

## Microaggressions in School Part 1

**Link:** [MICROAGGRESSIONS IN THE CLASSROOM - YouTube](#) [May 2014 (18 mins)]

Focused Arts Media Education

This video highlights college students' descriptions of microaggressions. One explains, "A microaggression is something that someone says to someone else without knowing that it might be offensive." Another says, "It hurts, that is how I know that it is a microaggression." A third states that, "It is not like outright racism but is something like almost unconscious in the way that you view people." The moderator expands, "Most microaggressions are subtle and indirect but they occur frequently in the daily interactions of members of historically underrepresented groups and most often people who commit microaggressions think of themselves as well-intentioned, non-racist, non-sexist people." BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and women students describe microaggressions from peers and staff regarding their appearance, intelligence, interests, and where they are "from". Fallout of microaggressions in education—especially if unaddressed—is that individuals who are the recipients of these comments and actions feel as if they do not belong. They will not be seen as individuals and will carry the responsibility to represent an identity group. And, for example, young Black men having to convey that they are 'safe' for others to be around.

There are three kinds of microaggressions:

- **Microassaults** or overt discrimination that is intentional and meant to hurt.
- **Microinsults** that convey that the person targeted belongs to a disrespected group, but for example, that the person is an exception, better than expected considering the identity group. Disguised—or intended—as a "compliment," it is an insult.
- **Microinvalidations** such as, "a comment or action that dismisses the experiences of historically disadvantaged group members"; examples include a Latina wishing for more BIPOC educators which is met with rolling eyes, or a statement of "color-blindness" by whites.

Antidotes in education for a microaggression might include naming it, or "calling out" or "calling it in," and modeling as adults that we talk about what just happened. When adults—professors, teachers, administrators-- as power holders find that they have microaggressed, consider how to make an apology by naming what happened and listening carefully to the other person—and not making the same mistake again.

Common microaggressions in the classroom include: Mispronouncing names; continually using the wrong pronoun; ignoring women and girls, while calling on males; calling on the white students while ignoring students of color; scheduling tests during religious holidays; ignoring access to materials needed when assigning projects; using heteronormative language.

Teenagers Discuss Microaggressions and Racism #HatchKids - YouTube [Feb 2015 (2 mins)]

Teens restate some of the micro-aggressive comments directed toward them in schools and ask of us all to, "Think of what you say and how it will affect the person you are saying it to."

**Link:** [LISTEN: How Do You Respond to Microaggressions? - YouTube](#) [2021 (4 mins)]

Pacific Lutheran University



Those with privilege often miss when and how their comments and actions become microaggressions. Where that privilege does not exist, it is clear. “People often don’t understand the impact of their words or their comments or something that has become a colloquialism in regularly exchanged conversation in our culture... and that [that] was not their [the speaker’s] intent at all.” Another student responds, “At the end of the day, it does not matter about intent because it matters how it impacted you [the person to whom the microaggression is directed].” We need to stop excusing microaggressions because the intent was not to harm and emphasize the impact of comments and actions on person(s) or group(s) targeted. Otherwise, our silence conveys agreement.

**Additional Resource:**

[Recognizing and Responding to Microaggressions in the Classroom NCSU.EDU](https://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/center-for-diversity-and-inclusion/recognizing-and-responding-to-microaggressions-in-the-classroom)