

## Environmental Microaggressions In The Classroom



### Part 1

**Microaggression** is a term used for brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial slights and insults toward any group, particularly culturally marginalized groups.

“Environmental microaggressions refer to the “numerous demeaning and threatening social, educational, political and economic cues that are communicated individually, institutionally, or societal to marginalized groups.”<sup>9</sup> Oftentimes, our physical environments or the architecture of a space can represent a microaggression (e.g., classroom desks that do not accommodate fat bodies), as can policies and practices that govern interactions in a setting (e.g. forms that only offer identity categories that fit within the gender binary). In these cases, the micro aggression is not necessarily communicated through a one-on-one interpersonal interaction.” (Munro 503)

*The ethical principle here are the unjust effects **microaggressions** can have on individuals, especially the cumulative effect. Microaggressions are wrong since they promote a worldview that reflects marginality, rejects deviation from the norm, and creates exclusivity for those who are marginally oppressed. Since micro aggressions are often an issue that is unintentional, moral responsibility can't be placed upon the aggressors unless they fail to change once made*

*aware of what they are doing wrong. This is why creating a system that addresses micro aggressions and promoting awareness is necessary to resolve this ethical issue.*

“1) Biological and physical effects, 2) emotional effects, 3) cognitive effects, and 4) behavior effects” (Munro 503): These are the detrimental effects micro aggressions have on individuals that make them an ethical issue in the first place. The cumulative result of micro aggressions are what cause these effects, and in the case of environmental micro aggressions in the classroom at Texas State, negative cognitive effects are the primary concern. If students who simply have learning differences are not being provided an equal opportunity to learn, this is an ethical issue.

“An action can be done in ignorance and still be an irreligious act! Just like someone’s innocent name carving in a Christian church alter, Thorpe had no intention of acting impiously—but his name carving was impious nonetheless. Here, then, is the “impiety” argument: Any impious practice is wrong, and the use of some Indian mascots is an impious practice, so use of some Indian mascots is wrong.” (Norton-Smith 18)

It is disrespectful and ostracizing for students that have different learning styles to be at a disadvantage to other students simply because they were born and hardwired to learn differently. It is impious to not accommodate students with learning differences, which is an environmental microaggression, therefore not implementing a change is wrong. Students should not be discriminated against due to the natural way their brain thinks and understands information. This is undeniably impious because students were made the way they were for a reason, and there is nothing they can do to change that. They were made and engineered the way they were for a specific purpose and it is an impious act for universities not to respect their unique way of learning and meet the needs that certain students have.

P2

Our Texas state campus offers hundreds of interesting and engaging classes, however they are almost all lecture based. Between the three of us, our philosophy class is the only one that offers any kind of student discussion and debate. When it comes to technical based classes like math, many students just aren’t able to learn effectively without any hands on activity, working practice examples in class, or discussion. Instead of focusing solely on auditory learning through these lectures, the school should incorporate visual and kinesthetic learning classes to help better educate it’s students.

We believe environmental microaggressions exist at our beautiful Texas state campus, and while this issue may not be the only problem at Texas state, eliminating micro aggressions could bring serious benefit to thousands of students.

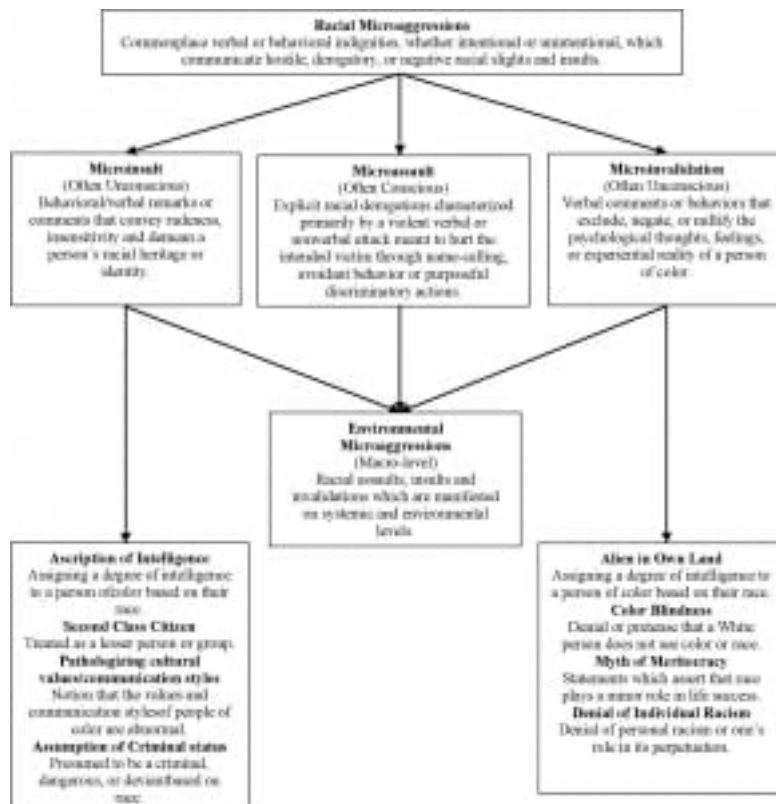
Below are links concerning articles that stress the importance of accommodating to every sort of learning technique that humans have and the significance of how it impacts the retention and comprehension within the people.

<https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/learning-styles/>

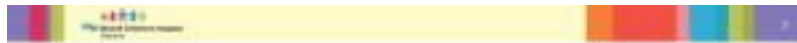
<https://www.statepress.com/article/2017/03/spopinion-learning-styles-are-helpful-to-individualized-learning>

<https://www.umassd.edu/dss/resources/faculty-staff/how-to-teach-and-accommodate/how-to-accommodate-different-learning-styles/>

In conclusion, environmental microaggressions in the classroom are a serious issue because students are at college to learn and everyone learns differently. Teaching students through lecture and nothing else marginalizes everyone who learns differently and is far less effective than having other teaching styles and classes.

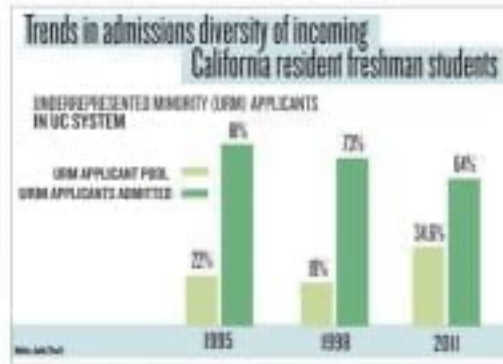


| Examples of Different Forms of Microaggressions |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Microinsult</b>                              | <p>A Black male college student at a highly selective university is asked what sport he plays, with the underlying assumption that he did not gain admission based on his academic credentials, but rather his athletic ability.</p> <p>A Latina administrator is described as "spicy," which culturally and sexually objectifies her while diminishing her effectiveness as a leader.</p> |
| <b>Microinvalidation</b>                        | <p>An Asian American professor is asked where she is from, and when she replies, "Kansas," her student responds with, "No seriously, what country are you from?" suggesting that she was not born in the U.S.</p>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Microassault</b>                             | <p>A Muslim student sits in a class where a professor makes Islamophobic comments during his lecture.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



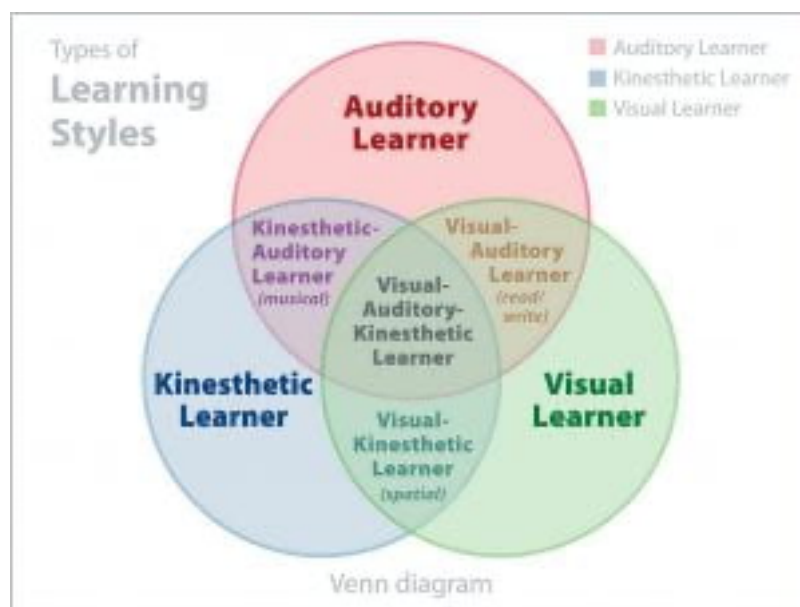
## Environmental Microaggressions

- Assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels



### Part 2 – Recommendation

Our recommendation to Texas state is first promoting awareness towards educators about learning differences and changing not all but some of it's classes to be less lecture based. It is not our belief that Texas State University needs to remove any of it's classes or change it's entire structure, however incorporating discussion and debate would greatly improve the learning environment. The university needs to explain the different teaching structures and the individual benefits of them to it's professors.



# Learning Styles

|                                                                                             |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Visual</b></p> <p>* You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.</p> | <p><b>Musical/Auditory</b></p> <p>* You prefer using sound and music.</p>         | <p><b>Verbal</b></p> <p>* You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.</p> | <p><b>Physical/Kinesthetic</b></p> <p>* You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.</p> |
| <p><b>Logical/Mathematical</b></p> <p>* You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.</p>  | <p><b>Social</b></p> <p>* You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.</p> | <p><b>Solitary</b></p> <p>* You prefer to work alone and use self-study.</p>      | <p><b>What is your learning style?</b></p>                                                        |

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**V**isual  
**A**ural  
**R**eadng/writing  
**K**inesthetic

#### Reasoning

Our recommendation will address the issue of environmental microaggressions on the Texas State campus. Having a more diversified learning environment in the classrooms at Texas State University will better accommodate all the different learning types of students. Many students don't learn the traditional way and struggle to learn from the lecture based education style so by modifying the learning environment and incorporating different ways of conveying information, students who struggle to learn the traditional way will become more engaged and learn more effectively.

#### Analysis

One potential factor that might cause resistance with our proposal would come from the professors. Many professors are set in their ways and do not take change lightly. Some professors will be extremely skeptical to change causing a halt in the implementation of our recommendation however incorporating this could be greatly beneficial to the students. Another perspective is from those students who learn best from solely lectures, and incorporating other learning styles may be less effective for them.



"As we start a new school year, Mr. Smith,  
I just want you to know that I'm an Abstract-  
Sequential learner and trust that  
you'll conduct yourself accordingly!"

*Browning*