

Open Your Class With This Tomorrow- *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*

Microaggressions

Background: Microaggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, put-downs, and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations, and other marginalized people experience in their day-to-day interactions. Microaggressions can appear to be a compliment but contain a "metacommunication" or hidden insult to the target groups to which it is delivered. They are often outside the perpetrator's level of conscious awareness, which means they can be unintentional. These messages may be sent verbally ("you speak good English"), nonverbally (clutching one's purse more tightly), or environmentally (symbols like the confederate flag or using American Indian mascots).

Directions: Watch the following video before answering the questions that follow. The short video is a presentation on microaggressions by Derald Wing Sue, PhD professor of psychology and education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJL2P0JsAS4>

1. What group or groups of people are microaggressions directed toward, according to the video and your text?
2. What five tips are presented in the video for combatting microaggressions from Dr. Sue?
3. Look at the photos in the posted PowerPoint titled *Visualizing Microaggressions*. These photos are from a larger photo exhibit created by a young photographer named Kiyun Kim who asked her Fordham University friends to write down an instance of racial microaggression. Then she created a series of images of the students holding up placards with their microaggressions. Common slights they encountered were anything from rude remarks about their complexion or hair to assumptions about their national origin. Kim's images show that racism does not necessarily come from a place of hatred: sometimes people simply blurt things out without thinking and fail to consider how others might perceive their words. The goal of Kim's series of photos, originally featured on her Tumblr account, is to get people thinking about the way they interact with others and to encourage them to be more sensitive about the language they use.

What did you observe in the photos?

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Did any of the photos resonate with you? If so, which ones and why or why not?

Did seeing the photos make you think about microaggressions you have experienced or witnessed in real life or the media? Explain.