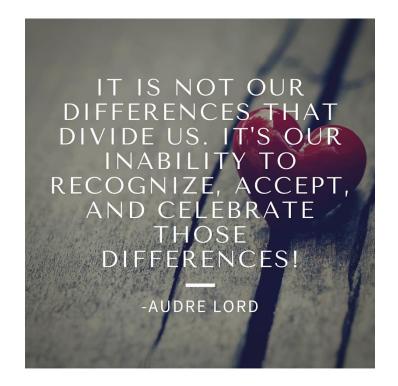


Example

Breaking It Down...

- •Intent
 - •We are unprejudiced
 - •It *shouldn't* matter
- •Impact
 - Dismissal of experiences
- •Best Bet
 - •Be authentic! We all have bias in some form; it's best not to pretend

"I don't see race" or "I'm colorblind"



Microaggressions in class

- Continuing to mispronounce the names of students who have previously corrected you
- Singling out students in class because of their perceived race, ethnicity, or background
- Making jokes at the expense of certain identity groups
- Assuming what language a student speaks

Things to watch

- Stereotyping and making assumptions
- Assuming a student's gender and pronouns
- Inserting your opinion that might favor (or oppose) certain identities

What can you do?

- Create inclusive environments by establishing classroom expectations
- Be aware of your class demographics and patterns (e.g. who you are calling on)
- With class speakers or videos, who is represented and who is not?
- Recognize students' behavior and microaggressions and respond

What can you do?

- Analyze your own biases
- Learn from others
- Don't be defensive
- Be open to discussing your attitudes and biases that might have hurt others
- Be an ally to stand against all forms of bias and discrimination

Responding

- When you are confronted: listen, understand, dialogue, don't "explain away"
- When you need to confront a student: educate, invite respectful dialogue, role model inclusive behavior, seek resources

Resources

- Microaggressions in the Classroom: http://otl.du.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/MicroAggressionsInClas sroom-DUCME.pdf
- Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestations, Dynamics, and Impact by Derald Wing Sue
- Student Life Multicultural Center
- HR Training: "That's Not What I Meant..."
- Kirwan Institute Implicit Bias Training



Questions

Thank you!

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