

Not So Micro; Microassaults and Environmental Microaggressions in the Classroom

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SOAN 371: Foundations of Social Science Research – Quantitative Methods

St. Olaf College

Fall 2017

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2017, the Sociology/Anthropology 371 students conducted research on racialized microaggressions in St. Olaf College classrooms. We sent an anonymous online survey to 2,844 students and received 718 responses, a 25.2% response rate. Our sample reflects many demographics of the student body, and it matches the general standard for a sample of a population of approximately 3,000 (10% and 30% response rate (Neuman 2012).

Prior studies have identified racial microaggressions as existing on various systemic levels: cultural, individual, and institutional. Microaggressions, subtle yet ubiquitous forms of racism, are instances of verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights which intentionally or unintentionally target persons from minoritized communities (Museus and Park 2015, Minikel-Lacocque 2013, Solórzano et al. 2000). Our research focuses on two sub-categories of microaggressions: microassaults, defined as conscious small-scale verbal or behavioral attacks meant to harm or degrade a person of color; and environmental microaggressions, which are macroscopic or institutional manifestations of covert racism. Our main questions are:

1. What kinds of microassaults happen in St. Olaf classrooms?
2. Who commits microassaults in St. Olaf classrooms?
3. In which types of classes are microaggressions most likely to occur at St. Olaf (e.g. lecture-based vs. discussion-based, STEM vs. Humanities, etc.)?

The most important results of our research are the following:

- 42.8% of respondents reported having experienced or observed a fellow student mock language styles or imitate accents at least once in the first 11 weeks of the semester.
- 39.7% of respondents indicated that they had experienced/observed a student tell a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s).
- Students of color were more than twice as likely to report having observed/experienced another student using a racial slur to address or refer to a student of color (21.9%) than white students (10.0%) (Cramer's $V=0.147$, $p<.05$).
- 10.3% of respondents indicated that they had experienced or observed a professor mock language styles or imitate accents at least once this semester.
- 1.7% of respondents indicated having observed or experienced a professor display racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt.
- Students of color were almost twice as likely to report having observed/experienced a professor telling a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) (13.2%) than white students (7.0%) (Cramer's $V = 0.091$, $p<.05$).
- 29.7% of respondents reported having observed or experienced a microaggression "during group work with other students;" 25.4% "during a lecture;" and 37.3% "during a class discussion."

Based on our research, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Create and publish an explicit campus policy regarding hate speech, derogatory language, and the display of racist symbols on campus.

2. Provide funding and resources to increase the number of students and faculty of color, which will hopefully contribute to a more positive learning environment and decrease the prevalence of environmental racism.
3. Provide training for all professors in all departments to be able to discuss racial microaggressions effectively and mitigate their prevalence and effects. This should help alleviate the burden on Professors of Color or Professors from departments that deal with issues surrounding race, social identity, and social inequality.

Review of Literature

Racism in modern America is discussed in many academic works as a highly relevant and consequential issue in need of addressing. The scholars examined for this study agree that racism refers to the often inequitable allocation of social, financial, psychological, and political resources based on race or ethnicity (Museus, S. D. & Park, J. J. 2015: 152, Solórzano et al. 2000: 61). Difficulty exists in identifying and exposing the covert form of racism that permeates everyday life and, more specifically, undergraduate campuses. Studies of this subject detail the vast variety of experiences of different marginalized groups and discuss the nature, scope, and perceptions surrounding what has been termed “microaggressions.” Microaggressions refer to subtle, yet ubiquitous instances of racism and will be further defined later on. Within our research, we will focus on racial microassaults and environmental microaggressions, two subcategories of the umbrella term “microaggression,” within classrooms at St. Olaf College. This small liberal arts institution, similar to many others in previous research, is historically and predominantly white. For this study, our three research initiatives include:

1. To identify possible contributing factors that render a classroom environment especially conducive to racial microaggressions
2. To examine microassaults as they occur specifically within the classroom at St. Olaf,
3. To identify the actors most likely to perpetrate microassaults in the classroom at St. Olaf
4. To identify the students most likely to report microassaults that happen in the classroom at St. Olaf.

Within the larger scholarly analysis of racial microaggressions, terminology definition, identification of actors within the classroom and of specific settings are most relevant to an understanding of microaggressions at St. Olaf.

We believe it is important to acknowledge the highly-personal narratives and various lived experiences of students, faculty and scholars of color at the core of research on this topic. We are grateful to these individuals for sharing their stories, and urge that these accounts remain at the center of current and future inquiry on this subject.

We hope this research can serve as a resource to recognize, quantify, and mitigate the pervasiveness of racism at St. Olaf. The following student response to an open response question articulates this well:

“I believe that St. Olaf, as a whole, needs to admit that there is a racism problem on this campus. That is the first step- Not forming a committee to decide whether or not there is racism, or if racism is experienced by students, and not repeating the school's inclusion and diversity initiatives over and over again... There is racism on this campus. It's explicit, it's pervasive, it's personal, it's institutional.”

Past Research

Not all racial/ethnic minoritized groups experience the same types of racism, and by extension the same microaggressions. Previous studies have examined racism and microaggressions specific to Latinx, Asian-American, African-American students, and professors of color, respectively, citing the common types of microaggressions occurring, by whom they are frequently perpetrated, and the settings in which they manifest. While the definition of a microaggression is generally agreed upon, the inherent subjectivity of a microaggression renders its definition highly fluid. Therefore, the microaggression cannot be exhaustively represented by the provided descriptions and within our research. Many of the articles reference and subsequently build on the work of Sue et al. (2007), whose taxonomy surrounding microaggressions has guided much of this field of research.

While studies examining specific racial/ethnic minoritized groups cannot be generalized to the entire community nor to other students falling within the same racial/ethnic identity, they are useful in understanding the differing experiences of microaggressions. Some researchers have conceptualized racism by the systemic levels on which it may occur—cultural, individual, or institutional—while others categorize patterns of racism and microaggressions under titles such as racial jokes, stereotyping, avoidance, and isolation (Museus, S. D. & Park, J. J. 2015: 151-152; Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 435).

Regarding methodology, the majority of previous research has utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more all-encompassing report. Specifically, certain articles emphasized personal experiences using direct quotes and narratives from research participants. They also, however, rely on statistical analysis to identify and codify themes found within the data in order to develop generalizable conclusions about microaggressions on college campuses (Minikel-Lacocque 2013, Yosso et al. 2009, Solórzano et al. 2000).

Terminology

The evolution of racism from overt “old-fashioned racism” to covert modern racism has been difficult to define. The term “microaggression” encompasses the most prominent forms of racism experienced today. Microaggressions are instances of verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, which target persons from minoritized communities (Sue et al. 2007: 272-273). This includes communities delineated by gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. Such categories are not mutually exclusive but, rather, intersectional, meaning that a microaggression may address multiple facets of an individual or community’s identity. Microaggressions are brief and have been documented as regular occurrences in many classroom settings, especially at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), which is of particular interest for our study (Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 433, Solórzano 2000: 64, Yosso et. al 2009: 665). Authors subdivide the term “microaggressions” into four categories: microinvalidations, microinsults, microassaults, and environmental microaggressions (Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 435).

Microinvalidations are often unconscious verbal or behavioral actions which exclude or neutralizes thoughts, emotions, or knowledge of peoples of color (Sue et al. 2007: 274, Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 436). Microinsults are generally unconscious behavioral or verbal slights that demean one’s heritage, racial identity, or ethnicity (Sue et al. 2007: 274-275, Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 436).

Unlike microinvalidations and microinsults, microassaults are often conscious acts. According to researchers, racial microassaults are small-scale attacks directed at persons of color. These attacks, verbal or behavioral, are meant to harm the target with demeaning and degrading actions or words (Sue et al. 2007: 274, Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 454). Examples of racial microassaults include the display of a racist symbol (e.g. the confederate flag, a swastika) in public, or the use of racial slurs to address a person of color. Other examples include obvious and purposeful avoidance of a person based on their race/ethnicity, mocking accents or language abilities, or racist joke-telling. This distinction of microassaults from microinvalidations and microinsults is crucial to our research, as our study will focus on microassaults as they occur in the classroom at St. Olaf.

Environmental microaggressions, as defined by Minikel-Lacocque (2013), are often the most difficult to recognize and to remedy. These incidents or situations exist on a systemic level. They are macroscopic manifestations of racialized assaults, insults, and invalidations (436). Examples of environmental microaggressions include classroom demographics in which a student of color is the sole non-white person in classrooms, classroom material centering narratives of white students when discussing race or “diverse” issues, the scarcity of professors and mentors of color, and curricular exclusion of content and perspectives from non-white authors or scholars.

Our Study

Our study is specific to the St. Olaf community, yearning to bridge the gap between the occurrence of microassaults and environmental microaggressions within classrooms at St. Olaf and the larger theories within this body of research. In order to study these topics, our research was informed by the framing, the provided perspectives, and the research methods of previous studies. Our research contributes to the current body of work on studies of race, racism, and higher educational racial climates. Our research process and understanding of these topics was guided by Critical Race Theory and the principles found within its five tenants. These include the ingrained and intersectional nature of racism in the United States, an approach which strives to challenge dominant narratives, an obligation to social justice, the prioritization of lived experiences, and an interdisciplinary field of work (Yosso et al. 2009: 626, Solórzano et al. 2000: 63). We aim to ground our own research and analysis within these five tenets and their commitments.

While the majority of existing literature studies overall campus racial climates at institutions of higher education, our focus centralizes classrooms as the setting. Additionally, because the variety of identifiable microaggressions is vast, we will focus specifically on instances of microassaults and environmental microaggressions. This tapered focus is a result of the division between our class topics, as well as the classroom and curriculum-specific focus of the “To Include is to Excel” Grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funding this research. In order to best address the incidence of microaggressions within classroom settings at St. Olaf, we aim to identify whether classroom style influences the incidence rate of microaggressions. Subtopics within our study include classroom characteristics (discussion, lecture, or lab-based), discipline, level, racial demographics, among others. We urge additional research be conducted to study race, racism, and racialized microaggressions across higher education, and urge specific focus on racialized microaggressions *outside* of the classroom. The mitigation of this issue begins with a well-rounded understanding of the many ways microaggressions exist and the continued education of the community about this national issue.

Methods

Survey Methods

In November of 2017, we conducted an anonymous survey questionnaire through St. Olaf Form Creator. We designed our survey questions to collect information on racial microassaults and environmental microaggressions within the St. Olaf classrooms during the fall 2017 semester. In addition to scholarly literature, our work with focus groups of St. Olaf college students informed our questions on the survey. In collaboration with our fellow researchers, we combined our questions into a larger survey which gathered information on racial microinvalidations in the classroom, racial microinsults in the classroom, proactive and reactive responses to racial microaggressions in the classroom, impacts of racial microaggressions in the classroom, and racism in the curriculum. We emailed an invitation and a hyperlink to our survey to most of the student population, 2844 out of the entire 3035 students. Our survey accumulated a response rate of 25.2%.

We built our survey using Likert scales, matrices of statements, and open-ended questions, and the survey was run through multiple drafts and tests by our class, professor, and teaching assistant. Our questions asked students about their experiences with racial microassaults in the classroom this fall at St. Olaf, as well as about specific classroom settings in relation to environmental microaggressions this fall within St. Olaf classrooms.

Variables

Our research addressed three questions:

1. In which types of classes are microaggressions most likely to occur at St. Olaf (e.g. lecture-based vs. discussion-based, STEM vs. Humanities, etc.)?
2. What kinds of microassaults happen in St. Olaf classrooms?
3. Which is committing microassaults in St. Olaf classrooms?

Environmental Microaggressions

In our conceptualization of environmental microaggressions, we established that the occurrence of environmental microaggressions is dependent upon certain attributes of the setting in which they occur. This is to say that certain types of classrooms are more conducive to the incidence of microaggressions. Environmental microaggressions exist on a systematic level and are macroscopic manifestations of microaggressions. Examples include an institutional scarcity of professors and mentors of color, incidences of students of color being the sole non-white person in classrooms, the curricular exclusion or minimal inclusion of content and perspectives from non-white authors or scholars, and the lack of or hostility towards a discussion of race and racism in a classroom.

To measure the factors of each classroom or setting that render it conducive to the incidence of microaggressions, we asked questions: *During this semester at St. Olaf, have you experienced or observed a racial microaggression in any of the following situations?* This question had five response categories (Never, 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5 or more times, Not applicable) as well as an open response option. We asked this about seven different classroom styles such as “During group work with other students outside the classroom,” “During group work with other students inside the classroom” or “During a lecture”. We also asked students to tell us specific departments and programs in which they had experienced or witnessed the highest and the lowest frequency of microaggressions.

Additionally, we used an index that asked questions about discussions of race/ethnicity in the classroom. Specifically, we asked whether respondents felt that “The discussion focuses on the experiences or perspectives of white students rather than of students of color”, and whether “The discussion is too dominated by white students.” The question had five response categories ranging from “In all or almost all of the discussions” to “In all or almost all of the discussions.”

Types of Microassaults

We conceptualized racial microassaults to be small-scale verbal or behavioral attacks made towards persons of color on the basis that they are persons of color. These are often consciously done (Minikel-Lacocque 2013: 454) and may include mocking language styles or imitating accents, telling jokes that are meant to mock or degrade a racial and/or ethnic group or groups, displaying racist symbols such as confederate flag or swastikas, or using racial slurs.

Our survey reflects this conceptualization of microassaults. We asked respondents to tell us the prevalence of specific microaggressions. We asked about microassaults involving accent imitations, racist jokes, display of racist symbols and racial slurs. The survey encouraged respondents to tell us about any additional types of racial microaggressions, undefined in the previous literature or our conceptualization, that they have experienced and/or observed in an open-ended question near the end of the survey.

Perpetrators and Targets of Microassaults

Because our research focuses on microassaults in St. Olaf classrooms, we conceptualized the perpetrators of microassaults as being either students within the class or the professors in their teaching role. Though previous literature details the experiences of microassaults toward faculty, our conceptualization of the targets of microassaults includes students only.

On the survey, we addressed all aspects of the conceptualization of microassault perpetrators by asking respondents about both student and professor-perpetrated microassaults. We did this within the same index as is described in the ‘Types of Microassaults’ section by creating two separate indices, one asking about microassaults perpetrated by professors this semester, and another asking about microassaults perpetrated by students this semester. Using an index, we asked students, “*How many times have you observed a fellow student do the following things towards you or another student?*” We provided four response categories ranging from ‘never’ to ‘5 or more times’. We then asked this question about professors committing microassaults. We used this information to compare the number of responses falling within each response category across both types of perpetrators.

Validity

Our measures of validity adhere to the definitions of content validity and face validity provided by Neuman (2012; 123). To ensure content validity, we conceptualized environmental microaggressions and microassaults, respectively, and made sure to address all facets of both concepts within the survey. Our use of focus groups further ensured that our conceptions of both types of microaggressions were all-encompassing, and that the forms of microaggressions we used were understood by the focus group participants in the same way that our research team understood them. To ensure face validity, the survey was edited and reviewed by a professor, a teaching assistant, and peers all familiar with the literature on our key concepts.

Reliability

To assure reliability, we developed detailed and distinct conceptual definitions for each of our variables. This ensured that our constructs did not overlap, repeat, or exclude any important details. In our survey questions, we addressed each aspect of our conceptualization of both microassaults and environmental microaggressions. We used extended levels of measure, such as five-point Likert scales. We also used multiple indicators to improve reliability, such as multiple questions asking about the topics of microassaults and about environmental microaggressions.

Our survey was pilot tested by the entire group of researchers in both sections of Sociology/Anthropology 371. Our peers, along with our professor and our teaching assistants, provided comments and critiques of the survey questions which helped us improve clarity of the survey questions and the effectiveness of the response categories.

Sample

We did not conduct sampling to obtain a sample population to participate in the survey. Rather, we sent our survey by email to the majority of the student body. In doing this, we ensured that every student with a functioning St. Olaf email address had an equal opportunity to complete the survey. Our target population was the student body enrolled in classes during the fall semester of 2017. The sampling frame we used the St. Olaf student email alias which is provided by the administration and theoretically reaches everyone with an active email address. The email was sent out Tuesday November 14th at 11:00 am and the survey remained live for 9 days, until November 23rd.

The total population of St Olaf College is approximately 3,035 students. Our ideal sampling ratio ranges between 10% and 30% of the total population as has been identified as an appropriate range for sample sizes between 1000 and 10,000 (Neuman 2012: 152).

The survey was sent out to the entire student body with active emails except for students in off-campus study abroad programs and students in our SOAN 371 course, totaling 2844 students. Of those students, 718 students took the survey, giving us a response rate of 25.2%. To maintain anonymity, we did not collect the names of the respondents, however, we did collect demographic information such as gender, race and/or ethnicity, class year, and areas of academic study. Additionally, we asked students to report the number of credits in which they are currently enrolled, whether they have participated in diversityedu training, and if they have participated in, or are currently participating in a St. Olaf Conversation program. We also asked students to indicate whether or not they are international students.

Of the 654 students who identified their gender, 31.9% (208) were male, 65.5% (427) were female, 2.1% (14) identified as nonbinary and 0.5% (3) provided another answer. Of the 636 students who responded to our question on race and/or ethnicity, 0.4% (3) identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.9% (57) identified as Asian or Asian American, 1.5% (11) identified as Black or African American, 2.8% (20) identified as Latinx/Hispanic, 5.2% (37) identified as Multiracial/ethnic, 0.1% (1) identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5.0% (36) identified as NRA/International, and 78.5% (471) identified as White. In regards to graduation year, 20.1% (144) were seniors, 21.3% (153) were juniors, 25.4% (183) were sophomores, and 25.2% (181) were first years, and 0.6% (5) identified as "other."

Ethics

Using the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) standards, we adhered to the ethical principles of research with human subjects throughout our research. Prior to the entire research process, each team member underwent the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program to certify our knowledge of the history and criteria of ethical research conduct. To ensure informed consent, we clearly explained the purpose of our research, and emphasized that participation in the survey was voluntary. While we provided incentives to complete the survey, it was in no way required or coercive. In order to receive the incentives, the respondents were given a link at the end of the survey prompting them to enter their name in a drawing to receive a monetary prize. This information was not connected to the respondent's survey responses, however the respondent was identifiable as being within the total population of respondents. We protected the privacy of respondents by not collecting identifiers on the survey, such as names, contact numbers, or other personally identifying information.

In order to maximize the number of completed survey responses, we designed monetary incentives, raised with both funds from the St. Olaf Sociology/Anthropology Department and the Andrew Mellon *To Include is to Excel* Grant.

Previous research has commented on the potential psychological distress of observing or being the target of microaggressions. Such research has detailed depression and anxiety as long term impacts of consistent exposure to these acts (Sue et al, 2007: 273). Though ethical issues state that the research may not exert more harm than is experienced on a daily basis, microaggressions, which indeed are mundane experiences for many do cause harm (Sue et al, 2007: 272). It follows, therefore, that our research may cause respondents harm by asking them to recall or relive damaging moments. In order to ensure that we do no harm, we made every effort to ask responsible questions in the survey. Unfortunately, however, it was brought to our attention that two aspects of the survey were harmful in that they were themselves microaggressions. The first was the advertisement for the survey titled "Help Oles! Win prizes!," which many respondents informed us to be insensitive and diminishing of the importance of the survey topic. The second was the inclusion of a question that assessed the survey-taking experience by asking respondents to compare the completion of the survey to various mundane experiences like waiting in line or losing money. Some students found this to be offensive because the severity of microaggressions and of reliving microaggressions through taking the survey is not comparable to such a trivial experience, and the insinuation that it could be comparable is patronizing. We are greatly apologetic for these two aspects of the survey, and the class made sure to contact participants with an explanatory apology on behalf of both.

Results and Discussion

Our analysis was two-part as we examined data on two different topics: environmental microaggressions and microassaults. We used univariate analysis to examine our independent variables for environmental microaggressions (settings of microaggressions, departments with most and least microaggressions, and professors' use of racist course material that was not discussed). We performed bivariate analysis on responses to our questions about perceptions of discussions of race and racism in classrooms controlled for by race/ethnicity. We used univariate analysis to examine our indexes of student-enacted and professor-enacted microassaults. We also performed bivariate statistical analysis on these indexes controlled for by race/ethnicity.

Environmental Microaggressions

Hypothesis 1: *Conversation-based settings in which students are able to express individual opinions will be most conducive to microaggressions.*

Univariate Analysis:

Table 1: Percentage of Students Who Have Observed or Experienced a Microaggression in Various Types of St. Olaf Classrooms this Semester (Fall 2017)

	Have observed /experienced a microaggression	Have <i>not</i> observed/experienced a microaggression
During a class discussion	37.3%	62.8%
During group work with other students inside the classroom	29.7%	70.2%
During a lecture	25.4%	74.5%
During a music ensemble led by faculty	17.7%	82.3%
During an SPM (Studies in Physical Movement class)	12.7%	87.3%
During a lab	11.2%	88.8%
During a professor's office hours	4.0%	96.0%

To measure our hypothesis, we asked respondents to report whether they had witnessed/experienced a microaggression(s), during the Fall 2017 semester, in specified classroom settings in order to assess whether certain classroom environments are more conducive to the incidence of microaggressions of any type. As Table 1 reports, students have observed or experienced a microaggression(s) in all classroom settings mentioned in the survey sometime in the first 11 weeks of the semester (Fall 2017). Four classroom styles are worth noting: 37.3% of respondents reported having observed or experienced a microaggression during a class discussion; 29.7% of respondents reported having observed or experienced a microaggression “during group work with other students;” 25.4% of respondents reported having observed or experienced a microaggression “during a lecture;” and 17.7% of respondents reported having observed or experienced a microaggression(s) during a music ensemble led by faculty.

The high rate (37.3%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during a class discussion may not reflect a high frequency of microaggressions. Because there are many students who are able to hear a microaggression happen during a class discussion, multiple student may have observed the same microaggression happening. Discussion based courses allow for more opinions and thoughts to be shared. In some discussion, participants may not know the appropriate terminology associated with racial/ethnic issues. This could lead to microaggressions occurring. But we would like to iterate that the absence of discussions about race and racism is in itself a racial environmental microaggression. Finally, the fact that students are reporting high levels of microaggressions in discussions based classes does not mean we should eliminate discussions, especially discussions of race and racism. Instead, we should be equipping students and professors with the tools necessary to foster a dialogue that is productive, comfortable, and supportive to students of color.

The high rate (29.7%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during group work with other students reflects a probable high frequency of microaggressions in this setting during the Fall 2017 semester. We believe this because student groups are likely composed of very few students, indicating a great number of individual, separate microaggressions rather than a

single incidence reported by a large number of respondents. A possible reason that this setting is more conducive to microaggressions is the lack of professor supervision that might prevent perpetrators from enacting microaggressions.

The high rate (25.4%) of reported observed or experienced microaggressions during a lecture may not reflect a high frequency of microaggressions because lecture classes tend to host a larger number of students, meaning many students may have reported the same single microaggression.

The rate (17.7%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during a music ensemble led by faculty leads us to believe that racial microaggressions are, in fact, happening in varying types of music ensembles on St. Olaf's campus. This data tells us that they definitely are happening in faculty-led ensembles, which range from large choirs, orchestras and bands, to small chamber ensembles and string quartets. The data representing a presence of microaggressions during a music ensemble could be reflective of an environment that is conducive to racial microaggressions. The music performed by the ensembles at St. Olaf College is derived from varying cultural contexts, but the focus of most music courses remains western-centric. As one of the foundational departments of St. Olaf's reputation as an academic institution, the Music department may be associated with "traditional" aspects of St. Olaf's predominantly white heritage and history. Additionally, the western-centric music curriculum may emphasize the role of white composers and musicians over non-white scholars and composers.

The rate (12.7%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during an SPM (Studies in Physical Movement class) may indicate a moderate frequency of microaggressions in this setting. This may reflect the casual environment generally associated with an SPM class, as well as a lack of familiarity in the Exercise Science department with microaggressions and how to prevent them.

The rate (11.2%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during a lab may reflect a moderate frequency of microaggressions in this setting. Lab courses are usually within STEM departments, which may indicate a lack of familiarity in these departments with microaggressions and how to prevent them.

The low rate (4.0%) of reported observed/experienced microaggressions during a professor's office hours may occur as a result of the smaller number of individuals who attend office hours. Additionally, students who are aware of a professor's tendency to commit microaggressions may not attend said professor's office hours, resulting in a lack of reporting.

Finally, it is likely that all these reports are low compared to the actual number of microaggressions happening in these settings. This partly because microaggressions are often hard to recognize, especially for people who have a small chance of noticing them because they are not the target and have never been targeted by a microaggression. The could also be due to the fact that many students who took our survey claimed that they do not believe microaggressions exist in any form at St. Olaf College. Several respondents articulated this idea in the open response question at the end of the survey.

"I have literally never seen an instance of racism, "institutional racism," or microaggressions on this campus."

"This focus on microaggressions and sensitivity is hurting the community at large and pandering to ideologies and zealots."

"I think this is making a huge fuss out of inconsequential issues. I'm honestly quite disappointed that students here are more worried about feelings and moral outrage rather than intellectual challenges and preparation for the workforce."

"Microaggressions can be hurtful, but most of the time, they are exaggerated and not truly an issue."

"This whole 'microaggression'/diversity push is about identity politics, not education. It would be best for the school to quietly abandon it."

"I've seen more microaggressions from people of color towards white people than the opposite. Stop trying to convince us that ALL white people are racist and that all people of color AREN'T racist. It's a two way street."

Racialized microaggressions (as well racism), by the definition given in the earlier part of this paper, cannot target white students. Needless to say, racialized microaggressions do occur at predominantly white institutions, and are a pervasive form of racism on campus here at St. Olaf. This has been shown both by previous literature as well as other responses from the open response question which detailed student's experiences with racist microaggressions at St. Olaf.

We found evidence to support our hypothesis that settings in which students are able to express opinions will be most conducive to microaggressions. We found a high frequency of reports of microaggressions happening during discussion and during group work with other students inside the classroom. We also found evidence that academic settings in which students are able to speak are not the only settings conducive to microaggressions. The third and fourth most reported settings of microaggressions were during a lecture and during a music ensemble led by faculty. These are both settings in which students are unlikely to be expressing personal opinions.

Hypothesis 2: *Curriculum which presents racist material or material containing racism will be reported at a higher rates than other forms of microaggressions as the number of witnesses to this will be higher than other types of microaggressions.*

Univariate Frequency:

Table 2: Percentage of Students Who Have Observed or Experienced an Environmental Microaggression in St. Olaf Classrooms this Semester (Fall 2017)

	Have observed/experienced	Have <i>not</i> observed/experienced
Professor included course material that depicted racism but didn't discuss it in class as racism	19.2%	80.4%

As Table 2 shows, 19.2% of respondents reported having observed or experienced¹ a professor including course material that depicted racism but did not discuss that aspect of the material in a class during the first 11 weeks of the Fall 2017 semester. Again, it is likely that this statistic is low compared to the actual number of St. Olaf students who have experienced a professor including course material that depicted racism but did not discuss it in class as racism in the Fall 2017 semester. This is probable, especially due to the fact that many students who participated in the survey do not believe racism exists in any form on campus (as expressed in the student responses detailed above).

Hypothesis 3: *Students of color are more likely to report the discussions of race and racism in classrooms focusing on the experiences or perspectives of white students rather than of students of color, and these discussions of race and racism being too dominated by white students.*

Bivariate Analysis: Relationship to Race/Ethnicity of the Respondent:

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of “professor included course material that depicted racism but didn’t discuss it in class as racism” reported by students of color² to the frequency reported by white students, and found no significant interaction ($Cramer's V = 0.072$, $p = 0.078$, $p > .05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed and/or experienced the environmental microaggression (25.0%) than white students (18.0%). This indicates that the race and ethnicity of the respondent does not significantly influence the reporting rate of having witnessed or experienced a professor including racist material in class without discussing it as racist. See appendix for corresponding data tables.

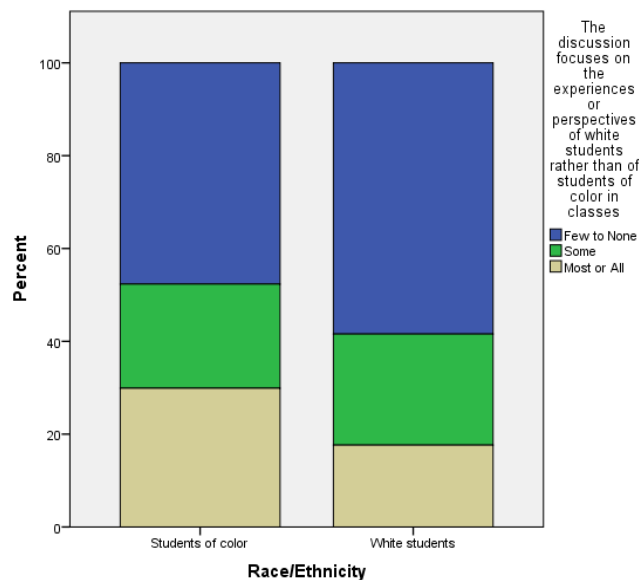


Figure 1: Bar Chart of Reporting of Discussion Environment by Race/Ethnicity

In the survey, we asked respondents to report on their experiences with discussions of race and racism within the classroom. We first asked students, when these discussions take place, are

¹ The original five-category response showing degree of experience was combined into two categories (student who experienced/witnessed and those who had not) due to low cell counts. For the original response rates, see Appendix.

² Self-identified student race/ethnicity was combined into white students and students of color; we acknowledge the problematic generalizations of these categories but were required to do so for statistical analysis. This applies for the remainder of the paper.

they focused on the experiences or perspectives of white students rather than students of color. We then asked if these discussions were dominated by white students. We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of “the discussion focuses on the experiences or perspectives of white students rather than of students of color in classes” reported by students of color to the frequency reported by white students, and found a significant interaction ($Cramer's V = 0.128$, $p = 0.018$, $p < .05$). From this data, we know that students of color are more likely to report discussions of race and racism to be focused on experiences and perspectives of white students rather than students of color at higher rates than white students. This tells us that many students of color feel that these discussions need to be refocused while white students are somewhat oblivious to this.

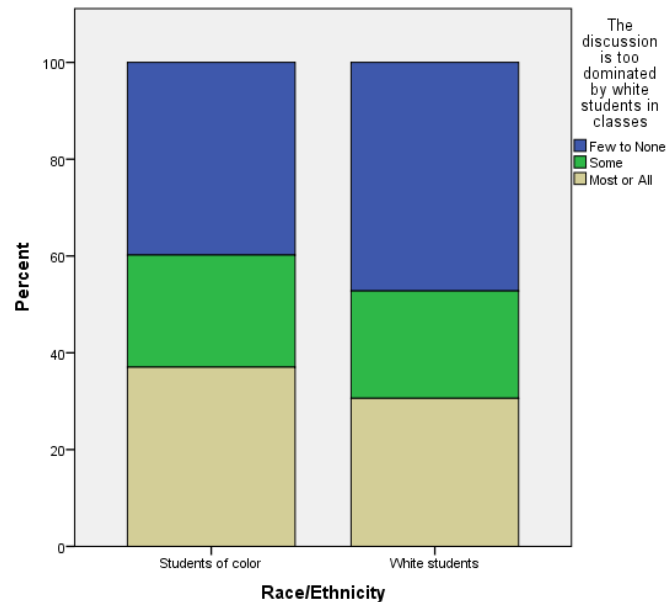


Figure 2: Bar Chart of Reporting of Discussion Environment by Race/Ethnicity

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of “the discussion is too dominated by white students in classes” reported by students of color to the frequency reported by white students, and found no significant interaction ($Cramer's V = 0.066$, $p = 0.344$, $p > .05$). Therefore, there is no significant difference between students of color and white students reporting the conversation being too dominated by white students. However, it is important to note that both students of color and white students are more likely to report the discussions of race and racism being too dominated by white students than the discussions being focused on experiences and perspectives of white students. This indicates a dissatisfaction with the usual structure of these conversations as far as the amount that students of color are able to participate in them.

Hypothesis 4: *Departments with greater amounts of class discussion and interactive group work will report higher numbers of microaggressions than those which are lecture or lab-based.*

Univariate Analysis and Frequency of Microaggressions by Academic Department:

Table 3:

Departments Reported as Having Highest Frequency of Microaggressions

Dept./Concentration/ Conversation/Program	Frequency
Music	40
Religion	38
History	19
Writing	19
Psychology	16
English	14
Political Science	14
SPM	13
Biology	12
Spanish	10
Economics	9
Chemistry	8
Philosophy	8
Great Con	7
Theater	6
Sociology/Anthropology	6
Mathematics	5

Table 4:

Departments Reported as Having Lowest Frequency of Microaggressions

Dept/Concentration/ Conversation/Program	Frequency
Mathematics	33
Psychology	31
Chemistry	30
Sociology/Anthropology	26
Biology	25
English	25
Religion	25
Music	24
Spanish	18
Social Work	17
Art/Art History	15
Race/Ethnic Studies	15
Education	13
French	13
Dance	10
Political Science	10
Women's/Gender Studies	10

Our survey asked students to identify the department(s) in which they believe the most microaggressions occur, and also the department(s) in which they believe the least microaggressions occur. These were two separate, open-ended questions. The respondents could identify as many as they chose to identify.

We examined the frequency reports of the academic department which respondents identified as the department(s) that provide classes in which the most microaggressions occur. Many departments appear on both lists. The five most reported departments were Music (identified by 40 respondents), Religion (identified by 38 respondents), History (identified by 19 respondents),

Writing (identified by 19 respondents), and Psychology (identified by 16 respondents). The three departments with the highest reported frequencies, which focus on tradition and historical events, may contain faculty who do not keep updated on present proper terminology and who may lack tact or eloquence in discussing certain topics. These departments are also likely to contain discussion-based courses which was the highest-reported setting for microaggressions in St. Olaf classrooms by respondents from our survey. Additionally, these top three departments in particular attract a distinctly white population compared to other majors. Finally, these departments are likely to deal with content that could lead to discussions of race and racism. This leads us to conclude that perhaps the institution as a whole should reexamine its mission statement and method of teaching these areas to an ever-diversifying faculty and student body.

A department which is low on the list might not present many opportunities for discussions of race/racism. Mathematics, for example, was identified by five students as a department in which they feel the most microaggressions occur, and by 33 students as a department in which they feel the least microaggressions happen. This could be due to the fact that many mathematics courses do not encounter the topic of race and racism due to a lack of discussion. A lack of engagement with these topics is not likely to prompt many individual microaggressions to happen, however, we do assert that the lack of engagement with these topics is in and of itself an environmental microaggression as well as an oversight of curriculum.

This engagement on the topic of race and racism may also highlight a greater need for increased voices and works by scholars of color within these departments, or a greater integration of topics of race and racism into the curriculum. As was articulated in many of the open responses, students have experienced both successful and unsuccessful examples of this within the Natural Sciences and Math departments, but overall, respondents stressed the need for it to happen at higher rates:

"I am enrolled in three stem courses that do not discuss people (colored [sic] or white) often."

"In the economics department I have never discussed racial events or learned about any racially diverse economist."

"I am a biology major. In reading research papers, we focus almost exclusively on the research and rarely on the author, so I'm usually unaware of the author's race. In my genetics we did discuss Henrietta Lacks and other instances of minority groups being mistreated by science."

"In biology, we don't talk about the race or gender of the authors, only their work and contributions to science..."

"Most of my classes are chemistry/biology/physics which do not include discussion or works of art or readings. I think addressing racism and microaggressions in the STEM fields will look different and needs to be addressed separately."

"...I have never had, nor do I expect to have discussions about race and ethnic identities/perspectives in any of my biology/chemistry/math/statistics courses. If a student majors in one of these fields (which many do), I think they generally don't get much exposure to these types of conversations in their classes simply because they don't pertain to the class material nearly as much as they do in classes in other

departments. I think discussions on race and ethnicity are very important to have, but it's difficult for me to see how those discussions can be incorporated into class material, unless the class has a specific focus on the subject of race and ethnicity."

Finally, it is likely that the reporting on departments in which the most microaggressions happen could be swayed by the respondents taking courses from those department. Departments which are high on the list might have students which are more equipped to notice microaggressions in classroom settings. For example, many students who take courses from the music department are music education majors. This means that in addition to taking music courses, these students are taking education courses which discuss racism and other forms of oppression in academic spaces. It is also notable that students taking courses from humanities departments (e.g. history, religion) are more likely to have encountered a discussion of race and racism in a class. These students may be more able to recognize racism than their peers in other departments. As one student from the open response stated,

"The departments based on discussion, like Poli Sci (Political Science), Race and Ethnic Studies, English, Gender Studies, Soan (Sociology/Anthropology), Philosophy, create people who can at least talk about these issues and can have a conversation when someone is problematic..."

Student-Perpetrated Microassaults

Hypothesis 5: *There will not be a high frequency of student-perpetrated microassaults compared to overall reported rates of microaggressions due to the overt, conscious nature of microassaults.*

Hypothesis 6: *Students of color will be more likely to report student-perpetrated microassaults than white students.*

Univariate Analysis:

Table 5: Percentage of Students Who Have Witnessed or Experienced a Specific Microassault in a St. Olaf Classroom this Semester (Fall 2017), Perpetrated by a Student

	Have witnessed/ experienced a microaggression	Have <i>not</i> witnessed/ experienced a microaggression
Student told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	39.7%	60.3%
Student mocked language styles or imitated accents	42.8%	57.2%
Student used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	14.1%	85.9%
Student displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	10.4%	89.6%

Racial microassaults, by definition, are significantly more overt and aggressive than other types of microaggressions. For this reason, we hypothesized that our findings would indicate relatively low incidence rates, regardless of the respondent's demographics. As Table 5 indicates, however, 42.8% of respondents indicated that they had experienced or observed a fellow student mock language styles or imitate accents at least once this semester, and 39.7% had

experienced/observed a student tell a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s). The other two forms of microassaults indicate fewer than 15% of respondents as having experienced or observed each type, respectively. This means that racial microassaults have happened much more frequently in St. Olaf classrooms this semester than we had originally expected.

Bivariate Analysis: Relationship to Race/Ethnicity of the respondent:

Table 6: Comparison of Percentage of Reported Microassaults by Students of Color to White Students in a St. Olaf Classroom this Semester (Fall 2017), Perpetrated by a Student

	Students of Color	White students	Cramer's V	P-Value
Student told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	46.1%	37.2%	0.075	0.066
Student mocked language styles or imitated accents	47.7%	39.6%	0.067	0.100
Student used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	21.9%	10.0%	0.147	0.000
Student displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	13.3%	8.7%	0.063	0.121

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “student used a racial slur to address or refer to a person of color” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found a significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.147, $p<.05$). Students of color were more than twice as likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (21.9%) than white students (10.0%).

This difference in reporting rate could be due to students of color being targeted by other students using racial slurs. Even if the racial slur was not directed at that student, a student of color is likely to remember the incident, because it could be tied to a personal experience, and report it on our survey.

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “student told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found no significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.075, $p>.05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (46.1%) than white students (37.2%).

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “student mocked language styles or imitated accents” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found no significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.067, $p>.05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (47.7%) than white students (39.6%).

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “student displayed racist symbol” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found no significant interaction (*Cramer's V* =0.063, $p>.05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (13.3%) than white students (8.7%).

The lack of significance indicates no statistical disparity between reporting rates of students of color versus white students. It is clear that both white students and students of color report high rates of this particular microassault, hence our conclusion that students are likely to report having observed or experienced another student mocking language styles or accents regardless of the respondent's racial/ethnic identity.

Students of color have higher reporting rates of microassaults than white students. This, as the literature suggests, is because racialized microaggressions target non-white people and are an unfortunate part of many students' daily lives (Sue et al. 2007: 272-273). Having exposure to microassaults, perhaps by being a direct target, renders students of color more capable of identifying these incidents. Returning to the definition of microaggressions, a key reason they are so pervasive is because they are generally small-scale and difficult to identify for those who are not being targeted. We believe, therefore, that the St. Olaf campus would greatly benefit from additional educational resources and training programs in order to inform *all* students of the many types of microaggressions that exist on the campus as well as how to react when they occur.

Professor-Perpetrated Microassaults

Hypothesis 7: *There will not be a high frequency of professor-perpetrated microassaults due to the overt, conscious nature of microassaults.*

Hypothesis 8: *Students of color will be more likely to report professor-perpetrated microassaults than white students.*

Univariate Analysis:

Table 7: Percentage of Students Who Have Witnessed or Experienced a Specific Microassault in a St. Olaf Classroom this Semester, Perpetrated by a Professor (Fall 2017)

	Have witnessed/experienced a microaggression	Have <i>not</i> witnessed/experienced a microaggression
Professor mocked language styles or imitated accents	10.3%	89.7%
Professor told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	8.7%	91.3%
Professor used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	3.0%	97.0%
Professor displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	1.7%	98.7%

Because of the overt and aggressive nature of microassaults, we hypothesized that our findings would indicate relatively low incidence rates of professor-perpetrated microassaults, regardless of the respondent's demographics. As Table 7 indicates, 10.3% of respondents indicated that they had experienced or observed a professor mock language styles or imitate accents at least once this semester, and 8.7% had experienced/observed a professor tell a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s). 1.7% of respondents indicated having observed or experienced a professor display racist symbols, such as a confederate flag,

swastika, or racist t-shirt. Only 3% of respondents indicated having from experienced or observed a professor use a racial slur to address or refer to a person of color. This means that, according to our results, racial microassaults perpetrated by a professor, occur less frequently than student-perpetrated microassaults in St. Olaf classrooms.

Bivariate Analysis: Relationship to Race/Ethnicity of the respondent

Table 8: Comparison of Percentage of Reported Microassaults by Students of Color to White Students in a St. Olaf Classroom this Semester (Fall 2017), Perpetrated by a Professor

	Students of Color	White students	Cramer's V	P-Value
Professor told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	13.2%	7.0%	0.091	0.026
Professor mocked language styles or imitated accents	13.2%	8.5%	0.065	0.110
Professor used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	5.4%	1.7%	0.098	0.017
Professor displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	1.6%	0.2%	0.078	0.056

In order to address our hypothesis eight, we calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “professor told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found a significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.091, $p<.05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (13.2%) than white students (7.0%).

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “professor used a racial slur to address or refer to a person of color” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found a significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.098, $p<.05$). Students of color were more than twice as likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (5.4%) than white students (1.7%).

According to these findings, students of color are more likely to report observing and/or experiencing a professor telling a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s) and observing and/or experiencing a professor use a racial slur to address or refer to a person of color. This significant difference may be due to students of color being targeted by these racial slurs or jokes. It could also be due to these microassaults resonating with students of color more than with white students, resulting in students of color remembering them long enough to report them on the survey.

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “professor mocked language styles or imitated accents” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found no significant interaction (*Cramer's V*=0.065, $p>.05$). Students of color were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (13.2%) than white students (8.5%).

We calculated a chi-square test of independence comparing the frequency of the microassault “professor displayed racist symbol” reported by students of color to those reported by white students, and found no significant interaction (*Cramer's V* =0.078, $p>.05$). Students of color

were more likely to report having observed/experienced the microassault (1.6%) than white students (0.2%). While this finding was not statistically significant, it does follow the pattern which demonstrates differing rates of reporting for students of color and white students, but also the hypothesis that such blatant microassaults will be less likely to be perpetrated both by a professor and compared to other forms of microaggressions.

Conclusion

Our research aimed to address these three research questions and answered by testing the subsequent hypotheses:

1. In which types of classes are microaggressions most likely to occur at St. Olaf (e.g. lecture-based vs. discussion-based, STEM vs. Humanities, etc.)?
2. What kinds of microassaults happen in St. Olaf classrooms?
3. Who commits microassaults in St. Olaf classrooms?

Our research about settings of microaggressions fills a gap in the literature; previous research reports on microaggressions as they occur in social spaces and dormitories, but not in academic spaces as specific as classrooms. From our data on classroom settings of microaggressions, we conclude that class styles with a larger student population as well as those that encourage student participation are the places where the most microaggressions are occurring. We also surveyed respondents about which departments they identify as locations for the highest and lowest number of microaggressions, respectively. This data tells us what students are perceiving about the different departments at St. Olaf College. We believe that these results are helpful for professors and departments to consider student perceptions of their departments and the courses within.

Informed by previous research and literature, we expected to find relatively low frequencies of reported experiences of microassaults given their overt and intentional nature. The results indicate that the microassault reportedly witnessed and/or experienced the most, for both student and professor-perpetrated microassaults alike, was “mocked of language styles or imitated accents.” The second most pervasive microassault, perpetrated by students and professors alike, was “told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s);” the third, perpetrated by students and professors alike, was “used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color;” the least pervasive, perpetrated by students and professors alike, was “displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt.” We found these to be reported at higher frequencies than expected.

Our last research question was answered using the bivariate analysis in the results section. For all four types of microassaults, the frequencies reported by respondents were higher for student-perpetrated microassaults than professor-perpetrated. We conclude this to mean that students may be responsible for committing most of the microassaults at St. Olaf. This could be due, however, to the fact that there are significantly more students than faculty on campus. This could also be due to the comfortability with which students communicate with another; the professor has more responsibility to behave appropriately and to avoid problematic and harmful interactions with students.

Strengths

As described by Newman, our response rate fits between 10% and 30%, the general standard for a sample of a population of approximately 3,000 (Newman). Due to this high response rate

(25.2%), our statistically significant results are generalizable to the entire St. Olaf student body. Additionally, our research is specific to St. Olaf, having been customized to and conducted within the campus, and by researchers familiar with its students and climate. Our research was composed both of a qualitative focus group and quantitative data analysis, and focused specifically on the topics of environmental microaggressions and microassaults in academic spaces to fill a gap in the current literature.

Limitations

Our research was conducted over a short amount of time, and was designed and completed over the course of a single semester (Fall 2017). Our singular focus on microaggressions in classroom and academic spaces allowed for a specific understanding of the topic, but this limitation may have prevented us from making connections between the incidents occurring outside the classroom. Though we hope this research can be useful for inquiry at other institutions, these statistical results are only generalizable to St. Olaf, and our recommendations may not be directly applicable elsewhere. Our research team was composed of three white females and lead by a white female professor. This positionality undoubtedly impacted our own view of this topic, as none of us has ever been the target of a racial microaggression according to the definition provided by the literature and used in this study. Due to the subtle and evasive nature of microaggression, as well our own experiences as members of a racial majority at St. Olaf, there were errors we committed as both an individual research team and majority white class. There were several suggestions and criticisms from student respondents and others, including the phrasing of questions, insensitivity of phrasing, and a lack of consideration concerning the voices of students of color.

"I heard several voices regarding this survey, and I am concerned that this survey may not reflect all of students' voices from SOAN 371. Also, I am not sure that the process of conducting this survey was the best way (ex. sending an email with an absurd title like 'Help Oles! Win Prizes!', sending many reminders to students, and some of unarticulated questions on the survey). I was very excited to hear about this research at first, but more and more I knew about this research course and the survey process, I was genuinely disappointed about it and was sometimes offended by not dedicated approaches for conducting the research."

As a class we listened to this feedback and attempted to alter our process as the project continued, and we urge future research to be cognizant of these suggestions.

Future Research and Data Use

Based on our data, specifically the open-response slush question, we recommend examining the incidence rate and nature of microaggressions as they occur outside of classroom settings on St. Olaf's campus. Participants in both the focus group and respondents to the open response slush question include identified extra-curricular locations of microaggressions: social spaces (especially where alcohol is involved), athletic programs, and residence life. It is important to note that respondents spoke of microaggressions occurring at *higher* levels outside of the classroom than inside:

"I feel like I definitely see microaggressions on campus, but not as much in the classroom as outside of it."

"I have heard many stories about upper-mentioned things happening in class, but so far I have not heard many things in my classes (it's my first semester only). I have heard comments and microaggression outside of class..."

"The majority of racial microaggressions I have observed or heard about have happened outside of classrooms in dorms or other places where students gather. I'm sure they have happened in a few of my classes in the last three years, but I can't remember really specific instances..."

"A lot of the microaggressions I have witnessed occur outside the classroom in friend groups, but I think learning to understand and combat microaggressions and racism in general needs to start in the classroom, and while some departments and faculty are making good efforts, others are not."

"I wanted to report more on the numerous microaggressions I experience on this campus, but since your research is focused on microaggressions in the classroom, I couldn't. Most microaggressions occur outside of the classroom."

"I know this is focusing on racial microaggressions and general racism in the classroom, but if we were talking about outside the classroom (still on campus) I have seen/heard a LOT of racist comments, ignorant statements, stereotypes, etc on campus and in dorms, even casually in conversations in Stav. A lot of people aren't going to say that in front of a professor but have no problem saying it in front of their peers, and honestly I think more courses should include discussing racism and current events because it does pertain to every subject in some shape or form."

This research could be conducted by future students or those involved with institutional-level research, or by specific departments who would conduct further studies.

Future researchers on this topic should also consider the personal and experience-based nature of this content of this research, as well as their own positionality and socialization in regards to race and experience with racism. While our research was grounded in Critical Race Theory and attempted to continuously use its tenants as guides throughout our process, as white researchers we made several mistakes and oversights throughout the course of our research process as described above in the limitations section.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we strongly recommend the following institutional changes:

1. The creation and publication of an explicit campus policy regarding hate speech, derogatory language, and the use of racist symbols on campus
2. Increased support for students and faculty of color and provide funding and resources to increase the number of students and faculty of color
3. Mandated anti-racism training for students and professors

This first goal aims to foster a campus climate where these acts are not condoned, as well as to establish protocol for when they do occur. Second, increasing support for students of color and faculty of color through specific programs that recognize the inequity students of color face in comparison to white students is crucial, as well is a commitment to increasing overall campus diversity. The specifics of this recommendation echo the demands of The Collective for Change

on the Hill as well as the recommendations of the Task Force on Institutional Racism. Finally, we recommend mandated, in-person training for students and professors across *all* departments that focuses specifically on racism, positionality, and uses of power in society. As was discussed in the results section, there exists a gap in the perception, understanding, and identification of racist acts between white students and students of color. We believe in-person training (offered as a seminar course or as a General Education requirement) would help to bridge this gap. Additionally, training for professors across all departments would help to increase discussion and awareness of academic microaggressions to mitigate their prevalence and impacts. This should help alleviate the burden of taking the initiative to explain racism and to spearhead mitigation efforts from professors of color or professors from departments that deal with issues surrounding race, social identity, and social inequality.

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Appendix

Table A: Index of Settings of Microaggressions (seven items, four response categories)

	Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
During group work with other students inside the classroom	70.2% 487/694	22.0% 153/694	5.3% 37/694	2.4% 17/694
During a lecture	74.5% 518/695	17.8% 124/695	5.6% 39/695	2.0% 14/695
During a class discussion	62.8% 439/699	24.5% 171/699	9.2% 64/699	3.6% 25/699
During a lab	88.8% 395/445	8.5% 38/445	2.0% 9/445	0.7% 3/445
During an SPM (Studies in Physical Movement class)	87.3% 282/323	9.0% 29/323	2.5% 8/323	1.2% 4/323
During a music ensemble led by faculty	82.3% 339/412	10.7% 44/412	5.1% 21/412	1.9% 8/412
During a professor's office hours	96.0% 582/606	3.5% 21/606	0.3% 2/606	0.2% 1/606

Table B: Index of Student-Perpetrated Microassaults (four items, four response categories)

	Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
Student mocked language styles or imitated accents	57.2% (407/711)	29.3% (208/711)	9.1% (65/711)	4.4% (31/711)
Student told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	60.3% (430/713)	27.1% 193/713	8.7% (62/713)	3.9% (28/713)
Student used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	85.9% (610/710)	11.0% (78/710)	1.7% (12/710)	1.4% (10/710)
Student displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	89.6% (639/713)	7.7% (55/713)	1.7% (12/713)	1.0% (7/713)

Table C: Index of Professor-Perpetrated Microassaults (five items, four response categories)

	Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times
Professor mocked language styles or imitated accents	89.7% (639/712)	7.4% (53/712)	1.8% (13/712)	1.0% (7/712)
Professor told a joke that mocked or degraded a racial/ethnic group(s) or a nationality group(s)	91.3% (649/711)	6.3% (45/711)	1.7% (12/711)	0.7% (5/711)
Professor used a racial slur to address or refer to person of color	97.0% (690/711)	2.4% (17/711)	0.4% (3/711)	0.1% (1/711)
Professor displayed racist symbols, such as a confederate flag, swastika, or racist t-shirt	98.7% (700/709)	1.3% (9/709)	0.0% (0/709)	0.0% (0/709)
Professor included course material that depicts racism but didn't discuss it in class as racism	80.4% (567/705)	13.0% (92/705)	3.7% (26/705)	2.8% (20/705)