

Mitigating Microaggressions in Virtual Reference

OCLC Webinar

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm (EST)

21 February 2018

Presented by

Marie L. Radford, Ph.D. | Rutgers | @MarieLRadford

Lynn Silipigni Connaway, Ph.D. | OCLC | @LynnConnaway



Lynn Silipigni Connaway, PhD

Senior Research Scientist & Director of User Research, OCLC



Marie L. Radford, PhD

Professor of Library & Information Science, Rutgers University

Background for Exploratory Project

Based on previous research

- **Seeking Synchronicity:** Evaluating Virtual Reference Services from User, Non-User, and Librarian Perspectives (*Radford & Connaway, 2005-2008*)
<http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/synchronicity>
- **Cyber Synergy:** Seeking Sustainability through Collaboration between Virtual Reference and Social Q&A Sites (*Radford, Connaway, & Shah, 2011-2014*)
<http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/synergy/default.htm>
- Funded by IMLS, Rutgers University, OCLC
- **Earlier version:** Radford, M. L., Kitzie, V., Connaway, L. S., & Floegel, D. (2017). *"Is it a journal title, or what?" Mitigating microaggressions in virtual reference*. Presented at ALA/RUSA's New Discoveries in Reference: The 23rd Annual Reference Research Forum, ALA Annual Conference, June 22-27, 2017, Chicago, IL.



Defining & Identifying Microaggressions

Theoretical Framework

- **Types** (*Sue et al., 2007*):
 - Microassaults
 - Microinsults
 - Microinvalidations
- **Communication Modes** (*Kerr, 2014*):
 - Verbal
 - Nonverbal
 - Environmental
- **Face-Work** (*Goffman, 1967*)

Research Questions

RQ1. Do VRS librarians commit microaggressions?

RQ2. What types of microaggressions do VRS librarians commit?

RQ3. How can VRS librarians avoid microaggressions?

Question
everything!

Method

- **Longitudinal data**
 - Large pool of randomly selected QuestionPoint transcripts (2006, 2010, 2016)
- **Emic/etic coding**
 - **Etic:** Types, Communications
 - **Emic:** Emerged in analysis
- 3 coders
 - 99% ICR

Major Findings

- 97% of transcripts free of microaggressions
 - 3% of transcripts display microaggressive behaviors
- Subtle & difficult to identify
- Coding dependent on context of full transcripts



Findings: Etic Codes

- Microaggressive behavior found in **55 (3%)** of **1710 transcripts**

| Code | % of Transcripts (N=55) |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Verbal | 95% (52) |
| Microinvalidation | 85% (47) |
| Nonverbal | 18% (10) |



Example: Verbal & Microinvalidation

“Also keep in mind that California is a community property state so most property and debts acquired during marriage needs to be divided up between you and your husband” (2016).

Findings: Emic Codes

| Emic Code | % of Transcripts (N=55) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Assume user's search Independence | 55% (30) |
| Call user out | 33% (18) |
| Assume user's technical literacy | 27% (15) |
| Assume user's information need | 25% (14) |

Most often manifested as verbal, nonverbal, environmental, & microinvalidations, consistent with etic codes.

Example:

Assume User's Search Independence

“Hi [User First Name], I have just Googled it and there is lots of information there. You shouldn't have any trouble finding it. Otherwise there are lots of books in any library which explain the conditions ... Your doctor can explain it also” (2010).

An aerial view of a city skyline at sunset, with the sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the buildings. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds. The city is densely packed with skyscrapers and buildings, with some lights beginning to glow as dusk falls.

Example: Call Out User

L: Can you please be more specific about what you are looking for? Is it a journal title, or what?

U: I would like to access the American Journal of Evaluations. Their journals are published by Sage (available online with an Athens account[])

L: Okay.

L: that is much clearer (2010)

Our Guidelines for Mitigating Microaggressions

- Respond with open questions when unsure
- Avoid wording implying identity assumptions
- Suggest specific alternative resource (not just “look elsewhere”)
- Allow time for user reply
- Listen to feedback on info need & heed calls for help
- Provide needed info w/o implying that doing so is a hassle
- Send generalized resources for broad questions

Guidelines from Literature

- Present resources from various perspectives (*Sue, 2010; Ettarh, 2014*)
- Avoid assumptions of identity or ability (*Sue, 2010; Ettarh, 2014*)
- Be aware that NV invalidations transfer to VRS (*Belluomini, 2014*)

Future Directions



Slides available at:



Conclusion

Questions & Discussion



Lynn Silipigni Connaway, PhD

connawal@oclc.org

@LynnConnaway



Marie L. Radford, PhD

mradford@rutgers.edu

@MarieLRadford

Because what is known must be shared.SM





Acknowledgements

- Institute of Museum & Library Services
- QuestionPoint
- Vanessa Kitzie, U of South Carolina
- Diana Floegel, Rutgers University
- Erin Hood, OCLC
- Stephanie Mikitish, Rutgers University



References

Belluomini, E. (2014). Microaggressions and the Internet. *New Social Worker*, 21(2), 30-31.

Ettarh, F. (2014). Making a new table: Intersectional librarianship. *In the Library With the Lead Pipe: An Open Access, Open Peer Reviewed Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/making-a-new-table-intersectional-librarianship-3/>

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company

Kerr, A.G. (2014, June 19). 6 things to learn about microaggressions. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anna-giraldo-kerr/six-things-to-learn-about_b_5512057



References

Lester, J., Yamanaka, A., & Struthers, B. (2016). Gender microaggressions and learning environments: The role of physical space in teaching pedagogy and communication. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 40(11), 909-926.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Quantitative data analysis: A sourcebook*. Beverley Hills: Sage Publications.

Nadal, K.L. (2013). *That's so gay!: Microaggressions and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Radford, M.L., Radford, G.P., Connaway, L.S., & DeAngelis, J.A. (2011). On virtual face-work: An ethnography of communication approach to a live chat reference interaction. *Library Quarterly*, 81(4), 431-453.

A background image of a bookshelf filled with books of various colors and sizes. Some books have labels on their spines, such as 'mickj', 'VALIE', 'EUCLID', 'KATE', 'STEPHEN JAY GOULD', 'THE STRUCTURE OF EVOLUTIONARY THEORY', 'PHOTOGRAPHY', 'BAUMANN HOPKINS NOLLETTI SOLUAI', 'Caplain's Logo', and 'PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS CATALOG'. The books are arranged on a dark wooden shelf.

References

Radford, M. L., Kitzie, V., Connaway, L. S., & Floegel, D. (2017). *"Is it a journal title, or what?" Mitigating microaggressions in virtual reference*. Presented at ALA/RUSA's New Discoveries in Reference: The 23rd Annual Reference Research Forum, ALA Annual Conference, June 22-27, 2017, Chicago, IL.

Radford, M. L., & Connaway, L. S. (2005-2008). Seeking Synchronicity: Evaluating Virtual Reference Services from User, Non-User, and Librarian Perspectives.
<http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/synchronicity>

Radford, M. L., & Connaway, L. S., & Shah, C. (2011-2014). *Cyber Synergy: Seeking Sustainability through Collaboration between Virtual Reference and Social Q&A Sites*.
<http://www.oclc.org/research/activities/synergy/default.htm>

Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., et al. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-286.

Young, K., Anderson, M., & Stewart, S. (2015). Hierarchical microaggressions in higher education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 8(1), 61-71.

Contact Info

- Marie L. Radford,
mradford@rutgers.edu
@MarieLRadford
- Lynn Silipigni Connaway,
connawal@oclc.org
@LynnConnaway



Image Attributions

- Slide 1: (<http://bit.ly/2r9yPsQ>) by Lukas, used under CC0
- Slide 3: “wave” (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/n8kowald/2445583134>) by Nathan, used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
- Slide 4: “subtle” (<http://bit.ly/2r9yPsQ>) by SquirmyBeluga, used under CC BY 2.0
- Slide 5: “Notepad” (<http://bit.ly/2sKKmvY>) by Sarah Ross, used under CC BY-NC 2.0
- Slide 6: “Question everything!” (<http://bit.ly/2rdhBWI>) by henry..., used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
- Slide 7: “splendid steps 1” (<http://bit.ly/2r9oEVm>) by Siaron James, used under CC BY 2.0
- Slide 8: “computer” (<http://bit.ly/2mKI9Ow>) by Plymouth District Library, used under CC BY-NC 2.0
- Slide 9: “Going Down” (<http://bit.ly/2s4N2ql>) by Thomas Hawk, used under CC BY-NC 2.0
- Slide 10: “On top of the Wedding cake” (<http://bit.ly/2r9tgLh>) by Susanne Nilsson, used under CC BY-SA 2.0
- Slide 11: “bottom-up” (<http://bit.ly/2rUeIBL>) by Aldus Rietveld, used under CC BY-ND 2.0
- Slide 12-13: “Shanghai, China” (<http://bit.ly/2r9yN4p>) by Lei Han, used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
- Slide 14: “Control is an Option to Command” (<http://bit.ly/2s4qq9w>) by Frederico Cintra, used under CC BY 2.0
- Slide 15: “Direction Arrow Pizol Shield Signposts Directions” (<http://bit.ly/2qcvdKH>) by MaxPixel, used under CC0
- Slide 16: “No sexism racism homophobia” (<http://bit.ly/2qMXQZF>) by Kurt Lowenstein Educational Center International Team from Germany, used under CC BY 2.0
- Slide 18: “Thank You” (<http://bit.ly/2rIKIoC>) by Orin Zebest, used under CC BY 2.0
- Slide 19-21: “books” (<http://bit.ly/2s4ROEfCC>) by Peter Clark, used under BY-NC 2.0
- Slide 23: “Mail iOS” (<http://bit.ly/2kuHPFS>) by Apple Inc., under public domain