“Race is a social construct and does not exist”

What Academic Librarians Have to Say about Racism in the Profession

Jaena Alabi, Auburn University

Racial Microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges (often delivered unconsciously) that convey denigrating messages to people of color.

Microaggressions are explicit and most similar to “old-fashioned” racism

Microinvalidations exclude, negate, or nullify feelings/experiences of a person of color.

Microinsults convey rudeness and insensitivity (i.e., subtle snubs)

Sue et al., 2007, pp. 271, 274

Spring 2012 survey

Online survey largely based on Nadal’s Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

Distributed via selected ACRL listers: ILI-L, LES-L, and EBSS-L

139 participants (minority & non-minority) completed the survey

Approximately 130 comments received

Selected References


Contact Information: Jaena Alabi, jaalab@auburn.edu

Additional/Uncategorized Comments

April 19, 2011 10:15 AM

I work at a predominantly white school with a majority of minority students. What I find scary is that when I have conversations with students, the students often laugh at the students who are not white. They do not realize that they are being racist.

April 21, 2011 4:33 PM

I am a 56 year old white woman and I can tell you that at least racism is being openly discussed as it should be. I can tell you that I have grown a great deal over the past few years and I hope that others have grown as well.

April 20, 2011 12:38 AM

I have no doubt that had I worked in more diverse staffed by white people, so while no one ever said anything, it was quite obvious to me what was happening.

April 21, 2011 8:42 AM

As a Latina, I can tell you I have been exposed to microaggressions from the moment I became a school teacher 20 years ago. It's all terrible, but something that is as familiar as the air we breathe.

April 21, 2011 12:08 PM

I'm sure there's a lot I have never experienced, but would like the opportunity to try and understand what it might be like. I want to learn more about the experiences of people of color in the profession.

April 21, 2011 1:50 PM

I have no doubt that had I worked in more diverse places I would have encountered more blatant discrimination, but that's unfortunately lead to a backlash against public figures perceived as racist.

April 21, 2011 4:09 PM

I have heard White colleagues make “positive” stereotypical comments about people of color. They have talked about how much “great work” they have done to select candidates for interviews that had names that sounded like they were white. I have heard positive-acting microaggressions.

April 21, 2011 4:57 PM

I have been told how lucky I am to be a minority because I do not speak Spanish and I can understand many things better than my Hispanic colleagues. I have been told how well I dress and how well I speak English...and what librarians do not openly recognize.

April 21, 2011 7:12 PM

139 participants (minority & non-minority) completed the survey. Approximately 130 comments received.

April 21, 2011 8:09 PM

I was asked to complete the survey in a white supremacist group during a discussion at work about racism in the profession. I was the only minority in the group and had no say in the matter. I was asked to complete the survey in a white supremacist group during a discussion at work about racism in the profession. I was the only minority in the group and had no say in the matter.