

# Micro Affirmative Text

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## Research Questions

How do youth engage with micro affirmative texts (photo writings)?

## Literature Review

### Racial Microaggression

- “a form of systemic racism in which verbal or nonverbal **assaults** are directed toward a person of color, often **automatically** or **unconsciously**. . . taking a psychological and **physiological toll** on those who are targeted.”
- Micro ≠ Small; Micro = subtle, **stunning**.
- **Impact matters**; Intent does not.

### Racial Microaffirmation

- Study shows that everyday racism has biological effect
- Racial microaffirmations can act as protection, cushioning the negative effects of microaggressions
- Listening, validating, having a place to share, having other POC in the room
- “We do not argue that microaffirmations erase the harm caused by racial microaggressions. When racial trauma is done, it can never be undone.” (p.7)

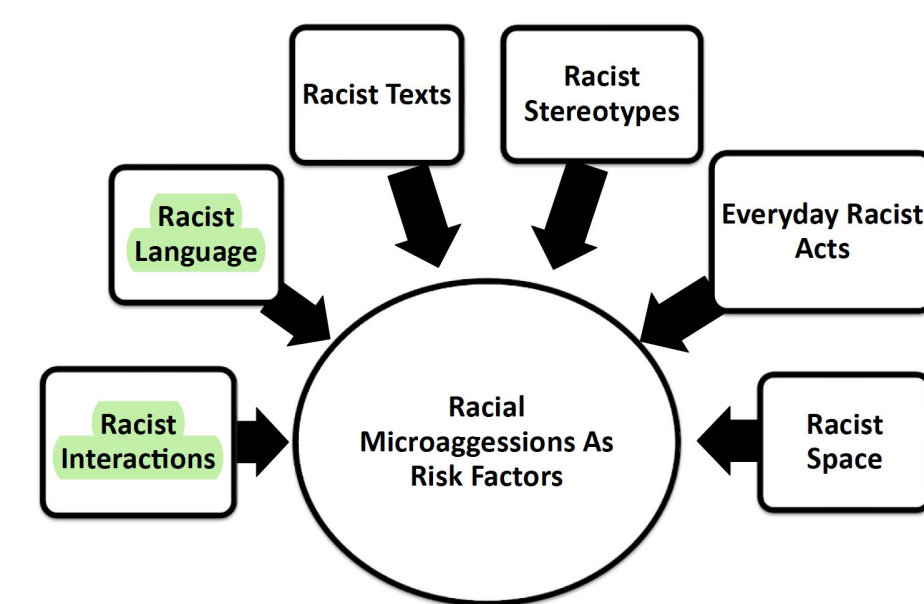


Fig. 3. Types of racial microaggressions as risk factors for People of Color.

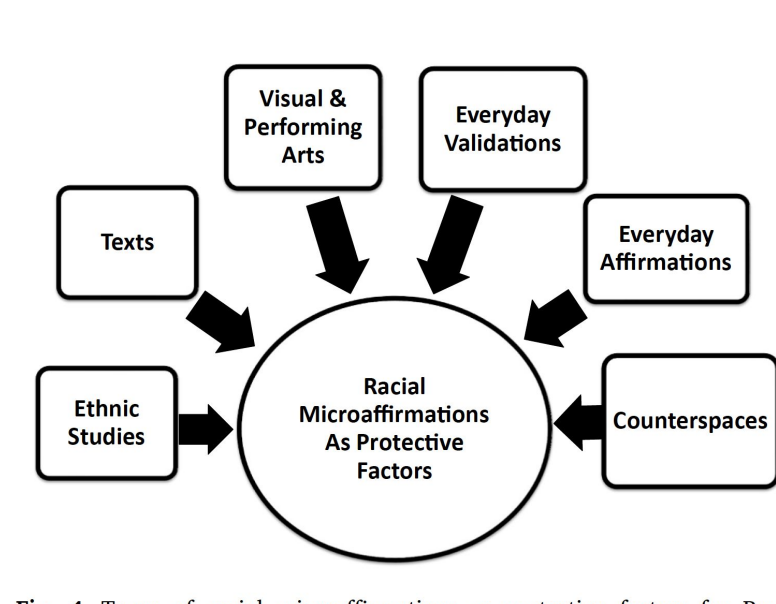


Fig. 4. Types of racial microaffirmations as protective factors for People of Color.

## Methodology

### Qualitative study using Critical Race Theory Action Research

We implemented one week lesson plan on photo writings in order to understand how students would engage with this type of free writing.

### Lesson Plan:

- Introduce key concepts of CRT and First Person texts as Microaffirmations
- Read photo writings as micro affirmative text -written by college students
  - Identify text that speak to microaggression
  - Identify how photo writing is also telling you about someone’s racial formation and identity through the positions they take in this world
- Youth author counterstory texts of their preferred form: Fotonovela, photo reflection, essay, poem, photo statement, photo remembrance.

### Data Collected

- Observation notes on process
- Youth and college students photo-writings, and
- Reflection
  - Youth-Self Reflection
  - College students reflection
  - Teacher reflection on lessons and process of doing this type of writing

## Key Themes in Student Writings

- Humanitarian Intentions
- Identity
- Survivance
- Subordination
- Reciprocity
- Feeling Othered
- Empowerment
- Lack of Representation
- Generational Perseverance
- Generational Trauma
- Holistic Community Development
- Gratitude

Students learned to find their voice, connect with classmates and express their feelings through writings

## Quotes from Student Writings



“This garden feeds us  
This garden covers us  
This garden teaches us  
This garden feels like home.”



“She is the prime example of role models and how change comes from anywhere... Lo mejor de la vida es ayudar nuestra comunidad”

By: Emely Ortega



photo by student Axeri Ramirez

“There’s no one I can relate to here. I share a school, But not a culture.”

- Pule Fonoti

“who am I, what happened to what I used to know”... “No one is like me I begin to wonder do I fit in here?”

- Ean Savage

“Siento que deje un pedacito de mi en méxico cuando me fui, pero lo estoy logrando por ella”

- Brianda Rodriguez

“You never gave up on us. The day you want to rest, is the day I will care for you. Just like you always did for me. - Diego Hernandez-Gonzalez

## Quotes from Student Reflection

I’ve never really had the academic opportunity to express my feelings on representation in school, and being prompted to do so in a classroom setting made it feel just a bit easier to be heard.”

-Jordan Lavant

“Este proyecto la verdad me ayudó mucho a aceptar quien soy y qué problemas sobre vivo cada día”

-Ashly Lopez

“I keep a lot of things inside and for me to share that with my classmates was a dope feeling for real.”

-Diego Hernandez-Gonzalez

“Con este proyecto también nos diste un lugar donde podemos usar nuestra voz [...]”

-Kimberly Pacheco

### Students expressed feeling:

- vulnerable
- validated
- courage
- belonging

## Improvements for Lesson Plan

- Extended time of 2 weeks would allow for more in depth, interactive conversations on key CRT terms
- Incorporate ice breakers into lesson plan
- Facilitate dialogue before having students write
- Be inclusive of all identities
- Allow students the opportunity to free write but provide more clear instruction

## Acknowledgements

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