

# “Why You Throwing Subs?”: An Exploration of Community College Students’ Immediate Responses to Microaggressions

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**Background/Context:** *Current research within four-year university settings reveals the daily encounters students of color and faculty have with microaggressions—brief, intentional or unintentional comments and behaviors communicating covert biases toward individuals based on their social group membership. The majority of all undergraduate students of color currently attend community colleges, but the occurrence of microaggressions in the community college classroom has been overlooked. We situate our study of microaggressions within the racial microaggressions model framework, which addresses how microaggressive events are mediated by institutional racism through systematic policies, practices, and processes that (re)produce inequitable stratification in higher education. Further, we analyze the immediate effects of and students’ responses to classroom microaggressions.*

**Purpose/Objective/Research Question/Focus of the study:** *The present study explores students’ immediate responses to 51 microaggressions observed in three community colleges. We examine microaggressions in community colleges with the objective to provide a lens into the immediate effects and responses students display to observed classroom microaggressions. In exploring both the effects on students and their responses to microaggressions experienced in 17 classrooms, we gain insight on how these events contribute to or undermine students’ in-the-moment learning experiences, as well as target their academic identities. To this end, we examine the following research questions: 1) In what ways were students’ academic identities targeted by these microaggressions? 2) What were the immediate effects of and students’ responses to the microaggressions experienced in their classrooms?*

**Research Design:** *To examine our research questions, we utilize a mixed-method research design, whereby mixed-method “connecting” was used to systematically quantify the microaggressions that occurred, which were qualitatively recorded in ethnographic fieldnotes from structured observations. We conducted content analyses of the observed microaggression ethnographic fieldnotes using the racial microaggressions model.*

**Findings/Results:** *Microaggressions stigmatized multiple identities the students occupied (e.g., college student identity). Using the racial microaggressions model analytical framework, we found that the most common immediate effects of microaggressions were: disengagement, silence, and discomfort. Immediate responses included laughter and responding with a joke or distraction. While less common, students sometimes resisted through actions of peer support and questioning of the perpetrator.*

**Conclusion/Recommendations:** *By expanding the racial microaggressions theoretical framework to develop an analytical frame that allows for the examination of responses to microaggressions, we can engage in a deeper understanding of the nature of the microaggressive classroom, and the ways that microaggressions target students’ academic identities. As found in our study, some students are engaging in immediate resistant acts to counter the microaggressions they experience, which warrants deeper investigation. Facing the reality that students with marginalized identities are likely to experience microaggressions, institutions should assist students in developing strategic responses that will help them adapt, cope, and resist.*

Community college institutions serve as a pipeline to four-year institutions for many first-generation, low-SES immigrant students and students of color (Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005). Research in four-year colleges has revealed that while students’ academic backgrounds contribute to academic success, the context and interactions students have within the institution also play a crucial role (Peña, Colyar, & Bensimon, 2006). Exploring students’ interactions with peers and instructors in community college could reveal factors that hinder their academic success and academic identity development. Recent studies of underrepresented students’ academic experiences within four-year institutional settings reveal daily encounters with microaggressions—brief intentional or unintentional comments and/or behaviors communicating covert biases toward individuals based on their social group membership (Guzman, Trevino, Lubuguin, & Aryan, 2010; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Museus & Park, 2015; Sue, 2010; Yosso, Ceja, Smith, & Solórzano, 2009). Comparatively few studies examine this phenomenon within the context of community colleges (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Examining the occurrence of microaggressions in the community college classroom is an important consideration in collective efforts aimed at promoting postsecondary educational attainment for students of color and of immigrant origin for multiple reasons (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). First, a decisive majority of all undergraduate students of color attend

community colleges: 61% Native American, 57% Latino, 52% African American, and 43% Asian/Pacific Islander (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Second, 36% of community college students are the first generation in their family to attend college (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Last, many students who enter community college are not ready for college-level courses. According to the Columbia University Community College Research Center, approximately one third of first-year students are enrolled in remedial courses (2015). Particularly noteworthy for the purposes of the present study are the ways community colleges are racialized and stratified. As we discuss in the next section, racist assumptions about the intellectual inferiority of persons of color often guide and mediate many educators' and peers' perceptions of and interactions with students of color in college and university settings. This phenomenon is compounded by a presumption that community colleges students lack academic potential, particularly those enrolled in remedial courses. Dache-Gerbino and White (2016) reveal in a recent postcolonial geographic analysis of two community college campuses how even the physical space of urban community college campuses is racialized by residential segregation and increased surveillance which criminalizes the students who are primarily students of color. The study demonstrates that we cannot assume that such institutions exist outside the social field of racialization and whiteness simply because they provide greater access for marginalized student populations.

The current study informs readers about microaggressions in community colleges, with the objective to provide a lens into the immediate effects of and student responses to observed classroom microaggressions. In exploring both the effects on students and their responses to microaggressions experienced in 17 classrooms, we gain insight on how these events contribute to or undermine students' in-the-moment learning experiences, as well as target their academic identities. To this end, we examine the following research questions:

1. In what ways were students' academic identities targeted by these microaggressions?
2. What were the immediate effects<sup>1</sup> of and students' responses to the microaggressions experienced in their classrooms?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

First introduced by psychiatrist and professor Dr. Chester Pierce (1974, 1995), the concept of microaggressions was offered as one way of theorizing the persistent and routine forms of racism Blacks experienced in their everyday lives. More recently, microaggressions have been popularized by psychologist Dr. Derald Wing Sue et al., (2007) and conceptualized as the often unintentional and sometimes unconscious ways in which individuals communicate covert biases to members of marginalized social groups. Pérez Huber and Solórzano further defined racial microaggressions as “layered assaults, based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname” that cumulatively “take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on People of Color” (2015, p. 302). Such biases are expressed verbally, nonverbally, and environmentally and often manifest as microinsults (e.g., assuming a person of color received their job because of their race instead of their performance), microassaults (e.g., explicitly referring to someone using derogatory or hate speech), and microinvalidations (e.g., an insistence on colorblindness to disregard and delegitimize the lived experiences of people of color) (Sue et al., 2007). Perpetrators of microaggressions communicate covert biases toward individuals by targeting what they perceive to be the person’s social identity, attacking the social group the person belongs to, and stigmatizing that identity (Padilla, 2008).

Earlier theoretical articulations and empirical investigations focused on racial microaggressions targeting African Americans, which rehearse common tropes such as a group’s second-class citizen status, presumed lack of intelligence, and propensity for criminality (Sue, 2010). However, the study of microaggressions has expanded in assessing their role in the lives of other stigmatized social groups (e.g., Latinos, Asian Americans, women, persons raised in working class families, LGBTQ persons, etc.) (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Lin, 2010; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; L. Smith, Mao, & Deshpande, 2016; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Scholars have also begun to investigate the experiences of undocumented students with microaggressions as they navigate the college choice process (Nienhuser, Vega, & Carquin, 2016). Recently, Nadal et al. (2015) employed qualitative secondary analysis (QSA) to unearth intersectional microaggressions in the lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, Muslims, women, multiracial persons, and Filipino Americans. Multiple themes and subthemes emerged from their analysis that speak directly to the ways individuals’ race, gender, and sexual and religious identities are simultaneously the target of an individual microaggressive act or statement.

## MICROAGGRESSIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Even prior to enrolling in a postsecondary institution, marginalized students experience microaggressions that affect their entry into college. For instance, Nienhuser et al. (2016) examined the microaggressions that 15 undocumented high school students experienced throughout their college choice processes. In their interviews with students, the authors found nine microaggressive themes that recurred in students' interactions with peers, teachers, counselors, and other administrators. Some of these themes included microassaults such as discriminatory financial aid policies and limited access to college information, microinsults that manifested in insensitive treatment of students' documentation status (e.g., indiscretion when communicating regarding the undocumented status), and microinvalidations which included assuming that the undocumented students were poor and could not attend costly more exclusive institutions (Nienhuser et al., 2016).

Various studies reveal that students of color encounter racial microaggressions in their undergraduate college experiences (Boysen, 2012; Minikel-Lacocque, 2013; Museus & Park, 2015; W. A. Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2006; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Yosso et al., 2009). In their qualitative inquiry into the experiences of 46 Asian American students representing six different four-year postsecondary institutions, Museus and Park (2015) found that some students' efforts to receive academic support were undermined because of adherence to the model minority myth internalized by both the institution and sometimes by the students themselves. For instance, one student shared how others' assumptions about her high level of intelligence resulted in feelings of inadequacy and led her to question her aptitude when her performance did not meet preconceived expectations.

Solórzano et al.'s (2000) focus group study of 34 Black undergraduates across three predominantly white elite universities uncovered how experiences of racial microaggressions negatively impacted students' educational experiences. Black students described their shared experiences of being ignored by faculty in classrooms and not being invited by peers to work on class projects due to low expectations of their intellectual abilities. The authors presented a powerful story of a student who was forced to retake a math quiz after initially scoring a 95 because the professor and graduate student instructor suspected the student had cheated. This example was representative of the ways some faculty-student interactions were colored by the idea that Blacks are not intelligent. Such interactions highlighted what some white faculty and students believed about the legitimacy of these students' entrance to the institution as academically underprepared beneficiaries of affirmative action policies.

Microaggressions are not limited to the college classroom, but occur everywhere in one's college experience. Minikel-Lacocque's (2013) study of Latino students attending a predominantly white institution draws our attention to the fact that racial microaggressions emerge in other contexts beyond an institution's physical boundaries, and in the local context in which the school is located. In one example, Minikel-Lacocque shared the experiences of a Latino male feeling discomfort as he walked into the local stores and was stared at with hostility (p. 446). Furthermore, Minikel-Lacocque challenges Sue et al.'s (2007) concept of microaggressions and pushes it a step further, arguing that some events previously categorized as microassaults in the microaggression literature are actually not micro- or subtle and thus should not be categorized as microaggressions. Instead, she categorizes these conscious, explicit derogatory statements as *racialized aggressions*. It is important to differentiate these racialized assaults as separate from microaggressions, since the power of microaggressions as a construct is to point to the harm that can be caused by seemingly elusive and "trivial" comments, in which perpetrators may not even consciously realize that they are being microaggressive or realize the cumulative effect such comments may have on the target.

Lastly, in their structured observations of 60 community college classrooms, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) reported various types of microaggressions in three community colleges. Of the 60 classes observed, acts of microaggressions were found in 28% of the classrooms. While intelligence-related microaggressions—demeaning an individual's intellectual capacity—were most common, the authors also noted gendered, cultural, and what they referred to as intersectional microaggressions, which constituted derogatory statements that targeted multiple identities such as culture and gender.

## MICROAGGRESSIONS AND ACADEMIC IDENTITY

Academic identity consists of, among other constructs, a person's identification with academic values and sense of belonging (Matthews, 2014), as well as the perception that she is able to succeed when engaging in academic activities (Graham & Anderson, 2008). Academic identity is positively linked to academic motivation and achievement (Graham & Anderson, 2008; Kaplan & Flum, 2010; Komarraju & Dial, 2014; Matthews, 2014) and college success (Komarraju, Musulkin, & Bhattacharya, 2010; Osborne, 1997). Moreover, academic identity can derive from multiple dimensions of a person's academic experiences. The development of a strong academic identity is related to individual factors such as a student's perceived academic ability. Further, there is a social component, as

students' daily interactions with their parents, peers, teachers, counselors, and other school administrators may influence how an individual will perceive herself to belong at school and her ability to succeed (Graham & Anderson, 2008).

Constantly being a target of intelligence-demeaning microaggressions in the classroom could potentially affect a person's academic identity. This has implications for the academic success of these targeted students in community colleges where biased assumptions about the intellectual inferiority of persons of color compounded with the presumed deficient academic potential of community college students guide and mediate many educators' and peers' interactions with students of color. Solórzano et al. (2000) found that students' cumulative exposure to microaggressions produced feelings of self-doubt and a sense of being drained. Similarly, Minikel-Lacocque (2013) reported the disempowerment students felt following microaggressive experiences. Collectively, these subtle and mundane racial stressors can induce what W. A. Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) termed racial battle fatigue. Operationalized within the context of their study of 36 Black male students across 5 post-secondary institutions, W. A. Smith et al. described racial battle fatigue as the "physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups and the amount of energy lost dedicated to coping with racial microaggressions and racism" (p. 555). The constant questioning of intelligence by instructors and peers stigmatizes students' cultural and social identities. This stigmatization may influence the students' academic identity. These experiences are not exclusive to the college setting. Students of color first encounter microaggressions in K-12 settings, suggesting that by the time they enter college these events are neither novel nor unexpected (see Nienhuser et al., 2016), and have already targeted their academic identities.

## RESPONDING TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

Sue et al. (2007) argue that one of the most powerful characteristics of microaggressions is their subtlety, which makes them difficult to identify and sometimes invisible to the perpetrator, and possibly even the target (p. 275). This difficulty may make one's response to microaggressions more stressful than overt racism or discrimination, whereby the student may feel vaguely "attacked, that they have been disrespected, or that something is not right" (p. 277). The recipient of the microaggression faces a "catch-22 dilemma" where she may wonder if the microaggression really happened and whether it was intentional or not. Furthermore, after realizing that she is a target of a microaggression, the recipient must decide whether

to respond or not. Not confronting the perpetrator may mean the target does not know how to respond, fears retribution if she responds, thinks that responding will not matter, or denies that the microaggression occurred or was meaningful. Regardless of these thoughts, not responding can lead to frustration and stress, whereas confronting the microaggression may be interpreted by the perpetrator and others as oversensitivity, anger, and even hostility.

The current literature on responses to microaggressions is limited to retrospective studies where participants are asked through interviews, surveys, or narratives to think about their responses to microaggressions long after they have occurred (See Q. Allen, 2012; Boysen, 2012; Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). For example, Q. Allen (2012) examined the responses to microaggressions of 6 pairs of middle-class Black fathers and sons through empowering counterstories of how the fathers and sons discussed the school microaggressions the sons faced (e.g., assumed deviant behavior). The fathers and sons responded to this stigmatization of their academic, racial, and gender identities by drawing upon their cultural wealth, socializing their children to prepare for microaggressive events at school, and becoming very involved in their children's education. Pérez Huber and Cueva (2012) presented the *testimonios* or counterstories used to reflect and document "experiences of struggle, survival, and resistance" (p. 396) of undocumented and U.S.-born Chicana/Latina students experiencing microaggressions throughout their educational trajectories. Their findings reveal the creation of counterspaces (e.g., programs with supportive teachers, joining a traditional cultural dance groups, etc.) which provided a place for the students to respond to marginalizing educational spaces by engaging in reflection, healing, and transcendence of oppressive events such as microaggressions (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Similarly, Solórzano et al. (2000) reported that African American undergraduate students collaboratively constructed counterspaces on and off campus. These spaces included student organizations such as Black sororities and fraternities as well as student-organized study halls.

While powerful, these studies examined collective action after encounters with microaggressions and stigmatization retrospectively, after students' constant experience of microaggressions in their daily interactions. Put differently, these response strategies were not observed while the microaggression occurred. More research is needed on how students in fact do respond and handle their experiences with microaggressions immediately as they occur (Solórzano et al., 2000, as cited in Sue et al., 2007).

The literature reviewed here illustrates how racial microaggressions undermine the educational success and academic achievement of students of color through the circumventing of learning opportunities (e.g., group

work, faculty interactions), producing harmful physiological, psychological, and emotional outcomes, and in some instances causing students to consider leaving their institution altogether. Additionally, prior research provides insights concerning the multiple ways individuals respond to microaggressions. While not exhaustive, this review represents the major themes concerning the manifestation of racial microaggressions undergraduate students of color face. While the extant literature identifies retrospective responses individuals have to microaggressions, empirically we know very little about students’ immediate and instantaneous negotiations of being targets of microaggressions. Most of the research to date—in part a function of methodological choices (e.g., retrospective accounts)—primarily engage organized, coherent responses such as the formation of counterspaces. Thus, the current study contributes to our understandings of how the immediate effects of microaggressions as well as students’ responses to them influence their individual learning experiences, as well as challenge those who microaggress them.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### THE RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS MODEL

Our analytical framework is premised on the racial microaggressions model (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). This model provides an analytic framework for making sense of microaggressions in different contexts, which are ultimately representative of institutionalized, macroaggressive systems that undermine the success of communities of color and of immigrant origin. Despite the often interpersonal and sub/unconscious nature of microaggressions, this model frames racial microaggressions within the oppressive material and ideological economies; namely, institutionalized racism and white supremacy, respectively (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). Using New York City’s unconstitutional stop-and-frisk policy as an illustrative example, Pérez Huber and Solórzano demonstrate how the act of being stopped-and-frisked (racial microaggression) is mediated by both the formal and informal policies and processes (institutional racism) of “targeting the right people for stops” (p. 312). Furthermore, racial microaggressions and institutional racism are supported by what the authors call macroaggressions, which are beliefs and ideologies maintaining the hegemonic status quo of oppression by dominant groups (e.g., whites) of nondominant groups (e.g., people of color). Macroaggressions justify both structural and interpersonal racism (e.g., the criminalization of persons and communities of color without or in the face of contrary evidence).

Moreover, critical race theorists' analysis of how racial microaggressions are mediated by institutional racism is particularly important considering the large number of students of color and immigrant origin students attending community colleges due to systematic policies, practices, and processes that (re)produce inequitable stratification in college and university enrollment patterns (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2011). Even before entering community college many students of color are subjugated to the systematic policies of tracking and homogenous curriculum unrepresentative of their own sociohistorical and cultural backgrounds (A. Allen, Scott, & Lewis, 2013). Long-held macroaggressive racist beliefs regarding non-whites' intellectual inferiority and irrationality (Mills, 1997) are intimately connected to racial microaggressions that ascribe (inferior) intelligence to Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans (Sue et al., 2007).

Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015) framework consists of four factors for identifying microaggressions: (a) type, (b) context, (c) effects, and (d) responses experienced by primary and secondary targets. The type of racial microaggression refers to what identity or multiple intersecting identities the microaggression is targeting (e.g., race, class, academic). The context of the microaggression consists of the location of the microaggression (e.g., classroom) and how it emerges. The effect factor consists of physiological and psychological consequences of the microaggression, including (but not limited to) self-doubt, anger, stress, racial battle fatigue, and over time, even cardiovascular disease. Lastly, the response factor refers to how the target and secondary targets will respond to the microaggression depending on the type and context in which it occurred. Pérez Huber and Solórzano state that responses "include engaging in counterspaces, places located within and outside of educational institutions where People of Color develop strategies for healing, empowerment, and building a sense of community" (p. 311).

Consistent with critical race theory's analytical and political practice of centering the lived experiences of people of color, Pérez Huber and Solórzano's (2015) framework illuminates that racial microaggressions can affect more than the intended target (e.g., witnesses). Their framework also emphasizes agential responses persons and communities of color employ to challenge racial microaggressions, institutional racism, and the macroaggressive racist ideologies they perpetuate. This framework helps us make sense of the immediate effects of microaggressions and of students' varied immediate responses to racial microaggressions, which are often not accounted for when researchers only consider students' post-encounter responses. The post-encounter responses often purposefully and strategically challenge oppressive policies and marginalizing practices.

## METHODS

The current study draws from a larger examination of the experience of immigrants in community college settings. The Research on Immigrants in Community College (RICC) mixed-method, multisite project explored the relationship within and between community college classrooms, campus settings, and the experiences of immigrant origin students. (Please see Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015 for a thorough description of the larger study).

The data collected consisted of campus ethnographies, systematic classroom observations, student surveys, and semistructured interviews with students, instructors, and administrators. For the current study, which focuses on the interpersonal microaggressions piece of the 60 systematic classroom observations, mixed-method "connecting" was used to systematically quantify the microaggressions that occurred, which were qualitatively recorded in the ethnographic fieldnotes and observation forms (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Quantitative, descriptive statistics are included in the analysis of the microaggression observations in order to measure the frequency of occurrences of microaggressions and the concurrent responses. Therefore, the quantification of qualitative data (Hesse-Biber, 2010) provides a certain perspective not typically afforded in this line of inquiry. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the observations allowed for a detailed description of each occurrence and response, as well as for the analysis of the microaggressive incidents that were not statistically significant (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

Before providing more detailed information related to the methods of our study, we would like to offer a collective statement about our positionalities. It is important to note that each of us occupies a variety of marginalized social categories based on gender, race, socioeconomic background, immigrant experience, and language. Thus, we are intimately aware of and painfully familiar with the presence of microaggressions, particularly in postsecondary educational settings. Throughout our careers as both students and faculty, we have encountered and continue to encounter microaggressions from students and colleagues and environmental microaggressions from institutional policies and environments. These ongoing experiences, along with our empirical research and professional training, certainly inform our commitment to examining issues of educational inequity that may undermine students' educational success, an important part of which includes not only documenting barriers, but also the varied ways these students respond to and potentially resist microaggressions.

## CONTEXT

The RICC study took place at three community colleges in the northeast area of the United States. Taino<sup>2</sup> is a small campus located in a low-income urban area. The campus student body makeup is largely Latino (64%). In addition, 31% of the students are Black, 3% are Asian and Pacific Islander, and only 2% are white, with 90% of the students speaking a language other than English at home (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Taino has a disproportionate amount of students enrolled in remedial courses compared to other colleges that belong to the same two-year public college system. Almost one third of entering freshmen failed all three “college readiness” exams (i.e., reading, writing, and math), with only 10.3% of entering freshmen in 2012 passing all three exams. Domino, a larger campus focused on technological education, also located in an urban area, offers both two-year and four-year degrees. However, the majority of participants were enrolled in a two-year program. Domino’s student body is 33.2% Latina/o, 32.5% Black, 19.2% Asian and Pacific Islander, 11.2% white, 0.5% Native American, and 3.4% other, with 65% of the students speaking a language other than English at home. The third campus, Oakmont, is located in a suburb north of a major metropolitan area. In contrast to the two previously mentioned campuses, Oakmont has the least amount of students of color. Almost half of the students at Oakmont are classified as non-Hispanic white. The school is located in a segregated, high-income suburban neighborhood with the student body being 49% white and 28% Latino, with 42% of the student population being foreign-born (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Microaggressions were observed at higher rates at the two minority serving institutions (MSIs): 11.8% of the microaggressions occurred at Oakmont versus 35.3% at Domino and 52.9% at Taino.

Sixty classrooms were observed across the three campuses: 18 at Domino, 20 at Oakmont, and 22 at Taino. These classes included 29 general education, 17 remedial, and 14 vocational. All classrooms observed consisted of at least four full-time underrepresented students, between 18–25 years old. The 60 instructors across the observed classrooms included both full-time instructors and adjuncts and were mostly female (60%) and white (60%). At least one microaggression was observed in 17 (7 general education, 3 vocational, and 7 remedial) of the 60 classrooms. Moreover, at least one microaggression was observed in eight classrooms in Taino, six classrooms in Domino, and three classrooms in Oakmont. A little more than half of the instructors with microaggressive classrooms were white, or nine out of 17, and female, nine out of 17. Microaggressions were present in 41.1% of the total observed remedial courses compared to 24.1% and 21.4% of the total observed general education and vocational, respectively. Most

notably, in six of the seven remedial classes (85.7%) where a microaggression occurred the instructor was white, and in five of the seven remedial classes the instructor was female. Overall, a majority of the 17 remedial classes we observed were taught by white and female instructors; 13 were taught by white teachers (76.5%) and 11 were taught by female teachers (64.7%). Please see Table 1 for an extensive breakdown of the faculty demographics across the 60 classrooms and the 17 classrooms where at least one microaggression was observed (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

**Table 1. Instructor Characteristics by Campus**

Instructor Characteristic	Taino (n=8)		Domino (n=6)		Oakmont (n=3)		Total CIMA Classrooms (N=17)		Total for all observed class- rooms (N=60)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
Gender										
Male	6	75.0%	2	33.3%			8	47.1%	24	40.0%
Female	2	25.0%	4	66.7%	3	100.0%	9	52.9%	36	60.0%
Race/Ethnicity										
Asian			2	33.3%	1	33.3%	3	17.7%	8	13.3%
Black	1	12.5%	2	33.3%			3	17.6%	6	10.0%
Latino	1	12.5%					1	5.9%	7	11.7%
White	6	75.0%	1	16.7%	2	66.7%	9	52.9%	36	60.0%
Unclear/ Unknown			1	16.7%			1	5.9%	3	5.0%

NOTE: This table has been reproduced from the Suárez-Orozco et al. (2015) original article.

## PROCEDURES

A review of the research literature on microaggressions indicates that the contributions in the field have primarily come from focus group, case study, or narrative analysis, and are retrospective in nature (Lau & Williams, 2010). Lau and Williams argue that the field would be served by observing microaggressions in “real time” as they occur. In this study, classroom observations were conducted to capture the microaggressions as they occurred. The classroom observations were arranged with consent from faculty and students. The observers included a dozen graduate research assistants (6 Latino, 2 Black Caribbean, 3 Asian, and 1 white; 10 female and 2 male) and two female, Latina postdoctoral researchers. Research assistants recruited faculty at meetings, through personal conversations,

and with flyers placed in faculty mailboxes. Faculty and students were told that two research assistants would observe classroom interactions and student engagement, without explicitly stating that microaggressions would be captured.

Observations occurred during regularly scheduled class times for participating classes. Two highly trained research assistants observed each course for the length of one entire class period. The observers arrived early to each class and sat in a place in the classroom where they would be least disruptive to the class. The research assistants entered the classrooms with three assessment tools: (a) the Community College Classroom Observation (CCCO), (b) the Classroom Structured Ethnography, and (c) the Classroom Interpersonal Microaggressions (CIMA) form. The CCCO form assessed instruction and student engagement. The CCCO is informed by the procedures and methods used in the CLASS-S (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), which is an observational instrument developed to assess classroom quality in high schools (Alicea, Suárez-Orozco, Singh, Darbes, & Abrica, 2016). The structured ethnography form consisted of a space to draw the classroom seating arrangement and open-ended questions to guide the observer in structuring the ethnographic notes taken during the observations. The questions captured information about the classroom characteristics (e.g., available technology, seating arrangement, social groupings, interactions between groups, cleanliness, repair/disrepair, and interpersonal student–student and student–faculty interactions). The CIMA observation tool captured the context of the microaggression (e.g., what classroom activity was occurring at the time, at what point in the class did the incident occur, who initiated the microaggression, and who was it directed to), the initiator(s) and target(s) involved in microaggressive exchanges, the tone of the microaggression, and responses to the microaggression (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). The observers did not go into the classrooms looking for microaggressions, but were trained to note occurrences that might have shifted the tone of the class and insulted, invalidated, or demeaned any person in the class. As part of the process, observers took ethnographic notes on the CIMA from the moment they observed the microaggressive interaction. In these notes, they described the microaggressions, student responses, the student–student and student–faculty interaction during the microaggressive incident, and the instruction of the class and class activities occurring at the microaggressive moment. Observers were trained to describe the setting, the tone, the context, reactions, and any other pertinent information (such as direct quotes) while the microaggression occurred. The microaggression form was not the main observation tool, but rather supplemented the ethnography and CCCO form.

Observations consisted of periods that started 10 minutes after the time the professor began the class, which sometimes differed from the designated course time. All observers rated items across 20-minute observation segments simultaneously and independently for the length of one entire class period (Alicea et al., 2016). The number of observation segments was based on the length of each class. If a microaggression occurred, observers took notes regarding the microaggressive exchange and filled out the CIMA form (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

## DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

All CIMA forms and ethnographic fieldnotes were entered into a database and fieldnotes were transcribed. A team approach was used to identify and analyze the captured CIMAS from the field in which four of the graduate research assistants, the two Latina postdoctoral researchers, and the white principal investigator assigned categories (microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation) and themes (e.g., country of origin, language, religion, intelligence, socioeconomic status) to the microaggressions observed. However, per Minikel-Lacocque's (2013) argument that microassaults are not subtle or micro-, the 4 microassaults are not included in this analysis. The themes were later grouped into four broader types: cultural, intelligence, gender, and intersectional. The seven researchers met to discuss and ultimately unanimously agreed on what category, type, and theme would be assigned to each microaggression.

Over the course of several meetings the seven researchers met to analyze the content of the captured microaggressions. Due to the nuance of the CIMA measure, a grounded theory approach was used for the open-coding strategy. First, two researchers conducted a line-by-line review of three sets of CIMA fieldnotes (supplemented by ethnographic notes) and conducted inductive open-coding of the notes (e.g., looking for conditions, interactions among actors in classroom, changes/consequences, etc.), using phrases as units of analysis. These two researchers identified emerging themes (descriptive and interpretive). A preliminary codebook was developed consisting of themes identified. The codes consisted of themes surrounding classroom climate disruption, repetition, and intensity factors, as well as initiator/target tone, behavior, body language, and affect (please refer to the Appendix). The codebook was discussed with the other five researchers to establish the meanings of coding categories, and specific guidelines for when to code a response into the categories and when not to code the response into the categories (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Four of the seven researchers coded the 17 classrooms that had microaggressions using the codebook. Throughout this process, the research

team met weekly to continue refining the codebook (e.g., adding codes, creating subcodes, reconstructing schemes/categories of codes, extending code meanings, bridging codes/relationships, etc.) (Mattis et al., 2009). After the four initial researchers presented their hand-coded analyses of the microaggressions assigned, the other three researchers engaged in backward coding to establish reliability across coders. These three researchers read the coded fieldnotes and discussed differences, clarified application of codes, and modified codes/themes found in each of the CIMA fieldnotes if necessary. In cases of agreements, the three backward coders assigned the same code to part of notes that the original four coders had assigned. In cases of disagreements the backward coders assigned different codes to the same part of notes or codes to parts of notes which the other coder had not coded. During each coding meeting the coded notes were reviewed and changes were made if necessary. The interrater reliability was 92.2%, based on the Miles and Huberman (1994) interrater reliability formula [ $\text{Agreement} / (\text{Agreement} + \text{Disagreement})$ ].

Once the coding of the microaggressions and microaggressive classrooms was complete, two research assistants entered the quantified codes into two databases: one classroom-level file and one individual microaggression file. The quantitative classroom-level and individual microaggression databases and the hand-coded worksheets, CIMA forms, and structured ethnographies were methodologically triangulated (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999) to analyze the 51 microaggressive incidents across the 17 classrooms and to analyze the students' responses to microaggressions patterns (please refer to the appendix). To answer the first question regarding the ways students' academic identities were stigmatized by microaggressions, we conducted chi-square and correlational analyses of the frequency of microaggressions that were intelligence-demeaning and their relation to the immediate effects and responses from the target(s) of the microaggressions. To answer the second question regarding what the immediate effects and responses to microaggressions were, we conducted frequency counts and chi-square and correlational analyses of these frequencies to examine the immediate effects of the microaggressions and responses students had the moment they experienced the microaggressions in their classrooms. We then conducted content analyses, using the racial microaggressions model (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015), of the CIMA forms and structured ethnographies of all the 51 microaggressions. We employed analyst triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999) to review our findings. The first two authors reviewed all the 51 CIMA forms and structured ethnographies content analyses to check for selective perception in interpreting the data. The first two authors discussed the complete content analyses and came to a consensus on the ways we interpreted the

effects and responses data and selected exemplars to highlight the effects of the microaggressions and each type of response. Although some of the effects and responses were not quantitatively statistically significant, we still find it important understand the immediate effects and responses students are having to microaggressions in their classroom settings. In this article, we place a greater focus on the qualitative content analyses of the most common effects and noteworthy responses to microaggressions across the 17 classrooms where microaggressions occurred.

## RESULTS

### TYPES AND CONTEXT OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

A total of 51 microaggressions were observed in 17 classrooms across the three campuses. The number of microaggressions per classroom ranged from 1 to 10 ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 2.24$ ,  $Mdn = 2$ ). The classroom with 10 microaggressions was a remedial English course at Taino. Students were the targets of 45 of the 51 observed microaggressions, while 6 were made as general statements with no specific target. The perpetrators of 45 out of the 51 observed microaggressions were faculty; the perpetrators of the other 6 microaggressions were students. In 78% of the microaggressive incidents where the perpetrator was an instructor ( $n = 45$ ), the perpetrator shamed the target of the microaggression, while shaming only occurred in 33% of the microaggressions where the perpetrator was a student ( $n = 6$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N = 51) = 5.25$ ,  $p < .05$ . In 73% of the microaggressive incidents where the perpetrator was an instructor ( $n = 45$ ), the perpetrator used deficiency speech (e.g., "I'm preparing you to go to college. I'm sure it's a challenge for you"; "I see students getting lazier and lazier") toward the target of the microaggression, while deficiency speech only occurred in 1 of the microaggressions where the perpetrator was a student ( $n = 6$ ),  $\chi^2(1, N = 51) = 7.65$ ,  $p < .05$ . Thirty-eight of the microaggressions occurred during teacher-centered (e.g., lectures, review for exams) instruction time, which is significantly more than the 13 microaggressions that occurred during student-centered instruction (e.g., group work, discussion of material),  $\chi^2(1, N = 51) = 12.26$ ,  $p = .00$ . These findings begin to suggest that critical points during the class period exist when microaggressive incidents are more prone to occur and become ongoing, such as in teacher-centered instruction.

Forty-six of the microaggressions were categorized as microinsults, with 5 categorized as microinvalidations (4 were microassaults, but not included in our analysis for this article). Fifty-nine percent of the observed microaggressions were rooted in the intelligence-demeaning theme and

questioned the students' ability to be successful college students ( $n = 30$ ),  $\chi^2(3,51) = 34.1, p < .001$ ). Please refer to Table 2 for a breakdown of all 51 microaggressions. The number of intelligence-demeaning microaggressions differed by campus,  $\chi^2(2, 51) = 11.2, p = .004$ , all occurring exclusively at the two MSIs. Seventy-four percent of all the microaggressions that occurred at Taino ( $n = 27$ ), and 55% of all the microaggressions that occurred at Domino ( $n = 18$ ) were intelligence demeaning. There were no intelligence-demeaning microaggressions at Oakmont ( $n = 6$ ). Out of the 20 intelligence-demeaning microaggressions that occurred at Taino, half were observed in remedial courses and half were observed in general education courses. Out of the 10 intelligence-demeaning microaggressions that occurred at Domino, 1 was observed in a remedial course, 4 in vocational courses, and 5 in general education courses. The 30 intelligence-demeaning microaggressions that occurred in the context of the 17 classrooms observed invalidate and stigmatize the social identities of the students in the classroom. The individual consequences of these 30 intelligence-demeaning microaggression and the other 21 cultural, gendered, and intersectional microaggressions are categorized as effects on and responses by the students who experienced them (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

#### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF CLASSROOM MICROAGGRESSIONS ON STUDENTS

The research team recorded the ways in which targets were affected by microaggressions immediately after they occurred. Using the racial microaggressions model analytical framework, we found various types of effects or behavioral and emotional reactions to microaggressive incidents. Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015) argue that effects are the anger, racial battle fatigue, and long-term health problems that occur as the target reflects on and encounters constant microaggressive incidents. We expand this definition to include immediate effects that impact individuals as the microaggressive incident unfolds. In the context of classroom microaggressions, these effects negatively alter students' learning experiences. In our analysis we found that the most common immediate effects were disengagement, silence, and discomfort. We define discomfort as a visible uneasiness, annoyance, or irritation. These effects are different from responses due to being almost involuntary in nature and more specifically can be seen as somewhat automatic emotional and behavioral reactions. For a complete breakdown of the frequency of these effects, please refer to Table 3. Disengagement was the only statistically significant frequency count across the effects featured in

**Table 2. Microaggression (MA) Types by Campus and Class Type**

Microaggression (MA) Type	Campus	Class Type			Campus Total (N=51)
		General	Remedial	Vocational	
Cultural (e.g., country of origin, language, ethnicity, im- migrant, SES, religion, race)	Taino	1	1	1	3
	Domino	0	3	2	5
	Oakmont	0	4	0	4
	Class Type Total	1	8	3	<i>n</i> (%) of MA 12 (23.5)
Gender (gender, sexuality, sexual orientation)	Taino	1	0	1	2
	Domino	0	0	1	1
	Oakmont	1	0	0	1
	Class Type Total	2	0	2	<i>n</i> (%) of MA 4 (7.8)
Intelligence (intelligence and college student ID)	Taino	10	10	0	20
	Domino	5	1	4	10
	Oakmont	0	0	0	0
	Class Type Total	15	11	4	<i>n</i> (%) of MA 30 (58.8)
Intersectional (gender and intelligence, gen- der and culture, etc.)	Taino	1	1	0	2
	Domino	2	0	0	2
	Oakmont	0	1	0	1
	Class Type Total	3	2	0	<i>n</i> (%) of MA 5 (9.8)
Campus by Class Type Total (N=51) N(%)	Taino	13	12	2	27 (52.9)
	Domino	7	4	7	18 (35.3)
	Oakmont	1	5	0	6 (11.8)
	Class Type Total	21 (41.2)	21 (41.2)	9 (17.6)	Total MA 51 (100)

this article,  $\chi^2(1, N = 51) = 7.07, p < .01$ . However, it is important to discuss two other effects, discomfort and silence, that although quantitatively nonsignificant, appear in 55% and 49% of the observed microaggressions, respectively. These effects are qualitatively important to analyze in terms of how students are reacting immediately after they encounter these stigmatizing incidents in the classroom.

**Table 3. Effects: Effects of Stigmatizing Microaggressions on Targets**

Types of Target response	<i>n</i> (%) of Effects
	(N = 51) <i>n</i> (%)
Disengagement	35 (68.6)
Discomfort	28 (54.9)
Silence	25 (49.0)

*Disengagement*

The most observed effect was disengagement. Sixty-eight percent of microaggressions elicited this effect. For example, in a general education math class at Taino, a light-skinned Black male instructor (who speaks Spanish fluently) engaged in an intelligence-demeaning microaggression which targeted Anthony, a young Latino male. According to the observation field notes, after taking an in-class quiz and engaging in two microaggressions with two other Latino students, the instructor started going over the quiz answers and called Anthony to the board. The other students laughed as Anthony went up to the board, as the professor said, “Anthony has a problem.” After Anthony wrote a fraction in which he put the negative sign in the wrong place, the following interaction occurred:

The professor corrects him, “You’ve got to be very careful with the sign.” Anthony goes and sits back down, but he is upset. He argues back, that the answer was correct...a Latina in the front-row who giggled earlier turns back to look at Anthony and says, “It’s wrong! It’s wrong!” The professor does not budge, he responds saying, “Instead of sending him back to high school, we’ll try to help him out.” Anthony continues to defend his answer to the front-row Latina, who responds, rolling her eyes a little, “You got to be careful of the sign!” After this Anthony disengaged and spent more time looking at his phone and did not participate as he had previously.

The professor’s demeaning tone to prove the student wrong was problematic in several ways. First, the public shaming of the student in front of the class created an environment where even other students, like his Latina colleague, engaged collectively in the microaggression. This is not conducive to a collaborative, respectful learning environment. Secondly, the microaggressive comment regarding “sending him back to high school” not only conveyed the message that the student is intellectually inferior,

but that he is not ready for college. The student's immediate reaction was to become upset due to being scorned and corrected in front of the class, yet what makes the student disengaged for the rest of the class time is the microaggressive comment regarding high school and the scolding from his classmate. The disengagement effect on Anthony did not occur when the microaggression began (the moment the professor called him to the board while students giggled), but manifested when the microaggression escalated to the demeaning comment regarding high school and peaked at the point where Anthony's classmate joins in. At that moment, Anthony no longer argued, as he went from being upset to disengaged.

As stated in the fieldnotes, the professor "initially appeared friendly by using the students first name, and by joking with them...The professor's teaching style was based on shaming students who got wrong answers and teaching to the weakest students. In the last few minutes of class he appears to introduce a new topic, at which point most students are no longer engaged." The professor questioned their college readiness and undermined their intelligence through various microaggressive comments and actions. This class had no white students, 15 Latino students, three Black students, and one Asian student. These coded comments about being wrong and going back to high school, although intelligence-based, cannot be decoupled from the racial context of the classroom. Through the racial microaggressions model framework, this microaggression is embedded within the macroaggressive, hegemonic ideologies of who should do well in school—and the attitudes that Black and Latino students are intellectually inferior (Q. Allen, 2012; Henfield, 2011; Museus & Park, 2015; Solórzano et al., 2000). These ideologies and attitudes can be internalized even by the Latina student that scorns Anthony, or the professor himself who is a Black (possibly Latino) male. The racialized undertones of delegitimizing students' intelligence and academic identity ripple out into the disengagement of the target, and after a while the general disengagement of other students, secondary targets. It is equally important to note that as he left class, Anthony told the Latina that scorned him, "see you later," to which she nodded back; thus they may be friends or have other classes together. Friends or peers joining in the microaggressive incidents can potentially make it more difficult to immediately react beyond disengagement to a microaggression, as it highlights the catch-22 dilemma of responding to microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007).

In another example, during a general education class at Domino, a female South Asian instructor similarly disengaged the class made up of mostly men of color. The incident begins as the instructor handed back exams and started reviewing the answers. She stated, "I can't even look at it because grades were so bad." Students were clearly uncomfortable and

began to moan. As she went over the answers, the instructor was “not including or actively trying to engage the entire class. Instead of letting students answer she just did the problems and told them, ‘you can’t do this, you can’t do this.’ Students at this point were disengaged, having side conversations, looking out the window, organizing their backpacks, and looking at their phones.” She continued to condescend the students with comments like “You must have heard of normal distribution” and asking questions without allowing them time to answer. Some of the students seemed lost and engaged in conversations trying to find out answers on their own. Later in class, the instructor initiated another microaggression, as she explained to them that they should go to tutoring, saying, “I’m going to have to tell student tutors not to give you answers.” She was not responsive to students who were lost and the class disengaged again. The instructor clearly and directly told students they could not do the work. In a similar shaming fashion, the instructor sternly stated that she “could not even look at their grades because they (we)re so bad.” This interaction clearly affected the students who were all targets of the microaggressive speech, and they begin to disengage. Students turned to each other to answer questions they had, a response that will be discussed later in the article under peer support and empowerment. Meanwhile, others were lost due to her focus on shaming and telling them they could not do the questions, instead of actually teaching the content. This exemplar illustrates how the learning context is compromised and the demeaning comments of the instructor once more target the ability of students to succeed at the academic task at hand, which is an integral part of how students form their academic identity (Matthews, 2014). Disengagement was an effect for 80% of the intelligence-demeaning microaggressions ( $n = 30$ ). Furthermore, as highlighted in our two examples, we found that shaming from the perpetrator was significantly positively correlated with disengagement ( $r(51) = .34, p = .014$ ).

### *Discomfort*

Following disengagement, in more than half of the observations (54.9%), targets and secondary targets of the microaggressions displayed discomfort in a variety of ways, including sinking into their chairs, flushing in embarrassment, or looking down. For instance, in a remedial English course at Domino consisting of 10 students of color and three white students, fieldnotes of a microaggression observation recorded the discomfort of a Latina student subjected to a microinvalidation of her ethnic identity:

To begin class, the instructor asks students to read a passage that was assigned for homework. While a Latina student was reading

from the passage aloud, she stumbled on the word Monteverde. Witnessing her demonstrable difficulty pronouncing the word the instructor shouted, "And you're Latina! Come on!" In response, the student smiled sheepishly. With her head bowed down slightly, she flushed and sank into her seat.

Using a chastising tone, the Black female instructor calls into question the legitimacy of the student's Latina identity, while simultaneously antagonizing her academic identity. Rather than interpret the student's difficulty in reading the word simply as a challenge of articulation, the instructor's unstated assumption and accusation is that *all* "real" Latina students should be able to pronounce *all* Spanish words despite regional and national language and dialectal heterogeneity. This instructor's statement had an immediate adverse effect on the student's educational engagement, as she responded by exhibiting discomfort and withdrawal instead of attempting to struggle through the reading passage.

In another illustrative occurrence, a student responded with discomfort (e.g., annoyance) after a white female instructor targeted her with a language-ethnicity based microaggression in a remedial English as a Second Language introduction to academic writing course at Oakmont. The class of 14 students consisted of mostly females ( $n=9$ ) and mostly Latino students ( $n=9$ ). After dividing students into groups to discuss a story in which one of the main themes concerned changing names, the white female instructor stopped to engage students in their ongoing discussion:

Student: My name is Greek, but I am from Jordan.

Instructor: Yeah, but it is an American-sounding name.

Student: But it is Greek.

Instructor: But it sounds like people would have that name *here*.

Evidently, the instructor disregards the student's emphasis that her name is Greek, despite it sounding "American" to the instructor. Observational fieldnotes described the student as visibly annoyed, but reported that she ultimately decided to let it go as the professor moved on to talk more about the story. Yet, later in the period when students were brought back together to discuss the story further with the entire class, the professor encountered a Persian name that she struggled to pronounce. Standing at the front of the room, she called on the same student from the early interaction—who happens to be sitting in the last row—and says "Sandra, how do I say that name really?" The student looks at the paper and ventures a guess at how to pronounce the name. She then looks at the classmates in her group and said, "Why did she ask me?"

The instructor appears to have had difficulty in discerning between Arabic and Greek with Persian and assumed that the student would be able to pronounce the name as though it were from her native language. The instructor not only lumped together very different cultures and languages, but was also calling on the student to speak for an entire population. The student seemed to be confused about the actions of the instructor and in light of their previous interactions about her own name, it seemed to create a large disconnection with this student. Further, this microaggression conveys the underlining assumption of homogeneity in ethnic groups (Allen, 2012), which delegitimizes the wide range of experiences of students of color. Discomfort was an effect for 70% of the intelligence-demeaning microaggressions ( $n = 30$ ). Like disengagement, our quantitative analysis indicated a strong correlation between the occurrence of shaming from the perpetrator and discomfort reaching statistical significance, ( $r(51) = .502, p = .00$ ).

### *Silence*

There were several instances where silence occurred as part of disengagement. One instance of silencing that occurred alongside disengagement took place in a general education English class at Oakmont consisting of 10 students of color and nine white students. A white female instructor was conducting a discussion on the topic of persuasion. A Black male student offered an argument by stating, "I am good ... I am the best ... at work." In a patronizing tone, in what appeared to be an attempt at humor, the instructor responded, "Yeah, right, at Macy's shoe department." Other students in class did not laugh and the targeted student became silent and disengaged immediately after this isolated microaggression in which the instructor employed classist logic to degrade the student's self-appraisal of his ability to be persuasive as well as degrade the student for being a Macy's employee. The immediate effect of the instructor's action was to silence a student who, prior to the instructor's remark, was actively speaking in class. Silence was an effect for 53% of the intelligence-demeaning microaggressions ( $n = 30$ ). In addition, another example of silence as an effect is found under the first example of peer support and peer empowerment in the following section.

### IMMEDIATE RESPONSES TO MICROAGGRESSIONS

The following section focuses on the target responses to microaggressions experienced or witnessed in class. Responses to microaggressions depend on the type and context in which they occurred. The racial microaggressions model framework places responses as agential

actions targets take post-microaggressive incidents in order to develop and employ strategies to remedy the effects of microaggressions, challenge and create awareness of racial microaggressions, and empower themselves and others who have experienced microaggressive incidents (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). Similar to our analysis of effects, in our analysis of responses, we extend the category from the Pérez Huber and Solórzano model to include how students experiencing classroom microaggressions respond immediately after the microaggression. We found laughter, joking/distraction, peer support and empowerment, and questioning the perpetrator as responses that occurred when the targets acted on the microaggressions. For a complete breakdown of the frequency of these effects, please refer to Table 4. Laughter was a response in over one third of the 51 microaggressive incidents, while responding with a joke and distraction was found in over one fifth of the incidents. It is worth discussing the other less common responses, even if they did not occur as often, as they give us novel insights into the immediate strategies individuals employ to manage the microaggressions they face. In some instances, these responses challenge, defy, and oppose the effects of the microaggressions while empowering targets during sometimes tense moments.

**Table 4. Target Responses to Microaggressions**

Types of Target response	<i>n</i> (%) of Target Responses
	( <i>N</i> = 51) <i>n</i> (%)
Laughter	19 (37.3)
Joking as distraction	12 (23.5)
Peer support/empowerment	8 (15.7)
Questioning perpetrator	6 (11.8)

### *Laughter*

In 37.3% of the microaggression incidents ( $N = 51$ ), targets responded with laughter. Laughter as a response was not isolated from the effects of the microaggression (e.g., disengagement) or other types of responses (e.g., questioning the perpetrator and joking/distraction). In the first example of disengagement discussed above, the microaggression observation also noted that students laughed as Anthony walked to the board and after the professor stated, “Anthony has a problem.” This example shows the escalation of the situation where the primary target is attacked not only by the perpetrator, but other students through their choice to laugh as a response to the instructor’s microaggression.

Another example comes from a remedial reading class of mostly male students of color at Taino, where a total of 10 microaggressions occurred. The class began with the instructor, a white male, giving a quiz that consisted of him reading questions that could be answered from a newspaper, which each student had. After students recorded the instructor's question in their notebooks, they were given time to find the answer in the newspaper and write it down using complete sentences. While explaining the quiz the students were about to take, the instructor mockingly told the mostly male students of color, "I bet you've done more reading in this class than in your whole lifetime." The researcher noted, "some laughter—mostly from male students sitting in front of me. Other students ignored him."

In this case the microaggression is not targeting one specific student, but the students in general. The intelligence-demeaning microaggression regarding students' presumed lack of reading prior to taking his class contains the underlying message that their lack of literacy is an individual deficit and assumption that they are not "productive American citizens." The instructor cast doubt on the reading abilities of his students at a crucial moment—right before they took a quiz—which could have potentially affected the academic performance of the students. Further, the microaggression not only questions students' abilities to be successful academically (academic identity), but also to be productive socially as citizens. The response of the targets varied, but some laughed, which was likely the intended response.

Another example of laughter as a response comes from a vocational computer course made up of all male students who were primarily students of color (only one white male), and led by an East Asian male instructor. At the beginning of the class the following microaggressive exchange occurred between students:

Two East Asian students sitting next to each other spoke to each other in their home language. Then, one a South Asian student who was sitting next to them said, pointedly but kind of jokingly said, "ok, let's keep it English!" and the two East Asian students responded by a moment of surprise, then all three were laughing and one of the East Asian students said something like "shut the fuck up," but in a friendly way. At that point, all three of them started talking about something in English.

In this exchange the perpetrator of the microaggression is another student who seems to be friends with the two primary targets. The perpetrator is invalidating his classmates' ethnic identity as he directly asked them to speak English and not their home language. This microaggression may not be directly targeting the academic identity of the students, however,

it still has implications for the students’ other social identities. Immigrant origin students constantly have to negotiate between speaking their native language—a marker of foreignness and otherness—and English, which becomes a marker of American identity. The two targets are surprised that their classmate would say that and then respond with laughter. The laughter response may have been used to diffuse the microaggression and write it off as a playful joke by their friend. These students not only laughed, but also told the perpetrator to be quiet. This laughter response differs from when students laughed at microaggressions delivered by instructors without saying anything else to the instructor. In this case, since a classmate engaged in the microaggression, the targets may have considered the interaction as less high stakes, since the perpetrator was another student and not the instructor who has power over the students’ learning outcomes (e.g., grades) and may have felt comfortable enough to jokingly laugh and ask the student to be quiet.

In the examples above, students responded with laughter in different ways: some primary targets laughed nervously; secondary and primary targets laughed at the microaggression itself when it was delivered in a joking manner. Even so, others laughed at their classmates who were the primary targets—escalating the damage of the microaggression. This type of laughter as a response was common in some classrooms where instructors continuously engaged in microaggressions and allowed students to think it was okay to laugh at these subtle and demeaning comments. Instructors can create a climate where microaggressions can potentially become the norm, and students are socialized to believe that it is okay to make these comments. This type of classroom climate may not be conducive to learning.

### *Joking as a Distraction*

Some students responded with a joke as a distraction to minimize the microaggression. In the course with the 10 microaggressions, in which the white male instructor continuously conveyed his microaggressions as humor, a student responded in a joking manner to one of these intelligence-demeaning statements. Despite the fact that students were currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution, the instructor stated, “I’m preparing you to go to college. I’m sure it’s a challenge for you... We’re trying to build college students.” This admonition betrays the instructor’s assumption that these students, who have graduated from high school and are enrolled in a college-level course, are effectively not college students. In response to this questioning of the students’ college identity and ability to succeed in college, as the instructor goes back to read the quiz questions

and says, “I stay up late to do this,” a Latino male student jokingly says “I appreciate it!” with a grin. In this example the student replies with a sarcastic comment, subtly resisting the intelligence-demeaning microaggressions by replying with a quip and simultaneously using the same mocking tone the instructor has used in his delivery of microaggressions to be critical of the instructor’s comments.

Another example of joking as a distraction in response to a microaggression occurred in an accounting class at Domino with a Black female instructor and 26 students, mostly students of color (17 male, 5 Asian, 13 Black, 3 Latino, 2 white, 3 unknown). Throughout the class, observers documented 5 microaggressions instigated by the instructor targeting students’ academic ability and diligence. At one point she said, “After this quiz I think more people should drop... These are the worst grades I’ve ever seen so far this semester.” During the microaggression where the instructor questioned the work ethic of her students, she dismissively stated, “I’ve seen students get lazier and lazier and lazier and it makes my job harder and harder. This class has more hours than any other college in NY, I should have at least half of my class getting A’s.” The instructor begins lecturing students about cheating and asserts, “I’m watching you when you take quizzes.” In response, a male student defuses the tension and defies the instructor by saying, “You are playing solitaire.” The class laughs in response to his joke.

In this case the student jokes to defuse the lack of worth ethic and cheating assumptions the teacher makes about him and his peers. Defusing the microaggression is a strategy that students used to manage the microaggressive interaction. To some extent, students reflect agency in empowering themselves to minimize the microaggression. Due to power dynamics of the faculty–student relationship, however, strategies for defusing microaggressions may be limited. Our coded joking responses were positively correlated with silence ( $r(51) = .29, p = .04$ ). As Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015) argue, responses can relate to the effects of microaggressions. We interpret this to mean that when students were responding with jokes and distractions it was also when perpetrators’ microaggressions would silence primary and/or secondary targets.

#### *Peer Support and Peer Empowerment*

Another strategy that some students employed in response to microaggressions was to rely on peer support and empowerment. In an example of an incident that occurred in a general education science classroom at Domino, a Black male instructor attempted to redirect the conversation back to the main topic of his lecture: “now onto transcription.” In

response, a Black female student asked, "what is transcription?" while laughing uncomfortably. Immediately the instructor responded, "OK, what's transcription? Get out!" Maintaining a straight face, he did not answer the question and carried on with the lecture. The student became silent moments after this happened. Shortly after, upon realizing that the instructor had no intention of providing clarification to her question, she turned to her peer for support in order to understand the class content. Noticing the students in conversation, the instructor then stared at both students until they stopped speaking. This strategy of turning to her peer for support was struck down by the instructor. Employing verbal and non-verbal communication, the instructor continued to silence both the student who was the primary target of his intelligence-demeaning microaggression targeting her academic identity as well as the student who could have potentially clarified the primary target's misunderstanding. Thus, this instructor's initial microaggressive comment and subsequent piercing stare functioned to discipline students into silence and foreclosed an opportunity for the student, in responding to the microaggression, to use peer support to understand the course topic.

After being silenced when she asked a question and realizing that the instructor would not provide an answer, the student refused to remain silent or disengage. She used her social assets (peers) to continue to learn the content, despite a hostile instructor who did not answer her questions and continued to silence her and the peer providing support. We hypothesize that peer support and empowerment may have only occurred in 8 of the 51 microaggressive incidents, because it may be a challenge for students to undermine the authority and power-speech of the instructors, who were the primary perpetrators of the microaggressions. However, it is important to highlight that students did turn to peers as a strategic response to resist the effects of the microaggressions on their learning.

### *Questioning the Perpetrator*

In some of the responses to microaggressions, students questioned the individual making the microaggressive statement. In one such occurrence, a Latino male instructor was lecturing on thermodynamics in a general education chemistry course at Taino when he veered off to discuss the different words used for heat in various languages. After a brief exchange with one student about how to say heat in French, the instructor, who is Dominican himself, stated, "Puerto Ricans and Cubans say 'Calol'" and spells it out on the chalkboard. While the initial conversation seemed not to be directed at any particular student, this last comment is addressed to a Latina student sitting in a row to the right side of the chalkboard. She

then responds by questioning the instructor: “What, what are you talking about?” Next comes a continuation of the instructor’s microaggressive statement: “Yeah Calol, *can’t* pronounce the ‘r’.” At this point the majority of students ignore his comment, but one Latina girl seems uncomfortable and upset with the comment. Impervious to the student’s response as well as the effect of his statements, the instructor continued this line of discussion. In this exchange, though the student ultimately decides not to pursue her challenging of the instructor’s statements, it is important to note her initial questioning of his sense-making. She did not raise the question for clarification, but rather to challenge the notion that certain ethnic groups are incapable (e.g., *can’t* pronounce the “r”) of “correctly” pronouncing *calor*. Instead of more accurately describing the use of an “l” instead of an “r” as a dialectical pattern that is equally legitimate, the instructor casts Puerto Ricans and Cubans as lacking the capacity to appropriately pronounce the word. This student’s questioning as a form of challenging the instructor is important to document as a subtle resistance strategy.

In the remedial English classroom where 10 microaggressions were recorded, a student directly challenged the white male instructor’s multiple (often times subtle) microaggressive comments about students’ intelligence and academic abilities. As described in the laughter and joking as a distraction sections, throughout the course, the instructor uses a mixture of humor and sarcasm to communicate intelligence-demeaning statements. At a later point in the class, the instructor uses slang to call attention to a student he believes is neither prepared nor participating. Addressing a Black male student, the instructor stated, “You’re not taking the exam, bro ... and I bet you didn’t do your essay?” Some of the students laughed a little when he said “bro.” The instructor then repeats what students need to do to prepare for the exam and finishes with “Right, James?”, a comment directed at the student he initially called “bro.” In response one of the Latinos sitting near the observer says to the instructor, “Why you throwing subs?” The instructor looked perplexed, and asked him what “subs” meant as he had never heard that expression before. While on the surface this response may seem passive, the phrase “throwing subs” is an explicit challenge to the instructor’s remarks. *Throwing subs* refers to a statement where an individual subliminally makes a condescending comment about another person. In this situation, the student is essentially asking the instructor why is he consistently making subtle, demeaning comments about students’ intelligence. The questioning serves to put the instructor on notice that though the students may not be responding every time he makes belittling comments, they are acutely aware of what he is implying.

In another microaggression, which occurred later in the same class session, the instructor announced to the entire class that the reason they are

in his class is because of their lack of effort toward reading: "It was not because of the test. The reason is because you don't read enough. We're trying to get you guys to read more." His remarks did not sit well with at least one Latina student in the class, who responded with an audible sigh. Directing his comments toward this student, the instructor continued, "You need to accept that—stop arguing with me about that." Additionally, the microaggressive incidents in this particular classroom lingered in some of the students' minds even after the class. The observer noted that this Latina student briefly talked to her after class as she was walking. The student muttered under her breath, "He thinks we don't read? I READ!..." The instructor's initial remarks targeted all students' academic efforts—or rather lack thereof. In response to the student's immediate rebuttal to his comments, the instructor doubled down on his argument and insisted that the students not disagree, but accept his diagnosis as big "T" Truth. Though the instructor maintained a level of structural authority and power, we interpret this student's audible sigh as a form of challenging the veracity of the instructor's statements.

#### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Our findings expand the racial microaggressions theoretical framework to develop an analytical frame in which we can engage in thoroughly understanding what the immediate responses to microaggressions look like as well as how they relate to students' educational experiences and target their academic identities. To our knowledge, there is no other study that is contextualized within the community college setting which uses the racial microaggressions analytical model as the driving mechanism to explain the importance of understanding not only the microaggressions that occur, but the immediate effects and student responses to microaggressions. Additionally, we incorporate literature from psychology concerning identity and stigmatization to capture how certain social identities are stigmatized in the microaggressive incidents, and specifically, how academic identities are targeted.

Seventeen of the 60 observed classrooms had at least one microaggression, and 51 microaggressions were observed in these classrooms. Although the microaggressions occurred in a limited number of classrooms and indicate more of an instructor effect than an institutional effect, from the racial microaggressions analysis lens, which states that racial microaggressions are supported by institutional racism and macroaggressions (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015), we cannot overemphasize the characteristics of the institutions and classrooms in which the microaggressions occurred. Microaggressions were most often initiated in the

remedial classrooms observed. Across the three campuses, the highest number of microaggressions, both in terms of the numbers of classrooms and the numbers of events within classrooms, occurred in Taino, a college that serves predominantly students of color, many of whom are enrolled in remedial courses.

These findings align with findings from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011), which highlight how macroaggressive ideologies and systemic institutional stratification constitute community college contexts, which are attended by large numbers of students of color. At the micro-level, we highlight intelligence-demeaning microaggressions, not only because they occurred most frequently in our observations, but also especially because they exemplify how these ideologies exist within the course-taking stratification. In the course of their academic trajectories, students of color experience recurring microaggressive messages from instructors, administrators, and peers that question their intelligence, assume deviancy as well as homogenous social group experiences (e.g., assuming that all Black students will be good at sports), and reinforce the superiority of white cultural values and communication styles (Henfield, 2011). These disparaging microaggressive comments that invalidate students' academic identities are guided by macroaggressive ideologies that ascribe notions of intellectual inferiority to persons of color that are reinforced by the systematic tracking of students in their K-12 education and in remedial courses at the community college level (A. Allen et al., 2013).

## THE STIGMATIZING OF ACADEMIC IDENTITIES

The delivery of the microaggressions by the perpetrators (most of whom were faculty) stigmatized multiple identities the students occupied (e.g., college student identity, ethnic or racial identity, gender, etc.). Constantly being a target of intelligence-demeaning microaggressions in the classroom could potentially affect a person's academic identity, which has been positively linked to academic motivation and achievement (Graham & Anderson, 2008; Kaplan & Flum, 2010; Komarraju & Dial, 2014; Matthews, 2014) and college success (Komarraju et al., 2010; Osborne, 1997).

More often than not, in the 51 microaggressive incidents we analyzed, the students did not respond and instead were silenced or disengaged. These findings suggest that students are sometimes caught in a "catch-22" of either remaining silent, displaying discomfort, and/or disengaging; or speaking up and responding in some way. This is noteworthy in understanding the clear effects of microaggressions on the social and emotional well-being of students of color who experience them. Students did not

always passively accept the microaggressions experienced or witnessed. They responded in a variety of ways: they laughed, joked back as a distraction, questioned the perpetrator, and sought or provided peer support. Each of these response types immediately altered the social interactions with instructors and peers when they occurred, which in turn, could reasonably influence how an individual will perceive her ability to academically succeed (Graham & Anderson, 2008). In the context of stigmatized identities, students lose a sense of belonging and can also disengage from the situation, while some can also take these experiences and engage in resistant acts to persevere (Padilla, 2008).

Our study shows that some students are engaging in resistant acts to counter the microaggressions they experience, which warrants deeper investigation. Future studies could benefit by employing a resistance theoretical framework (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) to observe the occurrence of resistant or nonresistant responses to microaggressions and conduct interviews with students about the intentionality in their responses.

#### THE POTENTIAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

In an era where student movements across the United States have begun to demand accountability from administrators and faculty in institutions of higher education, much of the research focus is on four-year colleges and predominantly white institutions (PWIs). In contrast to this trend, this study exposes the micro-level phenomena that cyclically reproduce macro-level inequitable educational outcomes for students of color who disproportionately attend minority-serving community colleges. These collective student movements and counterspaces that are being created across institutions of higher education by students serve as places where students can react, respond, and resist the often-hostile environments they face when confronted with uncomfortable, undermining microaggressive incidents (Solórzano et al., 2000). With the current backlash regarding safe spaces and political correctness in American society (Friedersdorf, 2016), it may be even more difficult for students to openly discuss the occurrences of microaggressions for students in different higher education settings. These counterspaces serve as a place for students to receive support after microaggressive experiences occur. Therefore, these spaces should be encouraged and supported, without being coopted or denounced by institutions in the name of freedom of expression or to counter a culture of political correctness.

Facing the reality that students with marginalized identities are likely to experience microaggressions from their instructors or peers, institutions

should work toward assisting students in developing strategic mechanisms that will help them adapt, cope, and resist (Sue, 2010). Even though our data only show a small slice of the processing of classroom microaggressions students experience, we found that some students are already resisting the microaggressions through critical, immediate responses to the perpetrators. Our study provides insight into what types of responses exist immediately during the microaggressive experience that can inform workshops where students can rehearse ways to respond and deal with these inevitable interactions. For example, students and faculty can devise strategic immediate coping mechanisms that students can employ when they are faced with a microaggressive incident in the higher education spaces through an examination of the kinds of microaggressions they may experience. A recent study found that some Black male college achievers resist racist stereotypes by “asking questions that shifted the emotional burden of stereotype sense-making from the microaggressed to the microaggressor” (Harper, 2015, p. 665). Several four-year universities have started to include microaggressions training as part of their new student orientations (Saul, 2016). Community colleges could benefit from similar activities.

In addition, our study highlights the importance of power differentials when considering faculty-initiated microaggressions that target students. Institutional leaders, academic department chairs, and program chairs should develop effective ways to both train educators to be more aware of how they may commit microaggressions as well as hold faculty accountable when they marginalize students in the classroom. To address classroom microaggressions, institutions should put in place systems and procedures where students can anonymously and safely report microaggressive acts they experience. These systems would function as a way to resist institutional racism that is maintained through systematic policies, practices, and processes while at the same time forcing institutions to face microaggressions at a policy level. Moreover, individual departments or colleges should engage in routine quantitative and qualitative assessments to better understand students’ experiences in various classrooms, with particular attention to microaggressions. Data gained from these assessments can be used to inform faculty about the ways their pedagogical practices on an aggregate level either promote or undermine student learning.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Findings from our study offer implications for researchers to better understand how the interactions occurring between students and instructors can exacerbate persisting inequality for students of color and of immigrant origin. Most importantly, this study captures the effects of and students’

immediate responses to microaggressions most prevalent in community college. The qualitative analysis of the student responses extends our understanding of microaggressions which undermine learning in the context of community college classrooms. Moreover, our focus on community college institutions responds to the need to pay closer empirical attention to contexts which many students of color and of immigrant origin attend at some point in their undergraduate tenures.

While this analysis provides important insights into the real-time microaggressive event, it has many limitations. First, it relies wholly on the observers' ability to capture the microaggressive events without student confirmation. Future research should incorporate the observed real-time community college student responses to microaggressions triangulated with student interviews and questionnaires in which students are asked to reflect on their responses to microaggressive situations. Furthermore, one of the limitations of the study is that although the microaggressions observation tool is a move toward understanding microaggressions in real time, it was not the primary focus of the larger study. Some microaggressions may not have been recorded and the full extent of the responses may not have been captured. The observation tool is also limited to recording verbal microaggressions; environmental or nonverbal microaggressions were not captured. The study was conducted in 60 classrooms across three campuses, and only 17 classrooms had observed microaggressions. However, the fact that microaggressions occurred in almost 30% of the classrooms even when instructors and students alike were aware that observations were taking place is noteworthy and provides opportunities to begin to understand how microaggressions, their effects, and students' responses to them are experienced in the daily lives of these students.

Although most of the observed responses and two of the observed effects were not quantitatively significant, it is important to understand qualitatively the immediate effects and responses of the students. In our qualitative findings, we detail the stigmatization of these students' academic and racialized identities in the interactions with their instructors, which is noteworthy in understanding the perpetuation of systematic and institutional racism that exists in community college settings, and particularly on minority-serving community college campuses. This is only the beginning. Future research should observe more classrooms and multiple sessions of each class and include a larger net of community colleges. Future research can also survey the students regarding their engagement in the specific classes where microaggressions were observed. More research should be conducted in the area of microaggressions in action to inform both educators and students about strategies that can be used to address microaggressive situations and prevent microaggressions from occurring in the

first place. Lastly, more research concerning the (in)formal ways in which students and educators are responding to and resisting microaggressions *in vivo* and post-incidents inside and outside of the classroom in community college contexts is needed.

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#### NOTES

1. We define *effects* as the behavioral and emotional reactions targets of microaggressions have after they experience a microaggression, as per Pérez Huber and Solórzano's racial microaggressions model analytic framework (2015).
2. All campus, student, and instructor names are pseudonyms.

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## APPENDIX

### Data Coding and Categorizing of Microaggressions and Responses

In this Appendix we provide evidence of the data coding process described in the Methods section of the article. We first include the Classroom Interpersonal Microaggressions (CIMA) form that was used by the two observers to record the *in vivo* microaggressions. Then, we provide a sample from the actual codebook that was created using grounded theory to be able to code the CIMA form and the ethnographic fieldnotes that were taken during each classroom observation. We provide the empty table created to sort and categorize the microaggressions by theme (e.g., intelligence, cultural, intersectional, gender) and by category (e.g., microinvalidation, microinsult, etc.), based on our analysis group meetings. We also provide the hand-coding worksheet and the empty table used to categorize effects/responses. The data from the CIMA forms, which were entered in the table used to sort and categorize microaggressions and the hand-coding worksheet, were also entered into quantitative databases to be able to conduct frequency counts and statistical analyses of each type of microaggression and each type of response.

*Classroom Interpersonal Microaggressions Manual and Form:*

**CLASSROOM INTERPERSONAL MICROAGGRESSIONS  
MANUAL**

Subtle, everyday verbal, non-verbal &/or visual insults, indignities  
& demeaning messages directed automatically or unconsciously  
towards  
under-represented persons or people of color occurring within the  
classroom\*

At the campus level, students can be rendered invisible (through lack of representation in the form of having campus buildings, flyers, office postings, or art that reflect their histories or experiences or by lack of faculty from their backgrounds. There may be active racialized or gendered joking that can be insulting and uncomfortable. And then there are the interpersonal microaggressions so aptly described in Sue, et al 2007 & Solórzano, 2000 articles, which include verbal and nonverbal affronts in social spaces between faculty, administration, and peers.

To date the work on this topic has been largely qualitative and has not focused strictly on the classroom level.

**With this task, we ask you to concentrate on CLASSROOM (level) interpersonal microaggression (heretofore CIMA) Please consider:**

- ✓WHO initiates the CIMA?
- ✓Who it is the CIMA directed towards?
- ✓What types of CIMA(s) occur – including but not limited to racial CIMAs(s)?
- ✓How do students and instructor respond to the CIMA?
- ✓Note details about CIMA—the qualitative portion of the task.

**NOTE EACH EVENT THROUGHOUT A CLASS OBSERVATION SESSION**

**NOTE THAT A SINGLE CIMA CAN INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF CIMA (e.g., all Mexican's are illegals = Country of origin + immigrant status)**

***PLEASE USE ONE SHEET PER MICRO-AGGRESSION EVENT***

**For EACH micro-aggression event observed describe:**

**(1) Details of micro-aggression/quotes**– Describe the set of interactions that happen during the micro-aggression event between the initiator, target, and rest of class; include **quotes** of what was said or thorough descriptions of what was done.

**(2) The context**–Describe the classroom environment; how are the students sitting; at what point during the class time did the event happen

**(3) The initiator** – Describe the person that initiated the micro-aggression, give background on his/her cultural background, gender, age, etc. and role in within the classroom; any previous knowledge about the person in the context of the classroom

**(4) Tone of micro-aggression (intended v. unintended)** – Describe if the micro-aggression was clearly intentional (rude, mean-spirited, etc.) or unintentional (initiator did not seem to know it was inappropriate)

**(5) The target** – Describe the person that the micro-aggression was directed towards; give background on his/her cultural background, gender, age, etc. and role in within the classroom; any previous knowledge about the person in the context of the classroom

**(6) Reactions (if any)** – Describe any reactions that occur due to the micro-aggression; of the target, initiator and rest of classroom

**(7) Anything else regarding micro-aggression event**- Make sure to write down anything else about the event

***Write down the descriptions of the CIMA in the “MICRO-AGGRESSION EVENT DESCRIPTION” area***

***Write down any notes corresponding to the observations you make (e.g., your biases, interpretations, thoughts about what is happening) in the “NOTES” area***

***\*\*Note: If multiple micro-aggressions occur one after another, tally number of CIMAs, write down examples, and make note in ethnography as well as in CIMA Form about the microaggressive climate.\*\****

<b>MICRO-AGGRESSION EVENT DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>NOTES:</b>
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<p><b>Post CIMA Summary</b> <i>(In your own words—what happened. What individual student responses did you note and did you note changes in classroom dynamics?)</i></p>
<p><b>INITIATED BY:</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Student <input type="radio"/> Instructor</p>
<p><b>TO:</b> **</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Intentional—deliberate; rude; mean spirited</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unintentional—unaware; joking</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unclear</p>
<p><b>DIRECTED TOWARDS:</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Student</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Instructor</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Unclear/Undefined</p>
<p><b>STUDENTS' RESPONSES:</b></p> <p><b>TR= Target Response</b></p> <p><b>CMR= Classmate Response:</b> <i>Next to the selected item(s) write "TR" if referring to the response of student targeted by aggression and/or "CMR" if referring to classmate(s)' response.</i></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ignored/ Oblivious</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Intervened</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Escalated</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Student(s)s visibly upset but do not intervene</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Withdrawn</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE:</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Ignored/ Oblivious</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Intervened</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Escalated</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Instructor visibly upset but do not intervene</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Withdrawn</p>
<p><b>DO NOT FILL IN THE SECTIONS BELOW. THESE WILL BE CODED LATER DURING ANALYSIS.</b></p>
<p><b>CATEGORY:</b></p> <p><input type="radio"/> Microassault</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Microinsult</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Microinvalidation</p>

**TYPE:**

- **Ageism:** *Related to age (e.g., how would she know, she's old)*
- **Country of Origin:** *Related to national origin (e.g., all Mexicans are lazy)*
- **Immigrant Status:** *Reference to recency of immigration or authorization status (e.g., FOB; wetback; illegal...)*
- **Intelligence:** *Related to intelligence (e.g., That's retarded; You are so stupid)*
- **Homophobic:** *Related to homophobia (e.g., That's so gay)*
- **Lang.—Foreign Accent:** *Related to foreign accent (e.g., laughing at pronunciation or word choice of someone who is clearly not a native English speaker)*
- **Lang. —Eng. vs. Non-Eng:** *Related to use of non-English in class not in interest of instruction (e.g., are you talking about me?)*
- **Lang. —Non-Standard Eng:** *Related to AAVE/Ebonics (e.g., laughing at pronunciation or word choice of someone of someone use o AAVE)*
- **Phenotype:** *Related to hair or skin color (e.g., comment about “bad hair”, not being dark/light enough to be of the designated group)*
- **Racism:** *Related to race (Exclusion or designation—either negative or model minority—about a group based on race- e.g., “We were talking about Latinas in class and I was the only Latina so everyone just stared at me.”)*
- **Religion:** *Related to religion (avoiding someone who is veiled or making a negative comment about a particular religion)*
- **Sexist:** *Related to gender (excluding minority gender in class or making comment about a particular gender's ability to perform)*
- **Sexual Innuendo:** *Related to sexuality (reference to a person or a particular gender's physique in a sexualized manner)*
- **Socioeconomic Status (SES):** *Related to SES (e.g., excluding due to person's low/high SES, negative comments about appearance due to SES)*
- **Other:** *Note any other that does not fit the categories above*

Samples of several CIMA codes from codebook:

CODE	DESCRIPTION/ SUBCODES	EXEMPLAR
<b>CLASSROOM LEVEL CODES</b>		
<b><u>Level 1: Class/CIMA Descriptives</u></b>		
<b>Instruction (classroom level)</b>	<b>Type of instruction occurring moment CIMA happens</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher centered pedagogy</li> <li>• Student centered</li> </ul>	Teacher centered: <i>The professor had been lecturing and paused to check for student comprehension.</i> Student Centered: <i>The instructor is going over the lecture and she wants everyone to take out their book to work on the assignment on the book.</i>
<b><u>Level 2: Class Climate: Influence of CIMA on climate</u></b>		
<b>Number Visibly Affected (classroom level)</b>	<b>The amount of people in the classroom impacted by CIMA:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• isolated person</li> <li>• two or more persons</li> <li>• whole class</li> </ul>	<i>Two or more persons: ... two East Asian students who were sitting next to each other were speaking to each other in a common language that I did not catch (Cantonese?). Then, one of the S.E. Asian students who was sitting next to them said, pointedly but kind of jokingly "ok, let's keep it English!" ... did not change the tone of the class, the instructor had not heard the exchange...</i>

<b>INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CODES</b>		
<b><u>Level 1: Individual Descriptives</u></b>		
<b>Target</b>	<b>Who was CIMA directed at</b>	<i>e.g., student, instructor, unclear-found in CIMA forms and inventory</i>
<b><u>Level 2: Tone/Speech of Individuals</u></b>		
<b>Deficiency Speech</b>	<b>Use of deficiency words/phrases</b>	<p><i>The professor had been lecturing and paused to check for student comprehension. He asked, “Questions about this?” referring to the whole class... He then looked at a young Black woman who had been quietly and actively taking notes and asked, <b>Ms. XX do you understand what is happening?</b>”</i></p> <p><i>The woman responded by nodding her head silently. The professor responded <b>“If Ms. X gets it, then we are all doing fine”</b></i></p>
<b><u>Level 3: Affect/Behavior of Individuals :The emotions and behaviors due to CIMAS</u></b>		
	<b>Coping responses from targets of CIMA:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Silenced:</u> target/room does not speak after CIMA</li> </ul>	<u>Silenced:</u> <i>Other students did not seem to react to this CIMA, although the room became silent after this happened.</i>
	<b>Mechanisms used by target to counter/resist CIMAs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Peer support:</u> use of peers as support to resist CIMA</li> </ul>	<u>Peer support:</u> <i>The Black woman began speaking to another student (seeming to be asking her for clarification).</i>

Table Categorizing the CIMA Category and Theme

Classroom
CIMA # (Total 55)
Date
Campus
Subject
Category
Mega-Theme
Sub-Theme
Description
Notes from Descriptions
Initiated by
Directed At
Student Response
Instructor Response

Hand-Coded Data Form

CLASSID	CIMA #	CLASS LEVEL CODES		INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CODES			
		LEVEL 1 DESCRIPTIVE	LEVEL 2 CLIMATE	LEVEL 1 DESCRIPTIVE	LEVEL 2 TONE	LEVEL 3 AFFECT	
						INITIATOR	TARGET
<u>QUOTES:</u>						<u>EXEMPLAR?</u>	

Table Categorizing Effects/Responses

Type of effect/response
Theme/Category
Perpetrator
Actual MA & Effect or Response
Classroom

SASKIAS CASANOVA, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Transborder Studies at Arizona State University. As an applied cultural psychologist, she examines how minoritized students' experiences with stigmatization and discrimination relate to their socio-emotional development and educational outcomes. She also explores the influence of family, language, and community on immigrant-origin students' identity development.

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