

Diversity & Inclusion in Action: Leadership at Any Level

Cynthia Mari Orozco

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ABQLA

@Cynthinee @LISmicroaggress #abqla18

My Path Into Librarianship

Me freaking out post-BA → Finding a viable career path



Created by Aenne Brielmann
from Noun Project



Created by Gregor Cresnar
from Noun Project

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ALA Members by Race or Family Origin

	2014	2017
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1	1.2
Asian	3.5	3.6
Black or African American	4.3	4.4
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.2
White	87.1	86.7
Other	3.7	4.0
Hispanic or Latino	3.9	4.7

My Path Into Microaggressions Work

Me when I discovered the word 'microaggression'



Microaggressions defined

“Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with...minorities”

-Derald Wing Sue, *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life*

**Microaggressions can be expressed toward any marginalized group in society

Microaggressions defined

this project is a response to “it’s not a big deal” - “it” is a big deal. “it” is in the everyday. “it” is shoved in your face when you are least expecting it. “it” happens when you expect it the most. “it” is a reminder of your difference. “it” enforces difference. “it” can be painful. “it” can be laughed off. “it” can slide unnoticed by either the speaker, listener or both. “it” can silence people. “it” reminds us of the ways in which we and people like us continue to be excluded and oppressed. “it” matters because these relate to a bigger “it”: a society where social difference has systematic consequences for the “others.”

but “it” can create or force moments of dialogue.

-Microaggressions.com

Social Identifiers & Intersectionality

Race	Ethnicity	Gender	Gender Identity
Sexual Orientation	Religion	Ability (Physical & Mental)	Age
Class	National Origin	Geographic/Regional Background	Language

Theme: Alien in One's Own Land

Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

Examples:

- “Where are you from?”
- “You speak English so well!”
- “Can you teach me words in your native language?”
- Continued mispronunciation of a person's name after correcting the person repeatedly

Theme: Alien in One's Own Land

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

I was on a panel and the moderator asked me to pronounce my last name. After I told her, she told me how hard it was to pronounce (it isn't) and asked me to repeat it three more times before the session got started. When she went up to introduce the panel, she told me, "I'm going to introduce you first or else I'm going to forget how to say your name." Then she proceeded to butcher my name.

Theme: Alien in One's Own Land

“...I went home and asked my mother if I could be called Zoe. I remember she was cooking, and in her Nigerian accent she said, ‘Why?’ I said, ‘Nobody can pronounce it.’ Without missing a beat, she said, ‘If they can learn to say Tchaikovsky and Michelangelo and Dostoyevsky, they can learn to say Uzoamaka.’”



Actress Uzo Aduba

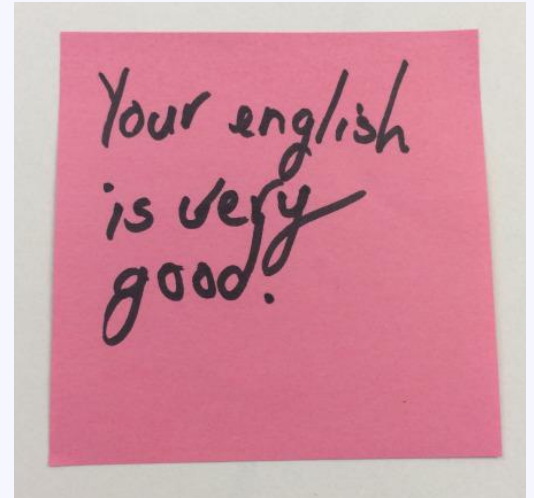
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Theme: Ascription of Intelligence

Assigning intelligence to a POC based on their race.

Examples:

- “You are a credit to your race”
- “You are so articulate”



Theme: Ascription of Intelligence

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

White male librarian and I did a presentation (that I organized) before faculty and administration. Only HE received praise and positive feedback on it.

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Theme: Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/etc.

Denial of personal racism or one's role in its perpetuation.

Examples:

- “I’m not racist. I have several black friends.”
- “As a woman, I know what you go through as a minority.”

Theme: Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/etc.

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

I once joked that the library should give all Children's Librarians free coffee because we run around so much. A coworker said, "Oh, they'd never do that here, they're all Jews." I asked what she meant by that (though I already knew) and she said that they weren't actual Jews, but they were all cheap. I informed her that I was Jewish (hoping to get her to apologize), and she said that she could tell by looking at me.

It was OK, though, she said, because she has some Jewish friends, and they joke about this stuff all the time.

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Theme: Myth of Meritocracy

Statements that assert that race does not play a role in life successes.

Examples:

- “I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”
- “Everyone can succeed in society, if they work hard enough.”

Theme: Myth of Meritocracy

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

When encouraged to hire students who have federal work study awards (for part-time student positions), a library supervisor responded that they didn't think they would receive any qualified applicants.

Theme: Sexist / Hetero-sexist or Transphobic Language

Terms that are exclusionary or derogatory towards women and LGBTQ individuals

Examples:

- Using incorrect pronouns
- Being forced to choose between Male or Female when filling out forms
- Two options for relationships status: married or single

Theme: Sexist / Hetero-sexist or Transphobic Language

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

As a recent MLIS graduate, I've been diligently applying to LIS jobs. Invariably, I'll be forced to select my gender on a form that only has two options. So I have to lie about a significant part of myself and be made invisible. Out of several dozen applications, only one had a "Transgender" option. I actually wept with gratitude.

Theme: Environmental Microaggressions

Demeaning and threatening social, educational, political, or economic cues that are communicated to marginalized groups.

Examples:

- “Color blindness” as a stated philosophy
- Hostile, invalidating, or threatening work environments
- An all white male library administration
- Representation in library collections

Theme: Environmental Microaggressions

From LISmicroaggressions.com:

After some ugly anti-LGBT incidents in our community, the library held LGBT ally training. It was mandatory for all librarians and staff—except for people who opted out due to “personal beliefs.”

Impact: Why does this matter?

Interpretation & Meaning Behind Microaggressions

You do not belong.

You are abnormal.

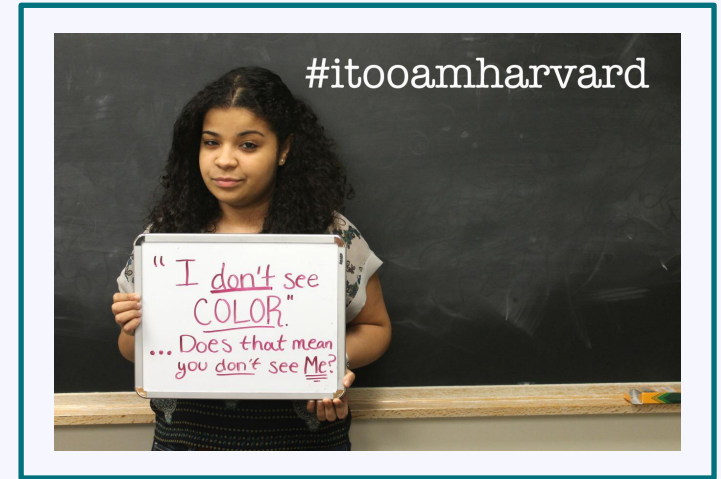
You are intellectually inferior.

You are not trustworthy.

You are all the same.

About the LISM Project

- Documentation project/website on tumblr since Spring 2014, inspired by student organized documentation such as *I, Too, Am Harvard*
- Storytelling to highlight untold/undertold experiences of marginalized persons in LIS
- Those working/studying in LIS can anonymously submit their experiences with microaggressions



“I submitted to LISMicro one time, it made me feel better. Vindicated. Visible. It’s important.”

“Mailed out my @LISmicroaggress zine submission today. It was surprisingly freeing to write down my story and send it away.”

On Privilege...

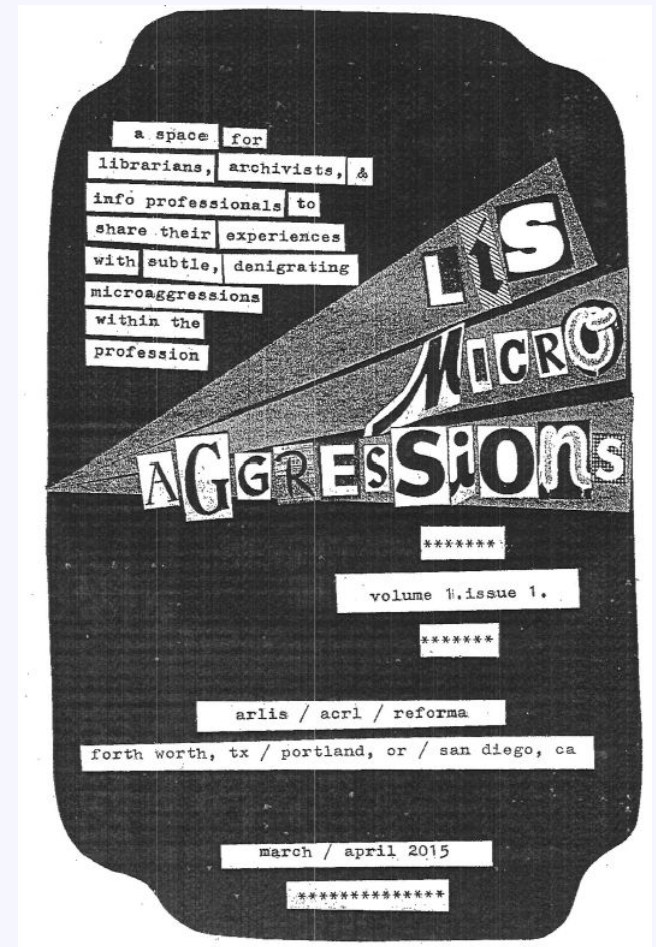
Privilege: a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group.

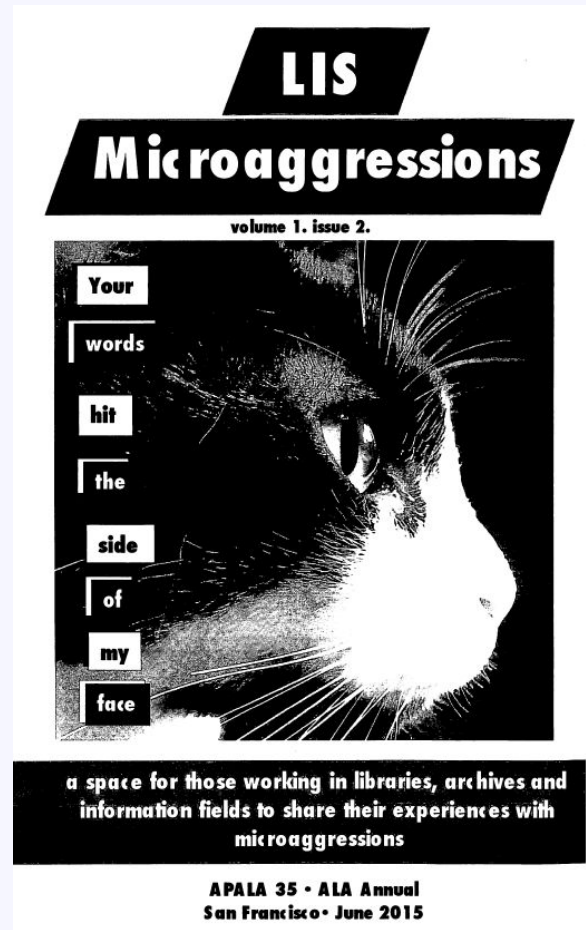
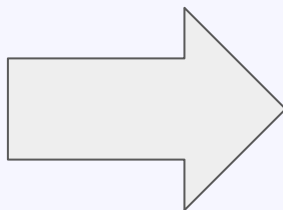
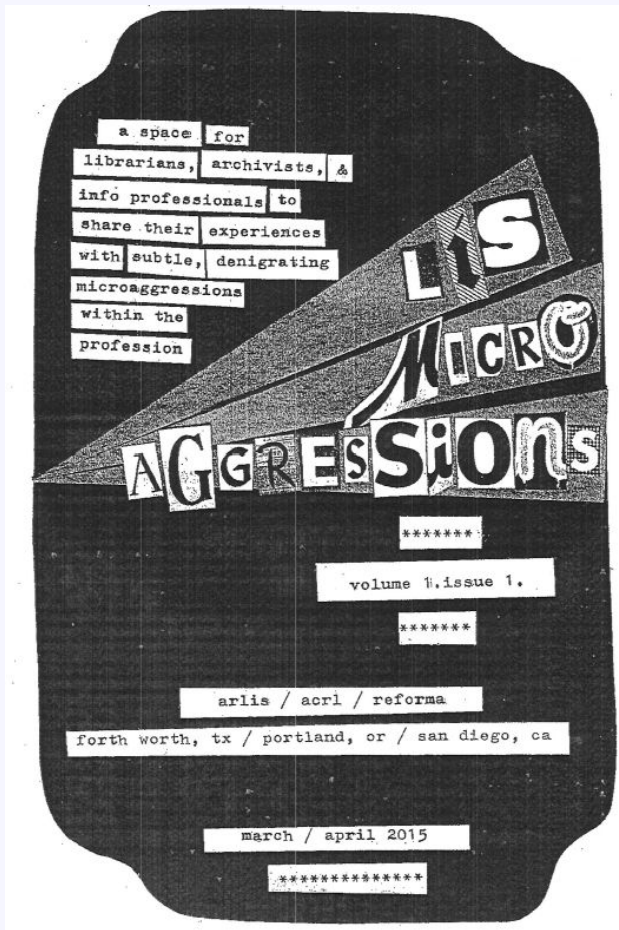
Privilege describes what everyone should experience.

What would it look like to bridge the gap between privilege and oppression?

Email from CMO to LISM Admin:

*one thought: I think we should change the tagline of LIS Microaggressions to "a space for library, archives, and information professionals..." to be inclusive of **paraprofessionals** too?*





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Strategies for Addressing Microaggressions: What Can You Do?

Strategies: As the Microaggressed

In general...

- Find allies and support groups – in your library, on your campus, & or in online spaces
- Self-care

In/after the moment...

- Take a step back and decide how you want to respond
- Turn the situation into a teaching/learning moment (if you're up for it)

Strategies: As the Microaggressed

Sample responses:

- “I don’t think that comment was inclusive.”
- “What do you mean by that?”
- “This makes me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I’m offended by that.”
- “Can I give you some feedback?”

Strategies: As the Bystander

Acknowledge power dynamics!

Sample responses:

- “I don’t think that comment was inclusive.”
- “What do you mean by that?”
- “This makes me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I’m offended by that.”
- “Can I give you some feedback?”

Strategies: As the Microaggressor

Do... 😊

- Check yourself: call yourself out and apologize immediately...or whenever you realize it
- Acknowledge your biases and be intentional about overcoming them
- Listen & reflect
- Research & learn!

Strategies: As the Microaggressor

Don't... 😞

- Fake apologize #sorrynotsorry, e.g. “I’m so you were offended”, “I’m sorry you feel that way”
- Dismiss
- Ignore
- Rely on the microaggrieved to teach you

Interpretation & Meaning Behind Microaggressions

~~You do not belong.~~

~~You are abnormal.~~

~~You are intellectually inferior.~~

~~You are not trustworthy.~~

~~You are all the same.~~

celebrated!



You belong!

You are normal!

You are intellectual!

You are trustworthy!

You are unique &

You are a valued & respected
member of our institution & community!

Work @ ELAC
(East Los Angeles College)

East Los Angeles College

Demographics:

- 38,000 students (credit, non-credit)
- 77% Hispanic/Latino, 16% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 85.1% first-generation college students
- Additional support programs for: disabled students, international students, foster youth, veterans, undocumented students

Why “Librarian for Equitable Services”?

- Activist student culture & demand for expanded library services targeting “non-traditional” students
- Closing shift to accommodate reference and instruction for non-traditional students
- Community college librarianship: Do all the things
- Increased responsibilities in collection development and open educational resources (OER)

Open Educational Resources (OER)

OER are “teaching, learning, and research resources that are free of cost and access barriers, and which also carry legal permission for open use” -[SPARC](#)

Includes open textbooks--openly licensed textbooks that are free to use/access.

OER & Privilege

“This problem doesn’t personally affect me; therefore, I don’t care.”

Acknowledging my inattention or naïveté to the struggles that students today face.

Privilege and apathy are dangerous together!

Reframing my work & understanding our users

- Disconnect between demand for library hours and what we provided
- Challenging the assumptions we made about our students and what they need & determining their real needs
- New & exciting doesn't always align with your users' real needs; what is our underlying mission at the end of the day?

My Path Into Librarianship, Continued!

No prior experience in libraries → Fighting “This is how we’ve always done it”



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Strategies for Building More Inclusive Environments

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Strategy #1: Listening & Intention.

Strategy #2: Assessment & User Experience

Strategy #3: Reframing our Relationship with Patrons

Strategy #4: Advocating for Our Patrons

Strategy #5: Transparency in Our Intention to Create & Support More Inclusive Work Environments

Strategy #6: Taking Care of Ourselves in the Process

So...What can I do?

Be critical about how we operate!

Taking an active role in building more inclusive work environments! Avoid complacency.

Doesn't always have to be "big"; consideration of [microactivism](#): small-scale activism.

Find collaborators.

Share best practices. Share your wins!



Thank you!

Cynthia Mari Orozco

orozcoco@elac.edu

LISmicroaggressions.com

lismicroaggressions@gmail.com



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