Berk's Law

MICROAGGRESSIONS TRILOGY: Part 3. Microaggressions in the Classroom[*]

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NOTE: This article is the final installment in a series of three articles about microaggressions. All of the articles are tailored specifically to help enable faculty developers, provosts and directors of diversity and training, faculty, and administrators to address the most critical issues related to this topic in higher education. Specific responses to and strategies for dealing with microaggressions affecting students and instructors in the classroom are described in this article.

(*VICTIM:* African-American female senior): *"With the Black students, it's very hard to be one of the few women in certain classes, like engineering or something like that, because sometimes the teacher doubts you because you are the only Black person"… "White people in class like to talk a lot because they don't have to think of the repercussions. What [I say] is likely to be assumed to represent all Black, queer women, but what a White student says will not be taken to represent all Whites."* Caplan & Ford (2014, pp. 41, 49)

Introduction

Do you remember the definition of microaggressions from Part 1 or 2 (Berk, 2017a, 2017b) or other sources? Me neither. Here is Sue's (2014) latest definition: "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalized status in society" (slide 8) (for details, see Berk, 2017a).

In a magazine interview, student Liam Baronofsky (University of MD) defined a microaggression: "like one paper cut, so it's something small, but it hurts the person at the core of their identity level. But it happens so often; you come home every day with like 15 paper cuts…and it really hurts" (Amenabar, 2016, p. 29). That simile to represent the effects of microaggressions appears in other articles and blogs (Gin, 2015). Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) expressed it this way: "[each microaggression] is a toxic raindrop over time [which has] negative cumulative effects on its victim's well-being falling corrosively into learning environments" (p. 157). Mayock (2016) used "shrapnel" to capture the impact of gender microaggressions in academia. Whether the figure of speech is paper cuts, toxic raindrops, or shrapnel, the effects can be devastating to the victims (Berk, 2017a).

Implicit bias and microaggressions in the classroom, counseling center, residence hall, student union, and admissions committee meeting are very different from those that occur in the workplace between colleagues. The present article is a user's manual for practitioners to educate students and employees about how to identify, eliminate, and re-

spond to microaggressions. It includes (1) examples of student-related microaggressions, including the *Student Microaggression Inventory*, and (2) guidelines for professional development and training workshops to respond to microaggressions at the institutional and individual levels.

Examples of Student-Related Microaggressions

"Self-Report" Qualitative Research Base

There have been numerous qualitative studies at several universities, colleges, and community colleges to obtain student input on diversity issues and experiences with microaggressions. Most are primarily retrospective in design relying only on students' memories of the microaggressions based on small samples using focus groups or interviews (Boysen, 2012; Boysen, Vogel, Cope, & Hubbard, 2009; Capodilupo et al., 2010; Clark et al., 2014; Guzman, Trevino, Lubuguin, & Aryan, 2010; Hall & Sandler, 1982; Kim & Kim, 2010; Lewis, Mendenhall, & Harwood, 2013; Poolokasingham, Spanierman, Kleiman, & Houshmand, 2014; Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, Lin, et al., 2009; Watkins, LaBarrie, & Appio, 2010).

A few are medium- to large-scale surveys based on questionnaires and/or interviews of students (Caplan & Ford, 2014; Harwood et al., 2015; Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012; Portman, Bui, Ogaz, & Treviño, 2013; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Students even conducted one about faculty members' microaggressions (instructor→student) (Portman et al., 2013). Also, there have been spontaneous student surveys and interviews that resulted in photo and dramatic productions identifying microaggressions at Fordham University (Nigatu, 2013), Harvard University (I, Too, Am Harvard, 2014; Vingiano, 2014), and Oxford University (Edds, 2014; I, Too, Am Oxford, 2014).

These investigations in all of their different uncontrolled forms rely exclusively on self-report. Further, the focus groups, in many cases, were contaminated with self-selection bias and the team leaders and participants were predisposed to endorse microaggressions (Lilienfeld, 2017). These design limitations, especially "mono-source bias" of only self-report (Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000), prompted a call to move beyond that research ap-

proach (Lau & Williams, 2010; Wong et al., 2014). It is preferable instead to use longitudinal studies in naturalistic settings (Lilienfeld, 2017) and time-intensive studies of day-to-day experiences with microaggressions (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012; Ong & Burrow, 2017; Ong et al., 2013). Only the researchers of the Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) study used classroom observations to record microaggressions in vivo.

Student→Student and Instructor/Advisor/ Staff→Student Microaggressions

Microaggressions involving students as victims can occur student→student, instructor→student, advisor→student, and staff→student. The venues may include classrooms, labs, student union, library, counseling and health services centers, residence halls, academic departments, instructor and advisor offices, fraternities/sororities, student affairs and financial aid offices, and just about anywhere else on campus. They also can appear online, especially on social media or the course website as cyberbullying.

A microaggression does not require many words. A Suffolk University professor's comment on a Latina student's paper read in front of the class: "This is not your language," challenged the quality of her English and her identity (Zamudio-Suaréz, 2016a). Examples of two types of microaggressions from the Harwood et al. (2015) and Portman et al. (2013) surveys follow:

1. Student→Student

- "As an African-American female, I often feel alienated or silenced in small group discussions with dismissive comments, not acknowledging my contributions, or not asking for my opinions."
- "I've felt uncomfortable in class when students were talking about how Hispanics have an easier time than Caucasians getting into college because universities need to fill their quota."
- "I'm the only Asian student in class and everyone expects me to be a math whizz and help them with their problems."

2. Instructor→Student

- "I felt like my professor automatically assumed I cannot possibly be here on my

own merit. He looks right through me because someone in admissions must have made a mistake. Girls don't do science, but Black girls especially don't."
- "You're Asian! Can you tell us what Japanese think about our trade policies?"
- A White professor tells a Black student who happens to be tall: "Why are you in my chemistry class? Shouldn't you be playing basketball?"

Most Common Microaggressions

Among the large-scale surveys of students' experiences as victims of microaggressions, two conducted at the University of Illinois and University of Denver are especially informative. Specific results from those surveys follow.

University of Illinois survey (Harwood et al., 2015). This survey received a 45% response rate; more than 4800 students of color completed an online questionnaire which generated 800 examples of racial microaggressions. The top 10 most commonly described microaggressions committed by instructors and students are listed below (p. 6) (*NOTE:* Most of these can apply to members of all underrepresented groups.):
- Hearing/reading stereotypes in the content of lecture and other course materials
- Being dismissed or ignored by the instructor before or after class
- Hearing inappropriate comments made by instructors before or after class
- Listening to the perpetuation of unaddressed stereotypes during classroom discussion
- Being called on in the classroom to offer the "student of a particular racial, gender, LGBTQ, etc. perspective"
- Receiving hostile reactions to participation in the classroom discussion
- Being excluded from participating in a group project
- Experiencing racial jokes and teasing in the labs
- Being discouraged during meetings with one's academic advisor (e.g., "racial steering" out of certain majors, which are called "sundown majors" with few students of color)

- Overhearing racist conversations between students in the classroom

University of Denver survey (Portman et al., 2013). This survey conducted by students documented the following 20 violations by instructors that were described by students:
- Failing to learn to pronounce or continuing to mispronounce the names of students after they have corrected you
- Scheduling tests and project due dates on religious or cultural holidays
- Setting low expectations for students from particular groups, neighborhoods, or feeder patterns
- Calling on, engaging and validating one sex, class, or race of students while ignoring other students during class
- Assigning student tasks or roles that reinforce particular sex roles or not allowing all students flexibility across roles and responses
- Using inappropriate humor in class that degrades students from different groups
- Using the term "illegals" to reference undocumented students
- Hosting debates in class that places students from groups who may represent a minority opinion in class in a difficult position
- Denying the experiences of students by questioning the credibility and validity of their stories
- Assigning class projects or creating a classroom or school procedures that are heterosexist, sexist, or racist or that promote other kinds of oppression, even inadvertently
- Using sexist language
- Using heteronormative metaphors or examples in class
- Continuing to misuse pronouns even after a student, transgender or not, indicates their preferred gender pronoun
- Assigning projects without consideration of differences in socioeconomic class status, thus inadvertently penalizing students with fewer financial resources
- Assuming all students have access to and are proficient in the use of computers and

- applications for communications about school activities and academic work
- Assuming that students of particular ethnicities must speak another language or must not speak English
- Discouraging students from working on projects that explore their own social identities
- Asking students with hidden disabilities to identify themselves in class
- Forcing students with non-obvious disabilities to "out" themselves or discuss them publicly
- Ignoring student-to-student microaggressions, even when the interaction is not course-related

Student Microaggression Inventory (SMI)

Some of the research about student microaggressions indicates that the most frequent aggressors are other students, while the authors of the community college study (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015) reported that the most common aggressors were the instructors. Beyond the previous samples and descriptions, a collection of 50 microaggressions in the forms of student→student and instructor/advisor/staff→student extracted from the preceding surveys (Harwood et al., 2015; Portman et al., 2013) was assembled into a self-assessment *Student Microaggression Inventory* (*SMI*) (see Appendix). In this inventory, the items are presented in the actual words of the students and instructors. (*NOTE:* A smaller random sample of 25 microaggressions from those 50 can also be drawn for different applications.)

Administer the *SMI* to students to raise their consciousness and sensitivity levels about what they and their classmates are experiencing. Also, test the instructors to help them gain a perspective and understanding of the students' experiences. The results should remain confidential, but a trained facilitator can use those examples to begin an open dialogue and discussion with students and faculty. Additional instructions for using the results from the *SMI* are given in a subsequent section.

Student→Instructor Microaggressions

In addition to the most common insults, shuns, and slights, there are student verbal and nonverbal attacks on the underrepresented faculty from racial and ethnic groups, faculty who are members of the LGBTQ community and religious minorities, and women faculty. In these cases, students are the aggressors and instructors are the victims. These microaggressions may occur in class, outside of class at formal or informal gatherings, or online, such as on social media or the course website. Instructors are also targeted by students in their mid-course and end-of-course ratings in class or online, especially in the open comments (Guzman, 2008; Sandler et al., 1996; Schmidt, 2017). Here are a few examples from Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris (2012):

- "As an African-American woman professor, I was challenged about things like 'how do you know that?' or I was tested and questioned to give them anything less than an A."
- "I am mindful of every look or stare, of every whisper, and I am cognizant of the ever-present undercurrent of White allegiances throughout the course."
- "White students feel entitled to be discourteous, arrogant, and abrasive. They feel very comfortable lashing out. Many days I feel incompetent, disconsolate, and enraged, and I simply want to give up."
- "An online post specifically named me as a 'feminazi.' The note was accompanied by an image of a swastika dripping with blood, framed by a pink triangle, and signed by Fred Phelps (the leader of the God Hates Fags movement)."
- "What my Black students saw was a Black girl [professor] who talked like a White girl, had been given privileges that they could only dream about and thus thought she was better than her students, even though that couldn't be further from the truth."
- "I always felt they underestimated me. It was almost like the mammy syndrome. 'Oh, Mammy, I feel bad; take care of me, mammy.' But they forgot Mammy had a brain and the same kind of PhD as others. But, 'You's still the mammy.'"

How Do You Respond to Microaggressions?

Just reading these microaggressions and the ones in the inventory may suggest possible solutions to the problem, but, as you have thought about it, you have probably concluded that it simply isn't that easy. If you have been guilty of inflicting any of these insults, have been a victim, or have witnessed instructors and students who have committed some of these microaggressions, what are you supposed to do? Where do you begin? How do you respond to fix this problem?

The list of institutional action steps to respond to microaggressions described in Part 2 of this trilogy (Berk, 2017b) provide a starting point and foundation for addressing microaggressions in the workplace. However, particular attention should focus on the issues in the classroom and all forms of microaggressions involving students on campus and online. It is a matter of which student activists have demonstrated on campuses nationwide. They have attempted to raise awareness of microaggressions and the lack of diversity and inclusion at institutions such as Dartmouth College, Colgate University, University of Virginia, University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan, University of Missouri, and UCLA (Harper & Davis, 2016; Jaschik, 2015; Kingkade, 2015).

Despite arguments by Campbell and Manning (2014, 2015) and Barbash (2015) that microaggressions are just part of a "culture of victimhood" and that marginalized students are overly sensitive, easily offended, and unable to handle small interpersonal matters on their own, the mounting corpus of research about microaggressions tethered to their pernicious consequences cannot be dismissed. Student surveys of microaggressions, implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion at institutions such as the University of Michigan (Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan, 2016) and Yale University (Ad Hoc Committee on Race, Diversity & Inclusion, 2016) indicate that these topics can negatively affect the campus environment. Further, the personal insults and indignities of microaggressions extend beyond students to the employees of the underrepresented groups in academe.

Separate strategies need to be developed to tackle the various instructor and student interactions with underrepresented students, which are very different from that between colleagues. To respond appropriately to these microaggressions, in this section I present the following: (1) the significance of explicit vs. implicit bias, (2) guidelines for professional development, curricular design, and training workshops, and (3) individual student responses to microaggressions.

The Significance of Explicit vs. Implicit Bias

Macroaggressions and hate crimes described in Part 1 of this trilogy (Berk, 2017a) are *explicit* expressions of bias and attitudes and blatant acts of prejudice. They have declined over the past 50 years (DeVos & Banaji, 2005). Unfortunately, since the 2016 November election, 1300 hate crimes have been committed against African Americans, Muslims, Jews, girls and women, immigrants, and LGBTQ individuals, including bomb threats and vandalisim of Jewish institutions and cemeteries and mosques (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Nooses displayed on several university campuses and even in the Segregation Gallery of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, (Dvorak, 2017) punctuate the significant spike in macroaggressions in 2017.

In contrast to this hate crime trend, unconscious, *implicit* biases, which are internalized and embedded in our identity, have remained constant. It is those biases of faculty and staff that provide the fuel for microaggressions directed at students. Microaggressions, in turn, can ostensibly provoke strong, intense emotional reactions and potentially volatile dialogue in the classroom and any other venue in which they occur. Alternatively, students may suffer in silence and internalize their pain. Although explicit bias has been shown to decrease significantly with age and with multicultural training and workshops, *implicit bias is virtually unchanged* (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Boysen & Vogel, 2008). Therein lies the challenge to find strategies to prevent microaggressions.

Guidelines for Professional Development and Training Workshops

What options, then, are available to attack these microaggressions and the underlying implicit bias that generates them? There is a scarcity of controlled studies of specific interventions for teaching

people how to respond to microaggressions and to cope with their adverse effects (Bartlett, 2017; Kalinoski et al., 2013; Lilienfeld, 2017). However, the potential negative consequences and risks of inaction justify pursuing specific actions at the insitutional level (Paluck, & Green, 2009). In addition to the strategies described in Part 2 (Berk, 2017b), here are six suggested steps, each of which will be discussed in detail, to address microaggressions that involve students: (1) present Microaggressions 101, (2) administer *Student Microaggression Inventory* (*SMI*), (3) administer *Implicit Association Test* (*IAT*) to uncover implicit biases, (4) integrate implicit bias recognition into the curricula, (5) train faculty and staff to conduct effective dialogues with students, and (6) train underrepresented faculty and staff to mentor underrepresented students. These steps will be followed by an epilogue on how to implement them.

Present Microaggressions 101. Step one is to create professional development workshops expressly designed to level the knowledge playing field for all faculty, staff, and students (Jaschik, 2016; Zamudio-Suaréz, 2016b). They should be based on the 10 outcomes and the basic definitions, characteristics, taxonomy, examples, and consequences presented in Part 1 of the trilogy (Berk, 2017a). The orientation of new employees and students should include this content about microaggressions (Saul, 2016). Facilitators specifically trained to conduct these workshops and initiate an ongoing dialogue should coordinate a program with the institution's diversity, faculty development, and training leadership (Sue, 2015).

This step requires that everyone is Mirandized on what microaggressions are, how to recognize them, how to respond to them appropriately (Kenney, 2014; Kingkade, 2015), how to serve as an effective ally for victims, and how to report them. The roles of victim, aggressor, and ally should be clearly defined. Even the new paid role ($10/hr) of "social justice advocate," created at the University of Arizona, should specify the students' responsibility to "report any bias incidents or claims to appropriate residence life staff" (Gockowski, 2017; Richardson, 2017). Participants should appreciate the differences among the underrepresented groups of people and the importance of the variability in identities of individuals within each of those

groups. The serious psychological and physical consequences of microaggressions to the victims must also be understood.

Administer Student Microaggression Inventory (SMI). The second step in this process toward eliminating microaggressions is to educate all those faculty and staff who have contact with students and all students about microaggressions. Everyone should be able to recognize microaggressions in their variety of verbal and nonverbal forms. All faculty and students in face-to-face, hybrid/blended, and online courses and staff should complete the *SMI* or an abbreviated version. The overall score out of 100 indicates level of exposure and experience with microaggressions. A score of 50 or more different encounters of the microaggression kind is a very high level. Individual scores should be kept confidential.

Once everyone has their scores, the participants can break into small groups to share what they have learned from the 50 items in the inventory. As questions start flowing in these groups and continue when they reassemble in the larger group, an open dialogue can begin about those items and the questions and concerns they raise. Each person should be encouraged to contribute and question in a safe zone without being accusative or judgmental. The over-riding goal of this exercise is to be able to identify microaggressions when they occur in the classroom and other venues on campus. Eventually, each person should be able to respond to them appropriately and to assist the victim to respond and recover. Strategies for responding were suggested in Part 2 (Berk, 2017b) and will appear in the last section of this article.

Administer Implicit Association Test (IAT). The third step is to pinpoint one's implicit biases to encourage people to begin self-reflection about the flaws each of us must address in ourselves and how they relate to microaggressions. Unfortunately, the *IAT* is focused only on racial biases, but that is a significant start. The *IAT* is intended to reveal awareness of unconscious, implicit preferences and stereotypes (Capers, Clinchot, McDougle, & Greenwald, 2016), which can mutate into microaggressions. The test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Project Implicit, 2011) should be taken by all faculty, staff, and students. There are alternative measures of implicit bias that can also be

used (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi, & Payne, 2012; Jacoby-Senghor, Sinclair, & Shelton, 2015; Ross, 2008, 2014) and validity issues that need to be addressed (Mitchell & Tetlock, in press).

This step is critical if we are committed to eliminating microaggressions. *It is our secret, hidden, unconscious biases that can trigger microaggressions.* Those biases are the disease, and the microaggressions are the symptoms. We need to treat both. Identifying our personal biases and intimate thoughts, beliefs, and feelings; acknowledging them publicly, and taking responsibility for them are essential to viewing oppression through realistic eyes and *making the invisible visible* (Harper, 2017; Sue, 2015; Warikoo, Sinclair, Fei, & Senghor, 2016). Even small interventions for faculty (Carnes et al., 2015) and students (Devine, Forsher, Austin, & Cox, 2012) have demonstrated significant reductions in racial and gender implicit biases (Yaeger & Walton, 2011).

Integrate implicit bias recognition into the curricula. Beyond identifying one's implicit biases and making the effort to overcome them in the previous step, health professions educators have recently proposed models to integrate implicit bias recognition and management into the curricula (Boscardin, 2015; Sukhera & Watling, 2017). Most previous attempts to infuse bias topics have not been successful (Gonzalez, Kim, & Marantz, 2014; Johnson, Donovan, & Parboosingh, 2008). Frameworks that curriculum designers can implement have the potential to significantly change students' attitudes and the learning environment. A single workshop is not an adequate intervention to alter implicit biases.

Sukhera and Watling's (2017) six-point framework may be applied to most university curricula: (1) create a safe and nonthreatening learning context, (2) increase knowledge about the science of implicit bias, (3) emphasize how implicit bias influences behaviors and student outcomes, (4) increase self-awareness of existing implicit biases, (5) improve conscious efforts to overcome implicit bias, and (6) enhance awareness of how implicit bias influences others. These elements are worth exploring in conjunction with all of the other suggested strategies in this section.

Train faculty and staff to conduct effective dialogues with students. In addition to the knowledge of microaggressions and our implicit biases gained from the previous steps, Sue (2015) argued that constructive dialogue about race, gender, or related identity categories can be one of the most powerful strategies for exposing and dispelling biases and stereotypes (p. x). That dialogue can unmask our personal prejudices and behaviors (Acosta & Ackerman-Barger, 2016; Pasque, Chesler, Charbeneau, & Carlson, 2013). However, conducting a dialogue in response to microaggressions in the classroom or other venues between instructors and students is difficult. Often faculty and other university personnel who are in the key contact positions to handle such discussions are ill-prepared for that task (Sue, Torino, et al., 2009).

Many White instructors and students experience extremely high discomfort in discussing race, gender, LGBTQ, religion, and similar microaggression targets in the public arena of the classroom. However, that level is surely not even close to the physical and psychological discomfort experienced by the victims (see Berk, 2017a). The ingredients for this discomfort are the predominantly White male, heterosexual, professoriate and the increasingly diverse composition of the student bodies in higher education. They furnish a recipe for confrontation.

Close interpersonal encounters of the "dialogue kind" arouse intense emotions because the parties involved may not want to disclose their intimate thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that mirror their implicit biases and prejudices (Rabow, Venieris, & Ghillon, 2014). They may also fear being accused of racism. These emotions can occur in response to microaggressions and course discussions on race and related identity topics (Berrett, 2016). This dreaded and anxious confrontation represents a clash of the different realities of the aggressor and victim(s) of the microaggression.

Often, the instructors and student victims are concerned about the consequences of their words and the negative and possibly volatile reactions of the other students in class. They worry that such dialogue would be a catastrophe waiting to happen. Sue and Constantine (2007) noted that it could indeed be disastrous, accompanied by a wide range of reactions, such as anger, hostility, conflict, tension, denial, fear, guilt, confusion, silence, complaints, helplessness, and misunderstandings. The words exchanged between the aggressor and the victim(s) can be emotionally charged, accusative, and offensive (Flaherty, 2016; Sue, Torino, et al. 2009).

To avert these dialogue disasters, key administrators should seriously commit resources for the formal professional development training of faculty and other personnel directly involved with students about how to conduct dialogues that can spontaneously arise from microaggressions. There are several models for engaging in dialogue about race and racism which are applicable to the other identity categories of microaggression victims (Bolgatz, 2005; Hofbauer, Dolson, Brown, & Pelco, 2014; IDEA, 2017; Murray-Garcia et al., 2014; The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2016; Singleton, 2015; Sue, 2013, 2015; Watt, 2007; Wear et al., 2016; Willow, 2008; Young, 2003).

Here, one of those evidenced-based models is briefly described. Sue (2015, pp. 234–244) proffered 11 suggestions to educate faculty, staff, faculty developers, trainers, and facilitators to conduct effective dialogues with students:

1. Understand your identity and values, biases, and prejudices
2. Publicly acknowledge your personal biases and weaknesses
3. Be comfortable and open in discussing your biases and identity issues
4. Understand your emotions on the topic and help others make sense of their feelings
5. Validate and facilitate discussion of feelings
6. Control the process, not the content of the discussion
7. Understand the group process to unmask the meaning of the dialogue
8. Unlock an impasse and blockages when they occur with some resolution
9. Understand and account for communication style differences in the different groups involved
10. Prepare students for the difficult, emotional, and uncomfortable dialogue that will occur
11. Validate, encourage, and express appreciation for students who actively contribute to the dialogue

The most *ineffective strategies* are (1) do nothing, (2) allow the discussion to be deflected away from the issue at hand, (3) shut down the discussion, and (4) exhibit defensive behaviors (Sue, 2015,

p. 231). These responses in the classroom by an instructor can increase misunderstanding, affirm biased beliefs and legitimize microaggressions, and produce anger and tension among the students (Sue, Lin, et al., 2009; Sue, Rivera, et al., 2010; Sue, Rivera, et al., 2011; Sue, Torino, et al., 2009).

Train underrepresented faculty and staff to mentor underrepresented students. Frequently, students who are violated with microaggressions and other difficulties in predominantly White institutions will seek out faculty and staff of like identity for one-on-one support and counseling. In Part 1 of this trilogy, one of the consequences of microaggressions was excessive advising and mentoring by women faculty of color and LGBTQ and Muslim faculty, in particular. This mentoring is for scheduled, but also for unscheduled drop-in, marginalized students in personal crisis (Whitaker, 2017). These office encounters represent an added role and burden placed on underrepresented faculty because, having been victims themselves, they are in the unique position to empathize with student victims. However, many are not trained for this "clinical" role. A faculty member's reaction to a student's meltdown with screaming, crying, or complete withdrawal could be befuddlement. The correct response is not as simple as listening politely or referring a student for mental health counseling or psychiatric care (Pryal, 2015).

These faculty and staff require specialized skills to handle the emotional distress and physical fall-out of students who have experienced microaggressions as well as sexual assault, mental health issues, and legal problems (Whitaker, 2017). They must know how to handle a variety of possible situations with sensitivity, appropriate mentoring, and knowledge of where to refer students to other professional personnel, when necessary (Pryal, 2015).

Epilogue on preceding steps. Do not tackle these steps alone at home. They should be tackled only by a trained professional. If possible, assemble a team of leaders from faculty development, training, and diversity based on your institution's administrative configuration. While the preceding six steps may appear daunting at first read, consider Microaggressions 101, *SMI*, and *IAT* as the beginning of a process.

Start with the step that seems most comfortable, workable, and has the greatest chance

of success based on available resources and the campus climate. Take this one step at a time. The information session on 101 is usually the safest, and those sessions involving the *SMI* and *IAT* may be challenging, depending on how the interpretations are handled. Finally, once those three steps are completed, you can invite curriculum designers into the process to integrate implicit bias into appropriate courses and plan the training of faculty to conduct dialogues in the classroom and mentor students on how to cope with microaggressions.

Do not be disheartened by the pushback that is inevitable. It can be reduced by providing incentives for all employees to participate, such as small stipends, a buffet breakfast, or including their attendance and documented outcomes in annual performance reviews and appraisals and specific items in student rating forms. Forge ahead with the tasks at hand. Any smidgen of progress that is made to decrease microaggressions and implicit bias and increase diversity is far better than not even attempting to improve the classroom and campus environments.

Individual Student Responses to Microaggressions

On a personal level, how do students respond to microaggressions? Their responses may be cognitive, behavioral, and/or emotional (Sue, Lin, et al., 2009). The negative effects can be psychological and physical (see Berk, 2017a). The following description by an African-American male student captures the complexity of the situation he is trying to manage:

> "I don't feel there is anything I can do. If I do anything physical, I'm in trouble. If I do anything, it's like he said, she said. What can I do? I feel useless. I'm being hurt by this person. It's messing with me emotionally. I'm getting angry…the fact that I cannot do anything about it makes me feel worse…sometimes you can walk away from situations, then it just eats away at you for days. I mean, it's crushing." (Caplan & Ford, 2014, p. 40)

The five options for individuals to respond to microaggressions listed in Part 2 (Berk, 2017b) can be used by students in one-on-one situations. Avoid open confrontations in class or other group settings (Griffin, 2015; Kenney, 2014). Those should be delayed and addressed in private office meetings.

Students handle microaggressions in a va-

riety of ways. One study produced a percentage (in parentheses below) distribution of 15 different responses that students reported they had to racial microaggressions (Harwood et al., 2015, p. 14). Only one-third of the students responded to the aggressor verbally or physically (italics below). Here is the distribution:

- Assumed that the person(s) were ignorant (83)
- Dismissed or ignored the incident (73)
- Decided to pick my battles (when to respond verbally) (42)
- Tried to dispel racial stereotypes (32)
- Blamed the media (33)
- Built a support network of friends/allies/supporters (33)
- *Responded verbally to the person (33)*
- Relied on my faith or religious beliefs (27)
- Got involved in campus activities (22)
- Took on leadership roles in student organizations (19)
- Used the cultural centers (13)
- Made use of campus resources (10)
- Thought about leaving the university (8)
- Cried about the incident (8)
- *Responded physically to the person (4)*

Conclusions

The ugly implicit biases residing in our minds and hearts are the evil sources of microaggressions. We have to treat both the symptoms (microaggressions) and the disease (biases). Doing nothing is the biggest threat to continuing the status quo. As one African-American medical resident stated, "Silence in the face of injustice not only kills any space for productive conversations but also allows cancerous ideas to grow" (Okwerekwu, 2016).

This article was designed to provide a sobering dose of reality of what students and faculty who have been marginalized by their identities experience with microaggressions and possible strategies to address them. It presented: (1) a wide range of real microaggressions directed at students from the underrepresented groups by students and faculty, (2) a sample of microaggressions by students that target marginalized faculty and staff, (3) specific strategies to educate faculty, staff, and students on microaggressions and their consequences, (4) measures that all employees and students can use

to assess their experiences with microaggressions and their implicit biases, (5) a framework to integrate implicit bias recognition into the curricula, (6) guidelines to prepare faculty and staff to conduct open dialogues with students triggered by microaggressions in the classroom and other venues, (7) guidelines to prepare marginalized faculty and staff to mentor violated students, and (8) several options for students to respond to microaggressions in one-on-one encounters. Whatever your identity or intersectional identities, there are tools available for all of us to be proactive in our attack against microaggressions and biases.

Tackling the "elephant in the classroom" is difficult, uncomfortable, and scary. However, the harmful consequences to students and faculty, the learning environment, campus climate, and society of ignoring that elephant can be more terrifying. The increasingly diverse student bodies nationwide are demanding action on diversity, inclusion, and microaggressions. Whether you have been an aggressor, victim, ally, inactive bystander, or leader in the past, this is YOUR time to step up and put it on the line to do the right thing. If microaggressions heretofore have been accorded insufficient attention and your leaders are not moving forward to address these inequities, find a way to light a fire under them to begin the process. Faculty developers and directors of training, professional development, curriculum design, and diversity need support to make any significant changes happen. You can contribute to that support.

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Appendix

Student Microaggression Inventory (SMI)

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following student→student and instructor/advisor/staff→student microaggressions experienced by students in higher education. For those that you have **EXPERIENCED** similar to the examples**,** place an **X** in the **EXP** column; for those that you have **OBSERVED**, mark an **X** in the **OBS** column. You may mark one or both columns for any item. Add the number of **Xs** in each column to determine your score.

	MICROAGGRESSION:	**EXP**	**OBS**
	Student→Student		
1.	"I get stares when I walk into class, as if to say, 'What are you doing here?'"	____	____
2.	"Classmates don't talk to me, and when it is time to gather in groups, they seem not to want me in the groups."	____	____
3.	"I've been in classes where people avoided sitting around me. Students would fill the other seats in the classroom, while the ones next to me or around me would remain empty. It happened to me so many times."	____	____
4.	"In the classroom setting, someone behind me was discussing how [he or she] did not feel that Afro-Americans deserve to be here, and that we only got in because the school has to let 'them' in."	____	____
5.	"In a large lecture hall, I was going for a seat and overheard a group of students commenting that I should be cleaning the classroom after, not during, referring to the stereotype that Hispanics are janitors."	____	____
6.	"I was in class, and a Black person was speaking. I overheard someone else's conversation in which a comment was made that 'you know they don't know how to talk.'"	____	____
7.	"I've been approached and asked in a very condescending tone 'Do you speak English?' I've been told to go back to running a Laundromat (Asian stereotype). This happens all the time."	____	____
8.	"I was sitting in the library, and I overheard other White students discussing admissions and laughing about how the only reason stupid Mexicans could get into this school was due to Affirmative Action."	____	____
9.	"Students of color talked about inappropriate, offensive remarks made in informal student conversations, as well as racist and sexist jokes."	____	____
10.	"Anytime I would speak or contribute to the discussion, this White guy would glare at me and roll his eyes, as though I didn't have the right to add my comment."	____	____
11.	"The looks and comments made by White students suggest that they do not expect Afro-Americans to be able to contribute anything of value in the classroom."	____	____
12.	"Since I do not have dark skin, people often assume that I am not a real Native American and that I am not a 'real minority.' It is hurtful and makes me feel disenfranchised."	____	____
13.	"The discussion was about terrorism, and I was insulted because many people associate all people of my race as terrorists."	____	____
14.	"Classmates responded by telling Black students that they are 'overreacting,' 'defensive,' or 'angry,' which invalidated them in front of the entire class."	____	____
15.	"In a class discussion about race, White students explicitly expressed their beliefs that minorities are somehow innately unwilling to work to become successful."	____	____
16.	"In several online classes, negative comments were made in regards to my race or culture by the White students."	____	____

CONTINUED

17. "In an online class, classmates spent a lot of time trying to convince me that 'the N-word' was once an OK word to use and not an insult."   ____   ____

18. "I felt really uncomfortable even to speak, as I was the only Asian kid in that group. I was 'invisible' to them when they were talking to each other."   ____   ____

19. "It was me and three White males in a group. Then one of the students expressed that he could not get any scholarship money because he was a White male and that all the money was going the Black and Latino students. He said this was ridiculous because he was smarter and that scholarships should be based on merit, not skin color and a majority of these students would end up flunking out of school."   ____   ____

20. "When it's time to separate into groups, it seems the Black student is always the last person to find a group. It makes me feel invisible as if I don't, or shouldn't, exist."   ____   ____

21. "Whenever we had to pick lab partners, I would always ask them, but they would look at me and say no or that they already have one and told me to go look for someone else."   ____   ____

22. "My two lab partners, one White and one Middle Eastern, kept telling terrible jokes about Chinese people, thinking that I was Chinese. When they finally asked, I told them I was half Japanese, so the jokes changed to ones about Japanese culture. They NEVER quit."   ____   ____

23. "When working in groups with my classmates, I was always given the easy portion of the project because they assumed that I was not capable of doing the harder parts."   ____   ____

24. "Sometimes in class when a teacher asks us to work in groups, I feel as though what I have to say often doesn't matter to the rest of the group and that I am ignored overall."   ____   ____

25. "An in-class group-mate accidentally sent me an email about not trusting the assignment 'the Black girl' in the group had completed."   ____   ____

26. "I feel like students do not want to work with me because they assume I am not as smart as they are because I am a Black girl."   ____   ____

27. "One of the girls at the table with me said the only thing she knew about Native Americans is that they live on reservations and drink."   ____   ____

Instructor/Advisor/Staff→Student

28. "Imagine a Latino boy who wants to work at Burger King to contribute to his family." But before this example, my Caucasian instructor mentioned encouraging a White kid [to go to] college...   ____   ____

29. "Native Americans practiced cannibalism." My White professor learned this from a documentary the night before, but wasn't able to name the tribe.   ____   ____

30. "I didn't understand one of the concepts [the instructor] was talking about and asked him to slow down. He made fun of me and said, 'Hey everyone, I guess I have to slow down for the Chinese girl.' No one thought it was funny."   ____   ____

31. "Anyone want to hear a good joke? Well there was a Jew, a Mexican, and a Black. The Mexican says to …" These jokes were inappropriate and insensitive, which created a hostile learning environment.   ____   ____

32. "I experienced a professor using the N-word to help elaborate a point…Throughout this class, he made and allowed others in the class to make several racist and sexist remarks based entirely on stereotypes."   ____   ____

33. "My instructor never called on me to speak, even when I raised my hand."   ____   ____

CONTINUED

34.   "My Native American perspectives are often not granted validity or even a chance for discussion because the professor assumes my ideas stem from my heritage and not scientific insights…"   ____   ____

35.   "I am inviting you all over to my house for dinner next week to discuss your projects. Ali, I know it's Ramadan, but I hope you will join us anyway."   ____   ____

36.   "As an Afro-American student, give me the Black perspective."   ____   ____

37.   "What stood out about these class comments was the instructor's passivity. Worse, many students of color were surprised to see faculty complacent or even laughing about hurtful stereotypes."   ____   ____

38.   "In class, the professor demonstrated ignorance of the Muslim religion. One of his slides literally said: 'Summary: Muslim women = oppressed = no democracy.' This was outrageous."   ____   ____

39.   "Atoms sometimes attract each other like this male and female here. At the same time, atoms sometimes repel each other like these two males here."   ____   ____

40.   "If anyone has a disability, raise your hand right now so we can make special accommodations for you."   ____   ____

41.   "Mr. _____! We just read about poverty among Blacks in America. Does this fit your experience?"   ____   ____

42.   "I would like for Mike to share her stories related to her life as a young woman growing up in New York City."   ____   ____

43.   "You're a Latino and you don't speak Spanish? You should be ashamed of yourself."   ____   ____

44.   "What do you mean you never heard of *The Cosby Show*? Where have you been hiding?"   ____   ____

45.   "If you're Native American, don't write your paper on Native Americans. You already know everything about that group and you will be biased in your writing."   ____   ____

46.   "Don't be retarded! That party this weekend was so gay."   ____   ____

47.   "It's been pointed out to me that I scheduled the mid-term during Rosh Hashanah, but we are okay because I don't see any Jewish students in class."   ____   ____

48.   "Is (mispronounced Latino student's name) here? I am here, but my name is (correctly pronounced name)."   ____   ____

49.   "An advisor suggested I change my major and made me feel as if I shouldn't have chosen the major because she said 'It's just not for some people.'"   ____   ____

50.   "My Afro-American friends were more often steered (racial steering) away from challenging courses/majors rather than counseling how to handle the work better."   ____   ____

TOTAL ___ + ___

MICROAGGRESSION EXPOSURE INDEX (MEI) = ____/100__