

Part 7: Communicating Effectively

Microaggressions in the Learning Environment

Microaggression: brief commonplace, daily, verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities, intentional or unintentional, directed toward a marginalized group

- **Microinsults (often unconscious)** - subtle snubs with a hidden insulting message to the recipient that is rude, insensitive, or demeaning to a person's heritage or identity.
- **Microinvalidations (often unconscious)** - communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person from a minority group
- **Microassault (often conscious)** - usually a conscious and deliberate explicit derogation that is meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.

Source: Ogunyemi, D., Clare, C., Astudillo, Y. M., Marseille, M., Manu, E., & Kim, S. (2020). Microaggressions in the learning environment: A systematic review. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 13(2), 97.

Closing Tips:

1. **Communication is key!**
Use. Your. Words.
2. **Impact is greater than intent.**



The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

3. Language and understanding continually evolve.

Continue to educate yourself on how to communicate effectively.



Additional Resources:

- **Writing Support:** Schedule an appointment with the Writing Center to get free writing support at any stage of the writing process. Graduate writing coaches are available for virtual appointments. Learn more: <https://lib.vt.edu/study-learn/writing-center.html>
- **The CommLab** provides coaching to help students develop their public speaking skills. Appointments strongly suggested. Learn more: <https://lib.vt.edu/study-learn/comm-lab.html>
- **Gender-specific language:**
 - **The Gender Unicorn** by TSER (Trans Student Educational Resources). TSER's website (transstudent.org) is currently down for maintenance, but the Gender Unicorn diagram along with other informational resources is available here: <https://libguides.madisoncollege.edu/LGBTQ/gender>
 - **Guidance about how to use gender neutral pronouns:** https://ccc.vt.edu/resources/Gender_Pronouns.html
- **Regarding the use of languages other than English in Duke University's biostatistics master's program** (mentioned in class): Williams, S. (2019) "Do English-Only Policies Foster or Damage Inclusivity in Science?" *the Scientist*. <https://www.the-scientist.com/careers/do-english-only-policies-foster-or-damage-inclusivity-in-science--66734>
- **"35 Dumb Things Well-Intended People Say" by Dr. Maura Cullen** (mentioned in class):
 - Partial preview: <https://books.google.com/books?id=RwaKfO7riyUC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
 - Interview with Dr. Cullen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QuzvOxTyWA>
- **Articles on Microaggressions:**
 - Ogunyemi, D., Clare, C., Astudillo, Y. M., Marseille, M., Manu, E., & Kim, S. (2020). Microaggressions in the learning environment: A systematic review. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 13(2), 97. <https://psycnet-apa-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/record/2019-25198-001> or in the link <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-25198-001>
 - Sue, D. W. (2010). "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Is subtle bias harmless?" *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life>
 - Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life:



ENGE 5304: Graduate Student Success in Multicultural Environments

Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271–286.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271> or in the link
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17516773/>

- **American idioms** can be confusing, especially for those whose primary language is not English. This resource includes an index of U.S. idioms and is written with international students in mind: <https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/loop>

