

DISCRIMINATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: LATINX STUDENTS

What is the study about?

Researchers observed the experiences of Latinx students in special education settings and witnessed students' responses to 3 types of **microaggressions** from teachers

MICROAGGRESSIONS: Subtle, automatic, or unconscious insults referring to a person's disability, race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.

3 TYPES OF MICROAGGRESSIONS

Low Expectations	Disregard	Bullying
Acting surprised by good performance	Continuing to mispronounce student's name after corrected	Publicly comparing a student to another, "see look at how _____ did it."
Using sarcasm in talking about a student's efforts	Questioning student's need for accommodations: "Why don't you try without it"	"If you were listening, you would understand this"
Hinting that college isn't a good fit and they should consider trade school	"This work is not hard...you should know this by now"	Insisting on an answer when student says "I don't know"
Complimenting non-white students on using "good English"	Invalidating student's response to your comment: "you're too sensitive"	Publicly commenting on a student's late assignment.
Any comment that makes a student appear or feel different or separate from other students		

What did they find?

- Students in the study either didn't respond or they refused to use their accommodations or services.
- Other teachers who witnessed the interaction either didn't respond, or attempted to minimize it.
- Other students who observe the interaction or hear about it are negatively affected as well.

Why is it important?

- When students experience microaggressions and their feelings are invalidated, it causes anger, resentment, anxiety, avoidance, and damages self-efficacy.
- Students start expecting to be victimized and experience anxiety when interacting with the teacher.

What can School Social Workers do?

- The authors suggest: Educators be trained with the use of curricula addressing perspectives of race, social class, disability, etc.
- We recommend: If you witness a microaggression toward a student, SAY SOMETHING! Even just validating the student's emotions can help to buffer the negative effects.
- School Social Workers should regularly help educators recognize biases that leads to microaggressions and practice a more collaborative and respectful style of interaction with students

How was the study done? Qualitative data were collected through ethnographic observations of classroom interactions and interviews with Latino/a students to gather their thoughts and feelings about the interactions they experienced with teachers.

Dávila, B. (2015). Critical race theory, disability microaggressions and Latina/o student experiences in special education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(4), 443-468. doi: 10.1080/13613324.2014.885422