



# Microaggressions as Detours to Collaborative Pedagogy:

## Exploring Routes to Social Justice for Academic Librarians

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# Microaggression Defined

Microaggressions are common and casual verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, either intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon marginalized group membership. What differentiates microaggressions from overt and deliberate acts of discrimination, is that the people perpetrating microaggressions often intend no offense or are unaware they are causing harm

(Wing Sue, 2010).



# Etymology & Evolution

Dr. Chester Middlebrook Pierce (Pierce, 1970)

“Most offensive actions are not gross or crippling. The enormity of the complication they cause can be appreciated only when one considers that these subtle blows are delivered incessantly. ... the cumulative effect to the victim and victimizer is of an unimaginable magnitude. ...the idea that [these] offensive mechanisms are usually a micro-aggression, as opposed to a gross, dramatic, obvious macro-aggression such as lynching.”

Dr. Mary Rowe (Rowe, 1981)

Micro-inequality: “... as destructive, but generally non-actionable, aspects of an environment which adversely affects the situations of minorities and women. They are the instances which reasonable people would agree are unjust towards individuals, by virtue of an individual being irrationally treated in a certain way only because of sex, race/ religion, age, or country of origin.”



# Purpose of Study

- I. Academic Librarians express dissatisfaction about mistreatment they have endured at the hands of Teaching Faculty, who treat Librarians in an inferior manner, rather than as colleagues/partners.
  
- II. Symptomatic of worldviews filled with values, biases, assumptions and stereotypes embedded in the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the perpetrators.
  
- III. Little-to-no quantitative data exists on microaggressions from Teaching Faculty towards Academic Librarians.

# Scope of Study

Developed a survey to investigate North American Academic Librarians' experiences of status based microaggressions from Teaching Faculty.

The survey attempted to address the following 3 points:

- I. How do Librarians walk line (or where to draw the line) between collegiality and assertiveness when communicating/collaborating with Teaching Faculty?
- II. Do Librarians believe they have the ability to speak from a place of power?
- III. Do Librarians feel comfortable and confident to report microaggressive behavior to their superiors, and is adequate support received?

# The Survey

Inclusive Dates: 10 February 2016 - 6 March 2016

Survey Platform: eSURV.org

Distributed to the following Electronic Mailing Lists:

- Association for Research Libraries—ARL
- Association of College and Research Libraries—ACRL
- Canadian Library Association—CLA
- Library Association of University of California—LAUC
- Music Library Association—MLA
- Ontario Library Association—OLA
- CSUN Oviatt Library
- York University Scott Library

## Assessing Perceived Teaching Faculty Microaggressions Towards Academic Librarians

### Pilot Study

The pilot study to garner feedback on the initial design of the survey. The pilot study involved a total of seven (7) individuals, including a variety of different stakeholders (see below). Individuals were asked to complete the survey and provide input on the readability, grammar, removal of leading statements and survey design. Feedback was used to improve the survey prior to its public launch.

### Parameters of Survey



### The Stakeholders



#1

Academic Librarians



#2

Teaching Faculty



#3

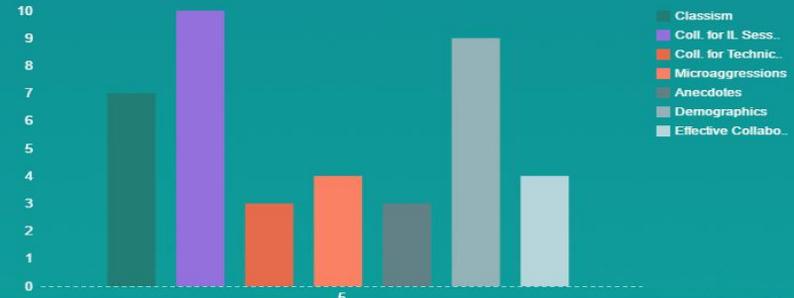
Post-Secondary Students



#4

Library Administration

### Units of the Survey



Source : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infographic>



# Assumptions of Inferiority

14) Teaching Faculty have assumed that I would not be as highly educated because of my position or title.

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		8.76	39
Frequently		14.38	64
Occasionally		35.96	160
Rarely		23.82	106
Never		17.08	76
Answered Question			445
Skipped Question			112

The following survey questions aimed to demonstrate that Teaching Faculty may have poor understanding of Academic Librarians roles.

# Assumptions of Inferiority continued

15) Teaching Faculty have acted surprised at my scholastic or academic achievements.

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		9.38	42
Frequently		17.86	80
Occasionally		31.47	141
Rarely		20.54	92
Never		20.76	93
		Answered Question	448
		Skipped Question	109

# Assumptions of Inferiority continued

16) Teaching Faculty have assumed that I had a lower paying job because of my position or title.

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		5.40	23
Frequently		16.90	72
Occasionally		24.41	104
Rarely		19.72	84
Never		33.57	143
		Answered Question	426
		Skipped Question	131



# Assumptions of Inferiority continued

17) Teaching Faculty have told me I was 'smart/intelligent' as though she/he assumed I wouldn't be.

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		2.49	11
Frequently		7.48	33
Occasionally		14.97	66
Rarely		15.42	68
Never		59.64	263
		Answered Question	441
		Skipped Question	116

# Assumptions of Inferiority continued

18) Teaching Faculty have started a conversation with the phrase 'no offense, but' and asked/mentioned something that could be perceived as a microaggression?

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		3.58	16
Frequently		2.91	13
Occasionally		15.44	69
Rarely		23.94	107
Never		54.14	242
Answered Question			447
Skipped Question			110

# Strides Towards Effective Collaboration

41) Have Teaching Faculty ever actively involved you with their course design?

		Response (%)	Responses
Very Frequently		0.76	3
Frequently		6.05	24
Occasionally		34.76	138
Rarely		33.00	131
Never		25.44	101
		Answered Question	397
		Skipped Question	160

The following survey question aimed to quantifiably address current collective efforts among Teaching Faculty and Academic Librarians.



# From M.L.I.S. → Trenches

New MLIS graduates lack:

- I. Formal training in teaching and pedagogy.
- II. Skills to interact and collaborate with Teaching Faculty.
- III. Lack skills to properly assess instructional programs and efforts.



# Practical Strategies

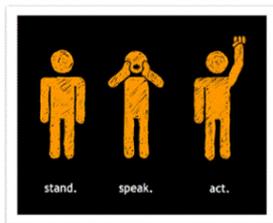
- I. Create partnerships with key stakeholders and learn to advocate.
- II. Enter diverse scholarly conversations.
- III. Advocate for self-empowerment and equity

# Access To Our Data

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## Microaggressions & Academic Libraries



May 16, 2016  
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### Purpose:

Academic Librarians aspire to facilitate partnerships with Teaching Faculty. However, many express dissatisfaction about mistreatment by some Teaching Faculty. Such treatment could be construed as microaggressive. The aim of this website is to share and disseminate data and information related to the topic of microaggressions in Academic Libraries. The overarching goal of our research is to encourage the empowerment of Academic Librarians in an effort to foster social justice, as well as increase collaboration and dialogue with Teaching Faculty.

### Microaggression Defined:

*Microaggressions are common and casual verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, either intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon marginalized group membership. What differentiates microaggressions from overt and deliberate acts of discrimination, is that the people perpetrating microaggressions often intend no offense or are unaware they are causing harm (Wing Sue, 2010).*

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