Proactively Improve Library Experience by Focusing on Hospitality, Microskills, and Microaffections

David A. Mac Court
Isabel R Espinal
Thomas Paige
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By Tom Paige, Dave Mac Court & Isabel Espinal, University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Assessment - how we came to these themes

Several methods:

- 2015 LibQual highlighted some comments about indifferent service

- a self-study in 2016 and 2017 to examine customer service standards within the organization

- and a dialogic ethnography between two librarians of color
Service vs. Hospitality:
What’s the difference?
Customer service:
The set of *deliverables* that the organization provides.

Service, *materials and information*, delivered:

- Externally to users
- Internally to colleagues
- Person to person and virtually
Hospitality:
The *experience* as perceived by the recipient.

Hospitality must be practiced *internally*

in order to project externally.
Serving the public *isn’t about being right*!

- Zingerman’s 3 steps to Great Customer Service

- The customer *isn’t* always right – but they always *think* they are right!

- Sometimes *hospitality* involves allowing the customer to be *wrong with dignity*. 
Is it possible to succeed at customer service...

...and still *fail* on Hospitality?
Sadly, Yes

http://echomon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Sad-Puppy-Face-Picture.jpg
Make Me Feel important!
Are we acting as Agents...

...or as Gatekeepers?
Enabling Hospitality: Emotional Skills

1. Optimism and kindness

2. Intellectual curiosity/desire to learn

3. An exceptional work ethic (desire to do a job well)

4. A high degree of empathy

5. Self-awareness and integrity.

Danny Meyer, “Setting the Table”
Employee First philosophy - an enlightened approach

The customer will never be happier than your employees. “Customer satisfaction begins with putting our employees first”

Is that where hospitality assessment should begin?
Delivering the “goods” is critical

- Alas, customer service is a monologue - it’s what we deliver
- Performance and activity metrics matter

- Hospitality is a dialogue -

"Hospitality exists when you believe the other person is on your side."

- Danny Meyer
Microskills
Microskills - What are they?

Microskills are a set of clinical skills that create an effective helping relationship.

Pioneered by Prof. Allen Ivey in the School of Education at UMass Amherst.

Microskills are used by many other human service programs as basic clinical training.
Microskills have many levels

1st level is what Ivey calls “Basic Attending Skills”

Focus here is on learning to control nonverbal communication

Skills consist of being aware of body position, eye contact, and tone of voice

2nd level is called “Basic Listening Sequence”

Focus here is on understanding clients question and the emotions experienced

Skills consist of questioning, reflection of feelings, and summarizing
Basic Attending Skills

Body positioning should convey your interest and involvement

Eye Contact should convey interest in the patrons problem, need, or question

Tone of Voice should convey a soothing and anxiety reducing feeling to the patron
Basic Attending Skills
2nd Level - Basic Listening Sequence

Focus here is on gathering more information about clients question

Process of asking questions

This is a process used to better understand the presenting issue and how it came to be

Why are these skills not taught as part of the “Reference Interview”
Can Microskills Help in your work?

Can help in 3 ways:

1. Understanding and controlling our body language prevents wrong or conflicting messages from being sent to the patron.

2. Using the Basic Listening Sequence, especially paraphrasing and emotional reflection, can help to diffuse anxious, angry, or combative patrons who often feel that no one “understands their problem.”

3. By always sending clear and concise messages both verbally and non-verbally to patrons; we can reduce conflict and engage in our work in a more efficient manner.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Microskills Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Basic Attending Skills</strong></th>
<th><strong>Below Standard</strong></th>
<th><strong>Approaching Standard</strong></th>
<th><strong>Meeting Standard</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate eye contact</strong></td>
<td>makes no or too much eye contact</td>
<td>has some eye contact</td>
<td>has natural rhythm to eye contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open body position</strong></td>
<td>interacts with closed off body positioning</td>
<td>interacts with some open positioning</td>
<td>interacts with open, inviting body positioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friendly tone of voice</strong></td>
<td>does not respond to patron</td>
<td>responds to patron</td>
<td>responds to patron with friendly, inviting tone</td>
<td></td>
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<th><strong>Basic Listening Sequence</strong></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
<td>does not use questions/drills patron with questions</td>
<td>uses some questions</td>
<td>uses open and closed questions effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paraphrasing</strong></td>
<td>does not use paraphrasing effectively</td>
<td>use paraphrasing sometimes to check patron's message</td>
<td>uses paraphrasing to check understanding of patron's message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflecting feeling</strong></td>
<td>does not reflect patron's feelings</td>
<td>reflects some of patron's feelings</td>
<td>reflects patron's feelings effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summarizing</strong></td>
<td>does not summarize patron's request</td>
<td>tries to summarize patron's request</td>
<td>accurately and effectively summarizes patron's request</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What micro skill do you use in your library work?
Micro affections - What are they?
Microaffections as counterpoint to microaggressions

So what are microaggressions?

“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)


For many, many examples of what not to do, check out the website Microaggressions in Librarianship lismicroaggressions.tumblr.com/

Don’t commit microaggressions!
Microaffections are "practices aimed at nurturing social affection. A provisional sketch of microaffection could include all the ways in which people subtly and skillfully include others, make others feel genuinely cared about, see others, hear others, think about others, and engage in social affection between in-group out-group categories that brings a concrete benefit to another, such as a genuine smile, or a genuine laugh, or a feeling of warmth, love, or safety."

Devin Coogan
A microaffection is

“... a subtle but endearing or comforting comment or action directed at others that is often unintentional or unconsciously affirms their worth and dignity, without any hint of condescension.”

Jim Burklo
Not so easy for everyone: Microaffections take practice for many people

“...the cultivation of microaffection: priming ourselves for moments when, spontaneously, we go out of our way to make others feel like they are dignified, respectable, truly beloved members of society. It takes forethought in order to be able to offer kindness without forethought. It takes spiritual discipline to make it automatic for us to share warmth with people just because they’re people.”

Jim Burklo
Go to the source: Love

Find or expand your source of love.

If you love what you do it is infectious.
Micro affections as affirmative actions
Librarians of color defining microaffectioes

“Sometimes it’s as simple as just noting the small things. Telling someone the things they do that you appreciate, their certain way of dealing with something, or even just small kindnesses like noting their unique fashion sense or new haircut. A few don't respond but most people warm up and return the favor. A consistent, reciprocal environment of kindness. I would have to add though that I feel the key to doing this, creating this culture of kindness, is to be truthful. Find something, even if it's the tiniest little thing (maybe the only thing!), you genuinely like about them or what they do. Don't make things up, people can often pick up on insincerity which can really take things the other way. However, once that is accomplished you'd really be surprised at how well people open up and in turn contribute to that "culture of kindness." :) I feel that gradually this can change the feeling of many departmental environments. It certainly has in ours!”

Amanda Aguilera

As an ally of the First Generation Low Income (FGLI) Program at my institution, I attend the events and talk to students. At these events, I introduce myself as a science librarian, as a first generation college graduate, and as the daughter of a chef and a baker. If students don't have questions about the library, that's okay, because at FGLI events, students can code-switch and talk about non-academic stuff with me.

Amanpreet Kaur
“I've been working on cultivating this at my workplace. Trying to do more intentional affirmation work - especially for those who are taking risks or putting themselves out there. I think it is really important. Honestly, most often, I just tell people when I appreciate something that they say/so - in private and public arenas. In my org we also have a problem of not affirming ideas or perspectives in meetings. Someone offers a different perspective or disagrees in a meeting and no one says anything, even when they actually agree. It ends up like this abyss. So I try to offer things like "Thanks for mentioning that perspective" or "Yes - agree." The only thing is, you have to be genuine - otherwise it can seem fake or saccharine sweet - two things I never seek to be.”

Yasmeen Shorish

“The library world needs more props in general. I love giving props to people who do great work! When I get props they motivate more almost more than anything else! #GiveProps!”

Max Macias

“OMG, this totally describes what I love doing! "MICROAFFECTION: a subtle but endearing or comforting comment or action directed at others that is often unintentional or unconsciously affirms their worth and dignity, without any hint of condescension." I'm very intentional with people when I say hi to them, look them in the eyes, and smile. Also I'm just a chatty Cathy and can't help but comment on what makes me happy about others. :) I truly believe positive, affirming actions from individuals can make workplace culture a better place (at least from the lower ranks; now if only those from the top-down would do the same). If my small words and actions can make someone's day better, it's worth it. It admittedly takes energy to push microaffections out, but helpful #ArchivistFairy at yo' service.”

Annie W. Tang
## Microaffections Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I love your topic”</th>
<th>“Thanks for mentioning that perspective.”</th>
<th>Smile at students</th>
<th>“I appreciate that you…”</th>
<th>Help a coworker get promoted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note someone’s unique fashion sense or new haircut</td>
<td>“I love your idea”</td>
<td><img src="heart.png" alt="Heart" /> Say: I love you</td>
<td>Smile at coworkers</td>
<td>Admit when you commit a microaggression and apologize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite a colleague for coffee, lunch or drinks</td>
<td>Publicly appreciate something a coworker or student did</td>
<td>Give people props when they do great work. #GiveProps</td>
<td>Send a thank you note to a coworker in genuine, specific appreciation</td>
<td>Hug someone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Say or do these things to colleagues of color**

- Say or do these things to students of color
What do microaffectations have to do with education?

Education as a positivist experience.

Helps in retention.

Education is theoretically empowering. Let’s make it so!
Make it so!
References


Questions?