



Colloquium Series

“How is it obvious? I really don’t see it”: Experiences of Mathematical Microaggressions in the Classroom



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Abstract: Mathematical microaggressions (MM) refer to the subtle ways in which mathematical authorities use language, behavior, and assumptions that communicate negative messages to students that they do not belong in mathematics (Su, 2015). This study analyzes the reflections of 173 undergraduate mathematics students who were asked to reflect on an article (Su, 2015) about MMs. Findings show that students experience different types of MMs, including microslights, microinsults, and environmental microaggressions. Students indicate that they have received them from professors, peers, and textbooks. Further analysis revealed that different racial/ethnic groups reported experiences of the three types of MMs at disproportionate rates and that female students were more likely to report experiences with MMs than male students. This research supports the need to investigate this phenomenon further and to develop initiatives at departmental and institutional levels to encourage more inclusive spaces in math classrooms.

Keywords: Mathematical Microaggressions, Microslights, Microinsults, Sense of Belonging.

Wednesday, Sep. 28, 1:05 – 1:50 pm in 4-2-314