charged experiences from the lens of those who are marginalized (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014).

Several of the Students of Color who were targets of the comments shared that when they expressed discomfort, the perpetrator claimed positive intent—they were just offering praise, or being funny. These Students of Color, however, expressed feeling othered, criminalized, or viewed as intellectually incapable. The statements and questions in the quotes above—seemingly innocuous to some—are harmful manifestations of institutionalized racism—racial discrimination systematically enacted by laws, structures, and practices of institutions (Omi & Winant, 2014). Stereotypes of the perpetual “foreigner,” the “dumb Mexican” (Valencia, 2002), or the “Muslim terrorist” (Ali, 2014) are ideologies rooted in historical and current-day policies and practices that position Communities of Color as inferior to Whites and fueled these microinteractions. Additionally, as these racial microaggressions reflect institutionalized racism, they also maintain it by subordinating Students of Color within the moment and beyond.

Using a framework of critical race theory (CRT), in this chapter we emphasize that racial microaggressions in K-12 schools are mechanisms of institutionalized racism. We analyze three case studies where Students of Color experienced microforms of racism that were framed as “compliments” or “jokes.” In each of these cases, we unpack the structural root of the microaggression to understand its legacy and trauma. Our aim is to bring attention to the dynamic relationship between macro- and microracism and offer strategies for researchers and practitioners of K-12 schools to better reflect upon and transform the way Students of Color experience their education.

Critical Race Theory

Racism is the creation or maintenance of a racial hierarchy, supported through institutional power (Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002). CRT is a framework that emerged out of critical legal studies in the 1970s to illuminate racism as an ever-present barrier in U.S. racial progress (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). An interdisciplinary theory, CRT challenges ideology, policy, and practice that uses individualized explanations for racial inequity such as colorblindness and meritocracy, and instead, points to structural causes for U.S. racial hierarchies (Crenshaw, 1995). As a theory, CRT acknowledges the intersectionality of race and class oppression, explaining that race and racism were created as tools of economic exploitation (Harris, 1993). It, additionally, weaves its analysis with other factors of subordination such as sexism (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), nativism (Pérez Huber, 2011), and ableism (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013). It is important to note that the purpose of CRT is not simply to understand racial power but also to transform it (Crenshaw, 2011).
CRT has been applied to the field of education to illuminate how, from Americanization schools (Spring, 1994) to segregation (Irons, 2004), and extreme racial inequity in education today, K-12 schools have maintained a history driven by racialization and racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Since its initial theoretical purpose within education discourse, CRT has expanded to include empirical research that further highlights the nuances of racism within education (Parker, 2015). Even so, racism, in its macro or micro forms, remains undertheorized in K-12 school-based research (Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevárez, 2017).

Racial Microaggressions as Racism

While overt racism continues to exist in U.S. society, everyday or mundane acts of racism also maintain the status quo (Bonilla-Silva, 2012) because they are directly linked to macrostructures of racial injustice (Essed, 1997; Holt, 1995; Lewis, 2003). Rooted in factors associated with race, such as language and culture (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007), CRT scholars have defined racial microaggressions as follows: (a) Subtle verbal and nonverbal assaults directed toward People of Color, often carried out automatically or unconsciously; (b) Layered assaults, based on one's race, gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or name; and (c) Cumulative assaults that take their toll on People of Color. In isolation, racial microaggressions may not have much meaning or impact; however, as repeated slights, the effect can be profound (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012).

Chester Pierce first coined the term racial microaggressions to describe racial offenses that are “done in automatic, preconscious, or unconscious fashion” (Pierce, 1974, p. 515). As he articulated, these microforms of racism exist as “often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges, which are ‘put downs’ of blacks by offenders” (Pierce, 1978, p. 66). Davis (1989) built upon Pierce’s work to clarify that, from the lens of the victim, racial microaggressions are not just personal slights, but instances of racialized harm. He operationalizes them as “stunning automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitutes verification of black inferiority” (Davis, 1989, p. 1576).

Starting in 2001, CRT scholars of education have also built upon the concept of racial microaggressions to discuss the covert forms of systemic racism that exist in educational institutions (Allen & Solórzano, 2001; Smith et al., 2007; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002). These scholars have argued that although often dismissed or overlooked, racial microaggressions have tangible consequences for People of Color (Smith et al., 2007). Racial microaggression research in education has primarily focused on the experiences of Students of Color in higher education who attend predominantly White institutions (Smith et al., 2007; Solórzano et al., 2002). There is, however, limited research examining the impact of racial microaggressions in K-12 schools (Carter Andrews, 2012; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Pérez Huber, 2011).

Method

Adapting case study methodology (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and counterstorytelling (Yosso, 2005), this chapter involves excerpts of qualitative interviews from various research projects and personal communications, presented as narratives. CRT builds upon the value and process of firsthand accounts of legal testimony and the oral traditions of Communities of Color to challenge dominant narratives through counterstories (Yosso, 2005). The narratives and analysis we share are constructed through the recollection of those who are marginalized, as a means to reframe to dominant views, myths, values, and norms shaped by stereotypes and racism. They are told from the vantage point of those oppressed to reveal structures and practices that facilitate and reproduce inequality (Yosso, 2005).

In this way, our case studies are stories conveyed and analyzed to center the perspective of the participants. Pulled from (a) a research project with teacher Candidates of Color reflecting on their racialization as K-12 students (Kohli, 2014); (b) a study of Students of Color reflecting on the racial microaggressions they experienced in school relating to their names (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012); and (c) the personal experiences of one of the authors, each case study reveals a unique nuance about racial microaggressions in K-12 schools, particularly as it relates to racialized “compliments” and “jokes.” In each of the following cases, we present and analyze the narrative using a CRT lens to bridge the racial microaggressions to macroinstitutionalized racism and other forms of oppression.

Case #1: “Your vocabulary is extraordinary!”

Ashley was one of few African American students in her predominantly White elementary school. Sometimes, when she would win at tetherball or have conflict on the playground, to degrade her, peers would call her the “n-word” without any consequences from the school staff. Within a school racial climate—defined as a school’s norms and values of race and interracial interactions (Byrd & Chavous, 2011)—of tolerated overt racism, students and teachers would also pay Ashley racialized “compliments.” Students would often remind her how much they liked her, saying, “You’re a cool Black person!” or “You’re a White-Black girl” or “A proper Black person.” They would tell her, “You talk proper,” “you’re clean,” and “you’re not ghetto.” Her teachers would state, “Well, Ashley’s different,” that “Ashley’s very articulate; her vocabulary is
extraordinary!" When she reached high school, with much social pressure to adhere to the standards of beauty of her peers, she began straightening her hair. Her classmates would often respond to her looks, comparing her to other Black people by saying things such as, "but you—your hair is so nice and it's so clean."

**Why Are These Comments Racial Microaggressions and Not Compliments?**

Ashley was the target of many comments that were framed as "compliments." Her classmates and teachers felt she was smart, articulate, and clean. What was embedded in their comments, however, was that they found her smart, articulate, and clean relative to how they perceived other African Americans—unintelligent, inarticulate, and unclean. Entrenched in their seeming praise were deep-seated expressions of racism, racialized stereotypes, and hierarchical ideologies. Furthermore, layered onto these racist perceptions of Black intelligence and hygiene were also gendered perceptions of Eurocentric standards of beauty. Ashley's acceptability as a Black woman in her predominantly White K-12 school was heightened when she adhered to white norms, as she was praised when she processed and straightened her natural hair.

The comments that Ashley describes are unfortunately not uncommon. Framed as praise, these layered assaults were meant to distance her from others in her community, and they were hurtful to Ashley's self- and community perception because they were fueled by (and perpetuated) anti-Blackness (Dumas & Ross, 2016). The cumulative nature of racial microaggressions took their toll on Ashley, and she started to internalize racism—a phenomenon that manifests when People of Color subconsciously or consciously adopt racial hierarchies of White superiority (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014). The impact of racism can sometimes be minimal and temporal, but it can also have a profound effect on the way an individual sees themselves, their culture, and the world around them (Steele, 1997). In Ashley's case, a repeated exposure to racial microaggressions caused her to accept and subscribe to racial stereotypes and attitudes of superiority to her family and community. She shared, "I felt that all black people that aren't like me are worthless. And when I would hear things from white people that [I now know] were racist and nasty, 'You talk proper, or you're not ghetto, or you're clean, or your hair is nice' I would take that as a positive. I was proud to be that way."

To understand the negative impact racial microaggressions could have on the perceptions of Students of Color, it is important to interrogate its root causes. Often, the perpetrator of racism is seen as the sole problem, in Ashley's case—her classmates and teachers. However, within a limited analysis, we might blame and remove particular actors, yet allow the broader climate that enabled racial microaggressions to continue. Instead, it is important to understand that the microaggressions that Ashley experienced in her K-12 education stem from and are empowered by macro forms of racism. The everyday racism said to her has a foundation in overt racialized U.S. policies and practices such as slavery, eugenics, segregation, and the development of the prison industrial complex, where many lawmakers, scientists, researchers, and educators have historically and currently articulated a biological, mental, and intellectual inferiority of people of African descent to justify their subordination (Bonilla-Silva, 2012; Hilliard, 1999; Irions, 2004). These institutionalized forms of racism manifest intersectionally and in daily ideology related to things such as standards of beauty and hair texture (Hooks, 1989), language patterns (Perry & Delpit, 1998), and perceptions of academic efficacy (Lane, 2017). While racism is woven into all facets of U.S. life, a danger of racial microaggressions is its covert nature. It can be hard to identify or call out microaggressions because they are framed as praise, yet they can cause lasting harm, particularly if Students of Color internalize the ideologies behind them (Kohl & Solórzano, 2012). It is within highly racialized context that we must interpret what seems "compliments" to Ashley about her physical and intellectual attributes.

**Case #2: “I wouldn’t want to call you Gandhi by accident or something”**

Nirupama went to a high school that was primarily Latinx and East Asian, with very few South Asian students. On her first day of tenth grade, she went to biology class. At a new school where she did not know many students, she sat quietly at her desk until it was time for roll call. When the White male teacher got to her name, he asked her to pronounce it very slowly. She responded "Ni-ru-pa-ma." He responded by laughing, "Thanks, because I wouldn’t want to call you ‘Gandhi’ by accident or something." Nirupama recalls that the whole class of students erupted into laughter at his comment, and she felt humiliated. For the rest of the school year, her classmates continued to call her "Gandhi."

**Why Is This a Racial Microaggression and Not a Joke?**

Already an ethnic minority in her school, the teacher exacerbated Nirupama’s isolation by comparing her identity to Gandhi, one of few South Asians referenced in K-12 history textbooks. This seeming "joke" was a tokenization of her Indian identity, equating her first name as a current young woman to the last name of a historic, world-recognized male leader, just because they broadly share a common cultural origin. When a child goes to school and their name...
is mispronounced or changed, it can negate the thought, care, and significance of the name, and thus the identity of the child. Additionally, this “joking” conflation is a disregard of the complexity and nuance of the billion people who share Indian culture, making this experience, albeit in micro form, an incident of racism.

The teacher’s racial microaggression led NIRUPAMA to feel humiliated within the moment. It also was embedded within, and simultaneously perpetuated, a hostile school racial climate where other students felt comfortable repeating the racialized “joke” throughout the school year. Although her peers were primarily Students of Color, unable to benefit from this racism (OMI & WINANT, 2014) and likely experiencing racism within their own schooling, the action of the teacher fostered a dynamic where Students of Color were complicit in NIRUPAMA’s alienation and racialization. Whether the students had internalized the racial hierarchy (KOHLI & SOLDRZANO, 2012), or if they were just laughing along in a moment, expanding the analysis of racism to a broader institutional perspective offers insights into the relationship between the actors and the social context.

It may be easy to individualize this experience and blame the students as “bullies” or the teacher as a “bad apple” for the racism that NIRUPAMA experienced. And while they should be held accountable, there are also larger, historical, and institutionalized structures that enable the power of microaggressions that are important to recognize if we are to understand and eradicate racial microaggressions at their roots. The sentiment that non-Western names are odd or an unwelcome inconvenience has historical and legal underpinnings. For centuries, enslaved Africans were forced to shed their names and were given the names of their masters (IRONS, 2004). The names of Indigenous people were replaced with Anglo and Christian names until the 1920s (BONNIN, 1921). And more recently, in 2009, during House testimony on voter identification legislation, a Texas lawyer argued that voters of Asian descent should adopt names that are “easier for Americans to deal with” (Ratcliffe, 2009). From the inception of systemic schooling in the United States, Students of Color have been invisibilized within curriculum (LOEVEN, 2008), unreflected in the teaching force (SLEETER, 2008), and neglected within cultural frameworks of success (YOSSO, 2005). Living in a racialized society, NIRUPAMA woke up that day and walked into a school within a system that, for centuries, has not been designed to serve her. The joking disregard of NIRUPAMA’s name by her teacher is not something specific to him or just an unfortunate choice of words; it is backed by a legacy of racist ideology and practice, and also works to further institutionalize racism within the school culture. It is in this context of historical and current racial hierarchies that we must understand the teacher’s choice to publicly disregard NIRUPAMA’s culture and identity. Similarly, it is in this context that we must begin to unpack the actions of NIRUPAMA’s classmates, Students of Color, as it relates to racism.

Case #3: “They don’t steal anything, do they?”

One of the authors, Ms. ARTEAGA, was a Latina who attended a working-class, Southern California high school that was labeled a “dropout factory” in a popular, internationally viewed documentary. The stigma placed on her education was something that deeply impacted Ms. ARTEAGA’s perception of herself, her school, and her community. As an adult, she became an English teacher in an urban, comprehensive public high school not too far from where she grew up. After 4 years of teaching, she was re-assigned to work at a continuation high school for students who had struggled to succeed in traditional high school contexts. When she went to sign the paperwork, a group of employees of the Human Resources (HR) department of her district offered unsolicited advice that she should not accept the placement and would be better off applying at other school districts. They thought they were doing her a favor; stating that teaching anywhere else was better than this predominantly Black and Latinx high school; that “the students were nothing but trouble.” But Ms. ARTEAGA, however, had explicit interest in working with the population the school served. Her first day there, she was greeted by the assistant principal who shared the sentiments of the HR personnel. He warned her that she needed to be “extra cautious while working with the students.” She quickly learned that the teachers at the school also shared deficit perceptions of the Students of Color on campus.

While Ms. ARTEAGA never attended a continuation school, she saw herself in her students, and felt troubled by the racial climate of the school. She put in effort to earn their respect and develop meaningful relationships; thus, you would often find students working on homework or socializing in her room outside of class time. One lunch period a few months into the school year, another teacher walked into the classroom and saw Ms. ARTEAGA eating lunch and working with several Students of Color. This teacher “Joked” laughingly, “Wow, you let THEM eat lunch with you! They don’t steal anything do they?” The students and Ms. ARTEAGA did not laugh back.

Why Is This a Racial Microaggression and Not a Joke?

The students in Ms. ARTEAGA’s class were attending a continuation school. They had been pushed out of traditional school settings, were often labeled as “troublemakers” or “problem students,” but continued to persist in their educational goals. On the day of the incident, they were spending their lunch hour working on their coursework, committed to their learning. While the teacher made the comment in a joking tone, under the veil of humor laid a stereotype that was rampant at the school—that continuation students were “thieves” and criminals. Said between adults, in front of the youth, the teacher expressed this racist sentiment about Black and Latinx students with an intention of camaraderie.

While the tone was casual and warm, the content was racialized, and the
incident was experienced as a racial microaggression against the Students of Color. We also assert that Ms. Arteaga experienced trauma from the comment, what we call here a second-hand racial microaggression (Pizarro & Kohli, 2017).

In psychological research, secondary trauma—or vicarious trauma—is the emotional stress that occurs when hearing about or witnessing someone else’s first-hand trauma (Hesse, 2002). This is particularly impactful to those who have experienced firsthand trauma, as it can feel like a re-experience of their own personal trauma (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Similarly, we argue that when Teachers of Color witness racial microaggressions targeted at Students of Color, they can experience that microaggression secondhand. For Teachers of Color who feel a racial or cultural connectivity to students, and have endured similar microaggressions in their past, secondhand racial microaggressions take a toll on their well-being even when they are not the direct or intended target.

These microforms of racism directed at the Students of Color are also tied to macroracism structurally embedded within the broader schooling system. As evidenced by the acceptability and banality of the racialized stereotypes, the school operated as a hostile racial climate, where the teachers, school administrators, and district staff did not believe in the worth or integrity of students, and thus, could not truly stand as advocates for their academic and life success. Continuation schools were designed to provide alternative pathways and opportunities for students who were not succeeding in traditional schools, but unfortunately, these settings have turned into pushout factories, often the last step along the school-to-prison pipeline (Annamma, 2015). With a typically unrigorous and culturally disconnected education, and high attrition rates (many leaving for juvenile hall), Black and Latinx students are overrepresented in continuation schools and are often socialized not to believe in their academic capabilities (Malagon & Alvarez, 2010; Winn, 2011). It is in this racially disparate context of low expectations and pathways to prison that we must understand the comment made in Ms. Arteaga’s classroom—a racialized comment that cannot be understood as a “joke” because it both reflects and perpetuates a cycle of Student of Color criminalization.

**Interventions and Strategies**

In this chapter, we provide three case studies to uncover how “compliments” and “jokes” in K-12 schools can sometimes exist as racialized microassaults. These forms of everyday racism are particularly harmful because, while it is systemically mediated by institutional racism, their mundane-ness can be invisibilizing (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014). Even the most sincere and well-intended racialized comments can have long-lasting effects that can jeopardize the physiological, psychological, and academic well-being of Students of Color.

Understanding how racial microaggressions operate and analyzing their underlying root is essential if we are to move toward disrupting racism in schools. And because racial microaggressions are an intersection of individually acted and institutionally supported racism, the interventions must also exist on those levels.

**Individual Responses to Racial Microaggressions**

Whether you are a bystander or the target, it is hard to know what one should say or do when confronted with racial microaggressions. Because of the mask of positivity in the form of praise or humor, it can be difficult to articulate what needs to be challenged without disrupting a perceivably cordial interaction and being framed as “angry,” “too sensitive,” or “too politically correct,” all additional examples of microaggressions that are mechanisms used to shut down challenges to racism. And while the onus to end racism should not fall upon People of Color and there is no prescribed response to mitigate its power or impact, Students of Color, their families, and their teachers have articulated the need to name and respond to racial microaggressions.

A primary step in mitigating the detrimental impact of a racial microagression is to be able to identify that it is happening. If one can classify something as racism, even internally, it is easier to prevent its message from shaping one’s perception. A secondary step in addressing racial microaggressions on an individualized level is articulating that racism to the perpetrator, as naming racism can—at times—facilitate a climate of reflection. The power dynamic and broader racial climate of a context, however, shape if and how target(s) or bystander(s) of racial microaggressions feel agency to respond. Unfortunately, because of limited explicit racial discourse and colorblind approaches in formal educational contexts (Bonilla-Silva, 2012), it can be difficult to pinpoint the racial undertones in a particular setting. Similar to psychological research on racial socialization that has connected explicit racial discourse to improved self-esteem in Children of Color (Gaskin, 2015), racial literacy is a skill that can offer an ability to identify what is problematic in the interaction, to thwart an internalization of its effects, and to challenge the injustice, no matter how micro in form. Racial literacy is one’s ability “to probe the existence of racism and examine the effects of race and institutionalized systems on their experiences and representation in US society” including the “ability to read, discuss, and write about situations that involve race or racism” (Sealey-Ruiz, 2013, p. 386). Considering the need for students to navigate racism that covertly diminishes their educational and career opportunities, the literature points to the importance of racial literacy to shift their understanding from an individualized to an institutional analysis of racism (Epstein & Gist, 2015). Having this skill allows Students of Color the ability to connect, as we did throughout this chapter, the microaggression to larger
macro systems of institutional racism. This process helps to deindividuate situations, remove themselves as responsible for any pain or failure they may feel, and rearticulate the situation with a clear vision of the role of power within inequity (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014).

Building the racial literacy of Students of Color within schools is not easy, however. It requires meaningful and open discussions of race and racism in the classroom (Sealey-Ruiz, 2013). Rogers and Mosley (2006), in a study with second graders, demonstrated how racial literacy development is an interactive process requiring teachers adept at guiding students through a development of race and racism discourse. While teachers’ racial literacies vary widely, teachers with high ability to navigate and discuss race have made a considerable difference in students’ ability to process and confront racism. What this means is that for individual actors in K-12 schools to have the skills to confront racial microaggressions, students, families, teachers, and staff must be able to comfortably and skillfully discuss race and racism. This can involve including racial literacy as a qualification in the hiring process of teachers, creating professional development sessions that address issues of race, culture, power, and inequity, and engaging in regular racial discourse in the curriculum.

Institutional Responses to Racial Microaggressions

In addition to the responses of individual actors, eliminating the presence of racial microaggressions in schools would require the end of policies and practices of racism. While many facets of structural racism exist beyond the control of school administrators or teachers because they extend historically and societally, there are still things that can be done to protect students from them on school grounds. Creating a positive racial climate is an important component to preventing Students of Color from enduring the harm of racial microaggressions. School racial climate is a school’s norms and values around race and interracial interactions (Byrd & Chavous, 2011). Student and teacher demographics, classroom and professional development curriculum, discipline practices, and cultural responsiveness are all aspects of school racial climate and can dictate how and if racism has a place in the everyday policies and practices of a campus. Diversifying the teaching staff, building upon the community cultural wealth of Students of Color (Yosso, 2005), and having regular reflections and open discussions of racial equity and racism on campus are all things that can support a positive racial climate.

An additional piece of shifting school racial climate is allowing Students of Color to create or access third spaces/counterspaces—places where they can feel supported and validated in their racialized experiences (Núñez, 2011). Building from higher education research on Students of Color who are constantly dealing with racial microagressions in their education, studies have shown that these safe havens can be an important strategy for their academic survival (Grier-Reed, 2010). In K-12 settings these practices can also be incredibly useful, providing or cocreating spaces where students can critically analyze microaggressions to not internalize or normalize these practices. Like Ms. Arteaga’s classroom, this can be as simple as opening up the classroom during lunch or before or after school.

Discussion and Implications

In this chapter, we present several case studies that articulate some of the nuances of racial microaggressions, as they exist in K-12 schools. Despite the intent of the perpetrator, a seeming compliment or joke can have detrimental impact on People of Color if it embodies racialized stereotypes. As discussions of microaggressions become more popularized and part of mainstream discourse, our fear is that they get watered down and framed as insults that are enacted individually and can be addressed by reprimanding that person—telling him/her that what they said is wrong. We write this chapter to emphasize that the power of racial microaggressions comes from legacies of racism. It is not just the words that are said, but it is the ideologies that are represented in the words and are supported by historical and current policies of dehumanization, domination, and exclusion. Thus, eliminating the presence of racial microaggressions in K-12 education requires strong racial literacies and positive racial climates where equity, community cultural wealth, and racial justice are constantly reflected in the everyday structures, practices, and interactions of schools.

References


Microaggressions in Higher Education: Embracing Educative Spaces
Kathryn S. Young and Myron R. Anderson

Unfortunately, microaggressions are everywhere. Research has documented microaggressions in clinical spaces, classrooms, boardrooms, everyday life, and so forth (Hunter, 2011; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2015; Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions have been documented relating to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and other important identity categories (Alleyne, 2004; Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Evans & Broido, 2002; Renn, 2010; Sandler, 1986; Sue, 2010; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001; Tatum, 2000). These spaces and identities intersect in specific ways in institutions of higher education in the form of hierarchical microaggressions. Hierarchical microaggressions are “the everyday slights found in higher education that communicate systemic valuing (or devaluing) of a person because of the institutional role held by that person” (Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015, p. 6). They are important to learn how to reduce for several reasons: (a) Microaggressions limit learning (Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007); (b) Microaggressions create a toxic campus climate (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yasso, 2000; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009); (c) Microaggressions affect people’s sense of belonging (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2015); and (d) Microaggressions lower the retention of students, staff, and faculty (Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). This chapter focuses on the manifestations of microaggressions between employees at universities (faculty/staff, tenured/contenured faculty, faculty/administration, new employees/long-standing employees, etc.) and offers proactive and reactive solutions to reduce microaggressions on university campuses.