

MICROAGGRESSIONS TRILOGY: Part 1. Why Do Microaggressions Matter?*

Ronald A. Berk**

NOTE: This article is the first in a series of three articles on microaggressions. All of the articles are tailored specifically for faculty developers, provosts and directors of diversity and training, faculty, and administrators to address the most critical issues on this topic in higher education. This one presents a framework for understanding the topic and a context for tackling those issues in the workplace and classroom in the next two articles, respectively.

(*VICTIM: Women professors of color*): “No matter how hard they work, how many degrees they possess, what titles they earn, or what levels and/or positions they acquire, they are still vulnerable to malevolent experiences as faculty members.”

Niemann (2012a, p. 448)

Background

How many times have you wounded someone with your words and didn't even realize it? Do you ever remember saying something you wish you hadn't said because it was hurtful? Did you apologize or just let it go? We have all been guilty of these transgressions.

In higher education, what has emerged from the veritable maelstrom of personal insults in our

workplace are the new aggressors, types of victims, and frequency of the attacks. Those attacks have been directed at the marginalized, historically underrepresented, and, usually, most vulnerable persons in our society in specific racial/ethnic, gender, religious, and sexual-orientation groups. African, Asian, and Native Americans, Latinx, women, Jews and Muslims, and gay and lesbian individuals are the most frequent targets.

In recent years, the backdrop for these attacks changed dramatically with the following events: (1) the tragic mass murders committed in the U.S. and abroad, (2) the White male police brutality killings of African-American youth and men, (3) the mean-spirited toxicity and coarse racist and sexist discourse of the 2016 presidential campaign, (4) the post-election protests in cities and on school campuses nationwide, and (5) the post-election spike in the harassment and intimidation of African Americans, Muslims, girls and women, immigrants, and LGBTQ and hate crimes in public schools, universities, and businesses (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). These events significantly altered the context and urgency for understanding and responding to all of these attacks. As they unfolded, we witnessed an old standard for “hate” and how many ways it can be expressed, substandard though it may be.

Of course, inequities already exist in so many areas, such as White women earning 79% of what White men earn and for African-American and

*This trilogy is dedicated to the memory of my wife, Marion Smith-Watson, MD, PhD, a Black Panamanian American, who, as a professor, clinical psychologist, and OB/GYN physician/surgeon, endured the insults and indignities of microaggressions her entire life.

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Latina women, it's even lower at 63% and 54%, respectively (Hill, 2016). The latest study in academic compensation by gender in medical schools by Freund et al. (2016) reported that women professors earn an average of \$20,520 less than men, which is 90% of men's salaries.

Layered on top of these disturbing differences and tragic events is the increasing number of daily indignities that the underrepresented members of our academic community must endure, especially White women, and men and women of color. For example, when a teaching award, grant, or any other competition is won by a female professor, a male professor may exclaim to another male professor: "You got beat by a girl!" That is a direct insult to the female professor, sending the message that women are inferior to men. It is further demeaning for a male to call a woman a "girl." Telling an African American professor: "You are a credit to your race," is insulting because the message is that African Americans are not as smart as Whites to be professors. "Complimenting" an Asian American that: "You speak excellent English," is offensive because it communicates that he or she is not a real American. These insults are called "microaggressions."

The purposes of this article are (1) to broaden the current definitions of microaggressions and macroaggressions, (2) to clarify and revise the taxonomy of aggressions, (3) to tack on a layer of hierarchical microaggressions, and (4) to examine the psychological and physical consequences of microaggressions. It focuses on faculty, administrators, staff, and students.

Microaggressions vs Macroaggressions

Microaggressions

The term "racial microaggressions" was coined by psychiatrist and Harvard University professor Chester M. Pierce to refer to every day "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs' of blacks by offenders. The offensive mechanisms used against blacks often are innocuous" (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Davis (1989) defined "microaggressions" as "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious atti-

tudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority" (p. 1576).

Alternatively, in the workplace, the term "microinequities" is used to describe similar behaviors that are often ephemeral and hard to prove, covert, unintentional, and unrecognized by the perpetrator, which occur wherever people are perceived to be different (Rowe, 2008). They result in being overlooked, under-respected, and devalued because of one's race or gender. Dunbar (2014) prefers the expression "workplace hazing" to capture the power relations and institutional tradition that such violations constitute.

"Micro" and "aggression" require some clarification. A microaggression is "micro" in the size of the infraction compared to a "macro" overt, illegal hate crime and the perception by the aggressor that it is trivial, innocuous, banal, and invisible (Wells, 2013). It is NOT "micro" in the hurtful impact it can have on the victims. The "aggression" component has been compared to the tort of assault. The microaggression is similar to an assault in that it produces fear, stress, and emotional harm, and may embarrass or intimidate the victim, undermine his or her credibility, and expose vulnerabilities. Unlike most microaggressions, however, an assault also requires intent, more than just words, and the fear of physical harm (Wells, 2013).

Based on the most comprehensive synthesis of the research (Sue, 2010a, 2010b) on this topic, Professor Derald Wing Sue extended *microaggressions* to encompass "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalized status in society" (Sue, 2014, slide 8). Here are the primary characteristics, including my broadening of the potential victims' categories:

Potential Victim: person in any group based on the following nine categories, usually in a perceived or real powerless, "inferior," subordinate, or vulnerable position:

- *race* (Johnson & Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010b; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008),
- *ethnicity/culture/nationality* (Clark et al., 2011;

- Lin, 2010; Nadal & Corpus, 2013; Nadal, Wong, et al., 2015; Ong et al., 2013; Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007),
- *gender/cisgender* (self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to a person's biological sex; not transgender) (Capodilupo et al., 2010a; Nadal, 2010; Owen, Tao, & Rodolfa, 2010; Sue, 2010b),
 - *sexual orientation* (LGBTQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2014; Nadal, 2013; Nadal, Davidoff, Davis, & Wong, 2014; Nadal, Issa, et al., 2011; Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010; Nadal et al., 2016; Shelton & Delgado-Romero, 2013; Sue, 2010b),
 - *religion* (Nadal, Griffin, et al., 2012; Nadal, Issa, et al., 2010),
 - *mental disability or illness* (Gonzales, Davidoff, Nadal, & Yanos, 2015),
 - *physical disability* (PWD: people with disabilities) (Keller & Galgay, 2010),
 - *socio-economic class status* (Smith & Redington, 2010), or
 - *age generation* (Net Geners, Gen Xers, Boomers, Traditionalists) (Berk, 2013), or
 - any combination of the above (aka *intersectional microaggression*) (*NOTE*: There could be 50 or more groups within these nine categories)

Aggressor: person who holds the power or believes he or she is in a “superior” position to the victim, typically White male heterosexual, although anyone else can be an aggressor (e.g., a White female professor directing a microaggression at an African American female professor)

Means of delivery: subtle insults, snubs, sneers, derisive and belittling comments, and dismissive looks, eye movement, gestures, tones (verbal, non-verbal, and/or visual), and environmental images

Execution: aggressor is usually unaware that he or she engaged in any negative exchange

Response by victim: “do nothing” based on confusion and questions about what happened and how to respond, OR “do something” by responding immediately or at a future time

Response by aggressor: verbal or nonverbal behavior dismissed as innocent, innocuous, banal, and trivial, explained away, unaware anything offensive was said, OR denies that the words spoken

or gesture was intended to offend AND the victim overreacted and was overly sensitive, petty, paranoid, or misunderstood what happened

Macroaggressions

Although microaggressions may not be legally considered crimes (Sue, 2008), there are acts and behaviors that satisfy the definition of assaults and more serious crimes. These are *macroaggressions* which are overt, conscious, intentional hate acts and crimes against one or more members of the aforementioned nine categories.

Consider the following definition of a hate crime according to The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 2009 (U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, 2012): a crime that manifests “evidence of prejudice based on race, gender and gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.” The crimes include murder, rape, assault, arson, and destruction, damage, or vandalism of property.

According to the latest hate crime statistics (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015), the incidence of actual crimes was 5462 single bias incidents in 2014. The highest categories in the distribution were race (47%), sexual orientation (19%), religion (19%), and ethnicity (12%). The top slots for those motivated by religious bias were Jewish (59%) and Islam (14%). Overall, the most frequent targets are African Americans and Jews.

Whether conscious or unconscious, the spirit of microaggressions is the same as hate crimes. The differences are a matter of degree or scale and the intent. “*Hate and prejudice*” have become the *shibboleth of all macroaggressions and microaggressions*.

Taxonomy of Aggressions

All of the verbal and behavioral aggressions described above devalue people's lives. They can be overt or covert, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, and hate crimes or hate acts. A further breakdown into four subcategories can more clearly circumscribe the boundaries of their characteristics.

This taxonomy is a revision of the one originally proposed by Sue (2010b; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008), which defined microaggressions in terms of three categories. They are included here, but reorganized under “macro”

and “micro” rubrics to be more consistent with the thrust of the original definitions and the research on this topic. Each is defined with examples:

Macroaggressions

Macroaggressions encompass the most extreme overt, intentional forms of hate and prejudice, which can be *macroassaults* and *macromurders*.

Macroassaults (overt, conscious, intentional hate acts or crimes): explicit, conscious, and deliberate verbal and nonverbal attacks intended to hurt the victim. This is where “old fashioned racism” (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000) would fit. Overt acts of racism, bias, and discrimination and the hate crimes defined previously fall within this category.

This is Sue’s (2010b) “microassaults” category, included under microaggressions. There is nothing “micro” about these “assaults” and hate acts and crimes. Other examples would be name-calling, avoidant behavior, and discriminatory actions, such as racial epithets, spray painting KKK on the base of a statue of a Confederate soldier at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, raising the Confederate flag at Clemson University (Jaschik, 2015a), painting swastikas and nooses in dormitories at State University of New York, Purchase (Minter, 2015), defacing a synagogue with anti-Semitic graffiti, and burning crosses and religious buildings. The intent is to threaten, intimidate, or make a person or group feel unsafe.

Macromurders (overt, conscious, intentional mass murder hate crimes): hate crimes and heinous acts of such magnitude intentionally directed at an underrepresented, marginalized group of victims that they extend the definition of old fashioned racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism to mass killings. White police officers have been added to the groups of victims. Macroassaults have escalated to macromurders. The deadliest mass shooting in the U.S. in Orlando, FL, in the Pulse gay nightclub on June 12, 2016, killing 49 people and injuring 53, would be an example of a macromurder. The mass killing of 5 White male police officers and injuries to 7 others in Dallas, TX, on July 7, 2016, and the massacre of 9 Blacks in the African American church Bible study group in Charleston, SC, in July 7, 2015, would also fit in this category.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are the covert, intentional or unintentional, insensitive, subtle insults, unconscious bias, and more invisible behaviors that comprise two of Sue’s (2010b) categories: *microinsults* and *microinvalidations*.

Microinsults (covert, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional hate acts): rude and insensitive communications that demean the victim’s racial heritage, identity, or other characteristics. They are stealthy, covert, subtle snubs frequently invisible and unintentional which convey a hidden insulting message.

To that list, we can also add intentional verbal and nonverbal put-downs in the form of racial, ethnic, gender, religious, sexual-orientation, disability, and age-related jokes which involve tendentious or disparagement humor. Put-downs, wisecracks, and sarcastic remarks, often under the guise of humor (Berk, 2002, 2003, 2009), have been given a rebirth in the form of microinsults. Comedians’ careers have been built on derisive, taunting, jeering, mean-spirited, and malicious jokes. However, in your department, the aggressor’s response: “I was only joking,” “You can’t take a joke?” or “Don’t take it so seriously. Chill!” will never excuse or redeem him for the put-down.

Microinsults attack a (a) person’s intelligence, competence, or capabilities (a Latina professor is told “You are very articulate.”), (b) group’s worthiness or importance to society (An African American female dean is mistaken for a service worker.), (c) person’s cultural values and communication styles as abnormal (“Leave your cultural baggage at home.”), (d) person’s race, especially African Americans and Latinx, as dangerous or criminal (A White female professor clutches her purse when a African-American male student gets in the elevator with her.), (e) woman as a sexual object or property (“Let’s promote the blond attractive candidate.”), and (f) person who is LGBTQ as abnormal, deviant, and pathological (“How can you trust a gay man to represent our department?”).

These insults are the heart of the definition of microaggressions. They are the mechanism by which the aggressor’s implicit biases leak out. We need to stop that leaking.

Microinvalidations (covert, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional hate acts):

communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of the victim. They directly and insidiously deny a person's racial, ethnic, gender, religious, or LGBTQ identity.

These acts (a) perceive Asian Americans, Latinx, and other Americans as perpetual foreigners ("You speak without an accent."), (b) promote color blindness which denies the cultural differences and experiences of each group ("I don't see color in my classroom."), (c) involve a person's individual denial as a racist sexist, or homophobe ("I'm not a racist; I have many Black colleagues."), and (d) assert the myth of meritocracy which assumes that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed or fail based on intelligence, hard work, and motivation ("Men and women have equal opportunities to be promoted.").

The remainder of this article and the two others to follow in this trilogy concentrate on the two categories of microaggressions: *microinsults* and *microinvalidations*.

Hierarchical Microaggressions

The preceding definitions and taxonomy are predicated on the relationship between an aggressor who is in a real or perceived superior position and the victim who is in one or more of the underrepresented groups. The underlying motivation for the insult, whether conscious or unconscious, hinges on the differences based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, and/or age. Hate and prejudice to varying degrees provide the driving force behind the microaggression.

What complicates this relationship in academia is the established hierarchy of the workplace positions (Gordon, 2012). One's professional role or identity is ranked initially according to the amount of education. Privilege is derived from those with a doctoral degree and lack of privilege is associated with those who have lesser degrees or none. These differences are most evident in faculty rank.

The hierarchical relationships among and within the categories of *administration* (president, provost, deans, department chairs, and directors), *faculty* (professor—tenure and nontenure, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, and adjunct), and *staff* (administrative assistant, technol-

ogy specialist, librarians, and other nonfaculty employees) supply the grist for a new microaggression mill called *hierarchical microaggressions* (Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015). Young et al. (2015) defined these as "everyday slights found in higher education that communicate systemic valuing (or devaluing) of a person because of the institutional role held by that person" (p. 62). Sound familiar?

This now adds a 10th category of victims to the nine previously identified. Here the insult is due to the hierarchy or rankism, not race, gender, etc. The hierarchy erects barriers to the inclusion of those employees in the lower ranks. It perpetuates their oppression (Lomax, 2015). Academic staff is particularly vulnerable along with lower ranked, nontenured, and adjunct faculty, which comprises the emerging "academic precariat" (Brown, 2012). The victim is in a relative position in this hierarchy. Most anyone is fair game for any aggressor in a power position. The higher ranked aggressor calibrates the level of contact and nature of the professional relationship which can foster microaggressions (Wells, 2013).

The actual microaggressions may be the same or different from those directed at members of underrepresented groups; but the motive for the incidents is different. In fact, Young et al.'s (2015) study found four themes that explain these hierarchy infractions: (1) valuing/devaluing a person based on his or her credentials/role within the department, (2) change in a person's behavior based on his or her role, (3) actions related to role, such as interrupting, ignoring, and excluding, and (4) terminology related to work position, such as classified staff and work-study.

Unfortunately, hierarchical microaggressions do not occur in a vacuum. Each person is a combination of multiple identities which can be inextricably connected in a single microaggression (Purdie-Vaughn & Eibach, 2008). Coincidentally, the underrepresented employees are often at the lowest rungs of the academic ladder in the precarious, contingent (temporary, nontenure track/adjunct), and staff positions. The interaction or intersection between underrepresented group identities and hierarchy may be challenging for the victim to discern and to strategize an appropriate response. For example, an African-American woman untenured assistant professor may have difficulty recognizing what

part(s) of her identity or rank is targeted and the reason for being repeatedly interrupted in a faculty meeting by a White male professor. Frequently, hierarchical microaggressions will be embedded in *intersectional microaggressions* which involve race, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Why Do Microaggressions Matter?

If the *microinsult* or *microinvalidation* is so trivial and frequently unintentional and the aggressor and victim usually don't even know what happened or how to respond, why not just move on and ignore the event? Should the victim just "swallow hard and keep on moving"? While that may be the most common response, both "do nothing" and "do something" have serious consequences.

Psychological and Physical Consequences to the Victims

Immediate past FLOTUS Michelle Obama in her commencement address at Tuskegee University urged graduates not to be daunted by slights and the indignities of microaggressions and to channel their efforts into overcoming every insult, real or imagined (Lowry, 2015). Microaggressions are constant, continual, cumulative, and corrosive. Consequently, they can be harmful and very painful to the victims. It is the immediate and long-term impact of the microaggressions that creates the problem, whether they were intentional or not. They have consequences that stretch far beyond the single insult that makes the victim angry and ruins his or her life on one day (Wells, 2013). They can occur every day (Rockquemore, 2016b).

As the victims bottle up the toxic feelings cumulatively, psychological and physical harm can take its toll (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Sue, 2010b; Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011; Wong et al., 2014). That impact cannot be dismissed or disregarded. There may be other aggressions, abuse, or discrimination the victim has already experienced and any new microaggressions can (a) compound or reopen old wounds or (b) trigger the tipping point beyond other difficulties or assaults to his or her mental/emotional health.

Maya Angelou said "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." It's that hurtful feeling of the victim that

elevates microaggressions to the highest level of importance. Notwithstanding the power of words (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013), we need to process the words, but also be sensitive to the hurt. The professionals who experience that hurt press the criticality of these insults in the academic workplace.

Top 10 Consequences in the Academic Workplace

Sue (2010a, 2010b, 2014; Sue, Lin, & Rivera, 2009) and Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. (2012) reported that microaggressions can have a wide range of effects on faculty, administration, staff, and students and the campus environment.

Microaggressions can

1. *create feelings of isolation, exclusion, loneliness, and tokenism* (Alexander & Moore, 2008; Niemann, 2012b; Wallace, Moore, Wilson, & Hart, 2012);
2. *lower the individual's work productivity and problem-solving abilities* (Dovidio, 2001; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007);
3. *devalue the individual's research, scholarship, and teaching contributions* (de la Riva-Holly, 2012; Fernandez, 2013; Grollman, 2015, 2016; Guzman, Trevino, Lubuguin, & Aryan, 2010; Lomax, 2015; Misra & Lundquist, 2015; Monforti, 2012; Stanley, 2006a);
4. *undermine and question the individual's qualifications and credentials* (Fernandez, 2013; Harlow, 2003; Monforti, 2012; Niemann, 2012b; Vö, 2012);
5. *subject the individual to biased and unfair reviews for performance appraisal, contract renewal, promotion, tenure, merit pay, and teaching awards* (Agathangelou & Ling, 2002; Brown, 2016; Davis, Reynolds, & Jones, 2011; Fenelon, 2003; Fernandez, 2013; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Matthew, 2016; Misra & Lundquist, 2015; Monforti, 2012; Niemann, 2012b; Stanley, 2006b; Vö, 2012);
6. *exclude the individual from grants (or include him or her as a consultant instead of co-PI), research projects, team teaching, mentoring, guest lectures, and professional conferences* (Niemann, 2012a; Thompson, 2008; Wallace et al., 2012);
7. *commit the individual to excess service on too many diversity, task force, department, and*

- university committees to be the face of diversity, to unwanted summer teaching, and to unpaid course overloads* (Niemann, 2012a, 2012b; Rboylorn, 2014);
8. *result in feelings of being ignored, overlooked, unappreciated, under-respected, under-compensated, overworked, misrepresented, and devalued* (Fernandez, 2013; Lomax, 2015; Niemann, 2012a, 2012b; Rboylorn, 2014);
 9. *produce physical and mental health problems, such as depression, frustration, anger, rage, low self-esteem, stress, PTSD, anxiety, significant weight gain, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease* (Araujo & Borrell, 2006; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Fernandez, 2013; Hwang & Goto, 2008; James, Lovato, & Khoo, 1994; Nadal, 2008, 2010; Nadal, Griffin, et al., 2014; Nadal, Issa, et al., 2010; Nadal, Wong, et al., 2014, 2015; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011; Wong et al., 2014);
 10. *create an unwelcome, hostile, and invalidating campus climate which is alienating, stressful, polarized, and risky* (Caplan & Ford, 2012; Fernandez, 2013; Harlow, 2003; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008; New, 2015; Niemann, 2012a; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Stanley, 2006b; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008).

Conclusions

Microaggressions matter because of the preceding consequences to the victims and the work and learning environments. The volatile “hate and prejudice” spirit and hierarchical oppression underpinning microaggressions pervade the academic climate in which we all work (Lomax, 2015). As we’ve seen, that spirit can ignite an explosion of student protests and demands for diversity and inclusion on a university campus or anywhere else at any time, especially in the post-2016 presidential election period, such as DePaul University (Wexler, 2016), University of California, Irvine (Jaschik, 2016), University of Washington (Brown, 2016), Hamilton College (Jaschik, 2015b), and Harvard Law School (Anthony, 2016).

Microaggressions can also undermine the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion practices and, especially, retention. Most initiatives focus on recruitment for diversity in all ranks of the institu-

tion as well as the student body. Fewer initiatives consider retention and promotion in a campus climate where employees and students from historically underrepresented groups will thrive and succeed (Flaherty, 2015; Misra & Lundquist, 2015; Rockquemore, 2016a).

Instead, those employees and students will not stay if they are unwelcome, alienated, and isolated in a hostile, indifferent, and chilly environment (New, 2015). The effectiveness of inclusion can be sabotaged everyday by the individual bombardment of microaggressions. Who wants to work or learn in a school where you are shunned, insulted, conveniently invisible, and devalued in so many ways to feel like an outsider? Consider why a faculty member might leave: “The mounting anxieties from ostracism, isolation, stress, and loss of professional support and interaction made me feel like a pariah...I felt like the situation was literally eating me alive and I was totally alone” (Wallace, et al., 2012, pp. 435–436).

Once microaggressions have metastasized throughout your departments, classrooms, and campus, the prognosis becomes complicated. Eventually, the practice of inclusion can transform into “*de facto* exclusion” with the psychological departures of those who stay and a revolving door of those who leave, only to be replaced by another employee from an underrepresented group, and so on (Flaherty, 2015).

Conversely, diversity and inclusion in a healthy academic climate of professional and social support, respect, career mentoring, and intentionally adding value to the lives of all employees and students (Maxwell, 2015) with microaffirmations (Rowe, 2008; Scully & Rowe, 2009), instead of devaluing them with microaggressions, provide the opportunity to create a “new normal.” The choice is clear for predominantly White institutions of higher education. In what type of institution would you prefer to work?

The definitions, taxonomy, and consequences of microaggressions described in this article furnish the framework for understanding their significance in the academic workplace and classroom. Part 2 will proffer a list of specific academic workplace microaggressions that occur in group meetings, individual office meetings, official and social events, casual encounters, and promotion and tenure review.

Suggestions for how to respond to those insults will be given at the institutional and individual levels in terms of institutional commitment, professional development and training workshops, victim's response to microaggressions, and aggressor's response to the victim.

Faculty developers, especially, working with the provost or directors of diversity and training are in the unique positions to be change agents on their campuses to eliminate microaggressions and mitigate their effects. Specific guidelines to tackle those changes will be suggested in the next two articles. Hopefully, the material in this trilogy will spark an interest in those of you who are willing to take on those challenges.

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Ronald A. Berk, PhD, is professor emeritus, biostatistics and measurement, and former assistant dean for teaching at The Johns Hopkins University. Now he is a speaker, writer, PowerPoint coach, and jester-in-residence. He can be contacted at rberk1@jhu.edu, www.ronberk.com, www.pptdoctor.net, or www.linkedin.com/in/ronberk/, and blogs at <http://ronberk.blogspot.com>.