POD Diversity Committee White Paper

2016 POD Network Conference

Louisville, Kentucky
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POD Diversity Committee Members and Friends 2015

Greetings POD Colleagues,

The POD Diversity Committee (DC) shares is second white paper with POD Colleagues, hoping to spark conversation by presenting some of our evolving knowledge and questions about diversity related educational development issues.

Updates in 2016

The DC is proud to be a part of developing, assessing applicants, and presenting POD's newest research award, the Christine A. Stanley Award for Diversity and Inclusion Research in Educational Development. The award seeks to honor individuals who, like Dr. Stanley, demonstrate unequivocal commitment to advancing research on diversity and inclusion issues in educational development.

Dr. Stanley has made several contributions to POD and to the field of teaching and learning, particularly as it relates to diversity. She chaired the DC from 1993-1999 and in 2000-2001 she served as POD president.

She published two significant scholarly works on faculty of color. In 2006, she served as the principle editor of *Faculty of Color Teaching in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities*. And in 2007, she published "Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities," in the American Educational Research Journal. Dr. Stanley is currently a full professor, Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity at Texas A&M University.

The DC developed and provided accessibility guidelines for POD presenters. Please contact us for an electronic copy.

In addition, the DC worked with the POD conference planning committee to ensure gender inclusive restrooms are available.

Featured In This White Paper

- Responding to micro-aggressions with micro-resistance

- Trends in POD diversity related sessions

- The influence of Donald H. Wulff Diversity Travel Fellowships

We welcome your thoughts and reflections, as well as your ideas for our next white paper.

In solidarity,

Autumn Harrell	*Joy Milano*	*Cheryl Richardson, PhD*	*Cameron Harris*
Research Coordinator	*Research Coordinator*	*Co-Chair*	*Co-Chair*

Responding to Microaggressions with Microresistance: A Framework for Consideration

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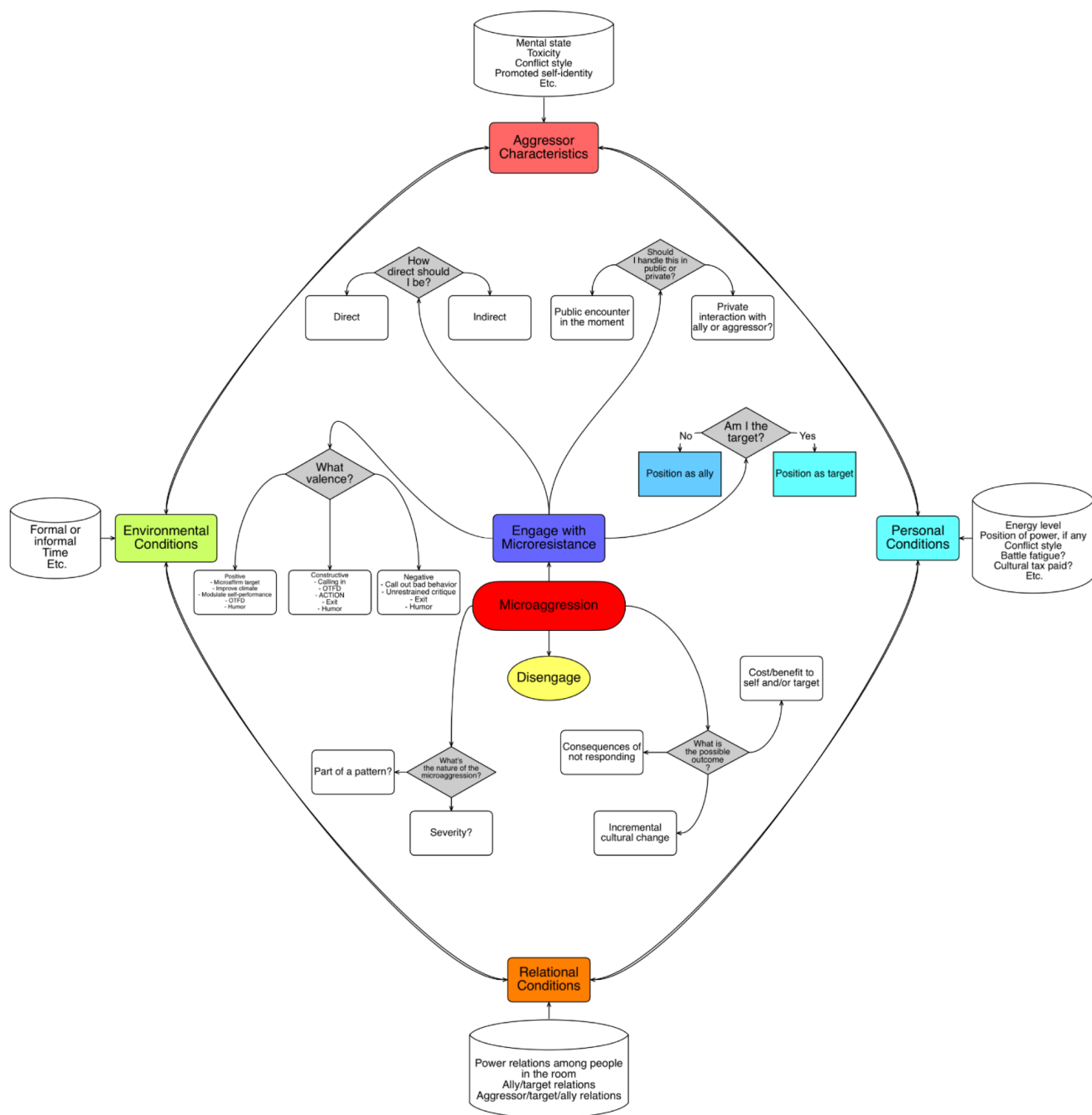**Microresistance as a Means of Personal Survival and Cultural Change**

At last year's POD Network Conference, we facilitated a workshop on ways to address microaggressions with microresistance, or "incremental daily efforts to challenge white privilege" that help targeted people "cope with microaggressions" (Irey, 2013, p. 36). Extending this concept to apply to other types of privilege such as gender, class, sexuality, ability, and nation of origin, we believe that microresistance can serve not only as a means of personal survival, but also as a way to challenge the culture that sometimes allows microaggressions to occur in our institutions.

Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative … slights and insults" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Microresistance provides us with positive steps we can use to defend ourselves and/or take a stand in solidarity with our colleagues who are facing microaggressions. In this way, we can take positive action to do or say something when we or our colleagues face the effects of systemic oppression such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and/or class inequalities. Make no mistake: microaggressions, though they occur in smaller interactions, are firmly situated within broader systems of oppression; they are micro-level manifestations of these systems. Hence, we believe that employing microresistance to counter microaggressions can not only contribute to individual well-being, but also serve as one part of a systemic approach to transforming racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and heterosexism on our campuses.

According to Kerry Ann Rockquemore, learning about the concept of microresistance as a participant in our POD 2015 workshop kept her "focused on the structural nature of the problem," and helped her reframe her role from reaction to resistance (Rockquemore, April 13, 2016). In her *Inside Higher Ed* article on the topic, she asked, "...instead of reacting to an individual's bad behavior, what if you proactively worked toward an equitable environment for everyone in your department?" (Rockquemore, April 13, 2016). Through this reframing, the decision to engage in microresistance becomes not only a one-time response but also a way to engage in positive social change, incrementally moving our local environments toward greater equity and inclusion.

Microresistance Response Considerations (see Figure 1)

In last year's presentation, we asserted that you *can* do something in the face of microaggressions; microresistance is possible. We then shared specific microresistance strategies, including Open The Front Door to Communication/OTFD (Learning Forum, 2016) and microaffirmations (Rowe, 2008). This year, we want to add a level of nuance to the practice of microresistance by offering a Microresistance Response

Mental state
Toxicity
Conflict style
Promoted self-identity
Etc.

Aggressor Characteristics

How direct should I be?

Direct

Indirect

Should I handle this in public or private?

Public encounter in the moment

Private interaction with ally or aggressor?

Am I the target?

No

Yes

Position as ally

Position as target

What valence?

Formal or informal Time Etc.

Environmental Conditions

Personal Conditions

Energy level
Position of power, if any
Conflict style
Battle fatigue?
Cultural tax paid?
Etc.

Engage with Microresistance

Positive
- Microaffirm target
- Improve climate
- Modulate self-performance
- OTFD
- Humor

Constructive
- Calling in
- OTFD
- ACTION
- Exit
- Humor

Negative
- Call out bad behavior
- Unrestrained critique
- Exit
- Humor

Microaggression

Disengage

Cost/benefit to self and/or target

Consequences of not responding

What is the possible outcome?

Part of a pattern?

What's the nature of the microaggression?

Severity?

Incremental cultural change

Relational Conditions

Power relations among people in the room
Ally/target relations
Aggressor/target/ally relations

Figure 1
Microresistance Response Considerations Framework

Considerations Framework that seeks at once to capture the dynamic complexity of a microaggression-microresistance event and to describe it in a way that clarifies the avenues available to targets of microaggression and their allies. We welcome your comments as we present this framework for the first time in this white paper; it is only as strong as the community members who are willing to engage in these ideas, test cases against them, and refine the concepts and relationships between them in the process.

Contextual Considerations

When a microaggression occurs, the target or ally may consider four key contextual factors when deciding whether or not to respond to a microaggression: aggressor characteristics, relational conditions, personal conditions, and environmental conditions. These factors shape the context in which the target or ally chooses to engage with, or disengage from, the microaggression. We will describe each of these factors in turn.

Aggressor characteristics: What is the mental state, conflict style, individual level of toxicity, and/or promoted self-identity (the way s/he sees self in context) of the microaggressor?

Relational conditions: What is the power differential between the microaggressor and the target, between the microaggressor and the ally, and between people in the room and the target or ally? Even if there is a power differential between the microaggressor and the target or ally, is the microaggression occurring in a group where others are likely to stand up for the target or ally? The power relationship between the target or ally and the microaggressor might matter in the decision to engage in microresistance, or it may not. Either way, the consideration of power differential likely goes through the target or ally's mind every time they experience or observe a microaggression.

Personal conditions: What is the position of power of the target or ally? For example, are they tenured or contingent faculty, staff or administrator? What energy level does the target or ally have today? Is the target or ally experiencing racial battle fatigue (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011)? What is their conflict style? Are they drained from cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994; Canton, 2013)?

Environmental conditions: Is the microaggression occurring in a formal or informal context? Is it happening in a meeting, or in a passing comment made in the hall? Are others around? How toxic is the environment? How much time is there until the interaction is expected to end?

Microaggression, Ally or Target Status, and Possible Outcome(s)

When a microaggression occurs, the target or ally may consider other factors when deciding whether or not to respond to a microaggression: the nature of the microaggression, ally or target status, and possible outcome(s).

Nature of microaggression: What type of microaggression is this? How severe is it? Is it part of a pattern, or an isolated event?

Ally or target: Are you the target of the microaggression, or an ally wanting to stand in solidarity with a colleague? Ally or target placement in the power structure may influence one's decision to engage in microresistance.

Possible outcome(s): What are the possible consequences (costs/benefits) of responding to this microaggression for the target and ally? What are the possible consequences of not responding? Are there

possible short-term *and* long-term consequences? Might incremental cultural change be possible through ongoing microresistance?

Choices Based on Considerations

After considering contextual factors, once the target or ally has decided to engage in microresistance, they will then make some additional choices: to address the microaggression in private or public, to do so directly or indirectly, and to choose the valence of the address.

<u>Private or public</u>: Should the microaggression be addressed in public, in the moment it occurs, or in private, after the event?

<u>Direct or indirect</u>: Should the microaggression be addressed directly or indirectly?

<u>Valence</u>: Should the microaggression be addressed positively, constructively, or negatively? For example, a positive way to address a microaggression might be to microaffirm (Rowe, 2008) someone who is behaving positively in the group. A constructive address might involve using the OTFD framework (Learning Forum, 2016) to point out possible ways to move forward after the microaggression. [For more information on constructive strategies, see our previous work (Cheung, Ganote, & Souza, 2016; Souza, 2016; Ganote, Cheung, & Souza, 2015).] A negative response might involve calling out bad behavior, or another kind of unrestrained critique of the microaggression.

Our Microresistance Response Considerations Framework represents the range of considerations that a target or ally may face when experiencing a microaggression. By laying this bare, we attempt to make visible the emotional and cognitive labor that is often invisible for targets of microaggressions. In our workshops, we amplify the choices that an ally or target might make in the face of microaggressions, hoping to expand the strategies available to all of us in these moments.

Conclusion

At the last POD conference, we focused our work on unfreezing and acting, explicating microresistance strategies. We learned from our experiences that a wide variety of people are open to unfreezing and acting, but they also want to account for various contextual considerations and the nature of different microresistance choices. Our framework presented in the paper emerged from these rich and ongoing conversations.

We want to strongly assert that the need to challenge problematic systems is not solely on the shoulders of targets and allies. Change can and should be initiated at the departmental, institutional, and national levels (Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood, 2008, p. 141). In addition, we suggest that microresistance can empower individual targets and allies in micro-instances. To be sure, these small, everyday acts do not immediately result in broader cultural change, even on one campus. But we argue that cultural change (a kind of macro resistance) can grow out of repeated and well-executed microresistances, by shifting the cultural norms that allow microaggressions to occur. In this way, microresistance can serve as not only a form of personal survival; it may provide a catalyst for cultural change.

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Diversity Committee Essay
A Deeper Look at Diversity-Related Conference Sessions

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The POD community has presented increasingly more diversity related sessions since the first annual conference in 1977. The sessions can be grouped into themes by decade: gender and race in the 1980s, race and culture in the 1990s, inclusive environments in the 2000s, and international issues since the early 2000s. In this essay, we will review sessions over the past four decades, consider the representation of topics, and pose questions about diversity influences, and is influenced by, our work.

From one of the first sessions offered in 1980 "Women and Men in Higher Education—Issues of Collaboration" to one of the last offered "Everyday Gender Equity: How to Achieve It?" in 1988, the effect of gender differences on individuals' experiences on a college campus was explored throughout the 1980s. We began to offer compound sessions at the end of the decade, such as "Gender Equity & Multicultural Awareness" and "Minorities and Women: A Panel Discussion" (1989). These multifaceted topics were the beginning of transition of the way we approached diversity from late 1980s onward. While sessions continued to focus on gender, race, and culture, these experiences were presented in conversation with one another. Sessions like "Using Multicultural Vignettes to Foster Dialogues on Diversity" (1993) and "Preparing Faculty for the Multicultural Classroom: A Cooperative Approach" (1994) were the precursors to future sessions on developing inclusive campus and classroom climates.

Two of such sessions, "Inclusion Ideas: Making Your Campus More Welcoming" (2000) and "Equity and Excellence in Teaching: Creating Inclusive College Classrooms" (2008), highlight the various ways POD affiliates have been involved with improving campus climates. Creating an environment where undergraduate learners, graduate teaching assistants, and faculty instructors from other countries are included is also part of developing a positive and inclusive climate. Two sessions from 2006 highlight this aspect of educational development. "Supporting the Teaching Development of International Faculty and Teaching Assistants" and "Activating International Students' Prior Knowledge and Learning Styles" are early examples of including international instructors and learners, respectively, in educational development.

Sessions such as these provide opportunity to reflect and engage in discussion about diversity in education and educational development. Increasing the number and variety of diversity-related sessions, to include other identities and the intersections of multiple identities, could broaden and deepen these conversations in future conferences. Questions are included below to spark reflection and continue these discussions.

Questions to prompt reflection and action

Inward-facing questions
- Are there areas of diversity where you are less familiar? What additional knowledge or skills do you need to better equip your toolkit?
- What conversations are not happening in your center or on your campus? How can you raise these topics for discussion in one of those settings?

Outward-facing questions
- How might someone with identities, abilities, or perspectives different from your own engage your work (a presentation, a resource, or the environment)?
- Which sub-groups or communities are well-supported by your center? Which sub-groups or communities are less likely to use the center or its resources? How can you connect with these groups?

Grants At-A-Glance
An Update on Donald H. Wulff Diversity Travel Fellowship Recipients

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In 1994, under the leadership of former POD president, Donald H. Wulff, POD launched the Diversity Travel Fellowship, which recognizes individuals dedicated to diversity and inclusion in educational development. It awards a travel stipend to awardees to enable them to become more involved with POD by participating in its national conference.

The DC has been curious to understand the influence of these awards. Two surveys thus were administered to learn more about the experiences of past Donald H. Wulff Diversity Travel Fellowship Recipients. In total, five recent fellows (2015-2016) and ten former fellows (prior to 2015) completed separate surveys to gauge their experiences as fellows, with POD, and at the conference. The majority of recent and former fellow respondents are currently involved in professional and organizational development in some way. Two recent fellows became involved in professional development activities in their work contexts after the conference, and two increased their involvement with professional development. The former fellows' engagement ranges from no involvement with POD or the field, to conference attendance and connection via the listserv, to committee leadership. Two of the 2015-2016 Wulff Travel Fellows will be presenting at the 2016 POD Conference – funding and time commitments prevented others from attending.

In the Fellows' Own Words:
Influence on Professional Career
2015-2016 Fellows

> "I think that it gave me confidence that this work was being valued and built upon at other institutions. Sometimes you feel alone in the challenges you face but to have a collective of supportive professionals who are navigating this terrain and hear about ways that they are doing this was really great."

> "I met many developers with whom I continue to share information, practices, and ideas. They have influenced the direction of my work as well as given me confidence in my ideas and try new things."

Former Fellows

> "I am deeply grateful and humbled that I received the fellowship, it was a gateway for me to become deeply enmeshed with the leadership opportunities within POD at a juncture when I was a graduate student trying to figure out her career."

> "[The fellowship] allowed me to attend the conference and develop a deeper understanding of faculty development and teaching and learning issues. Attendance at the annual conference allowed me to understand the career pathway within Faculty Development."

> "I am still interested in organizational and professional development, and am doing a postdoctoral project looking specifically at faculty and institutional culture."
> "The travel fellowship allowed me to meet diverse professionals in faculty and education development and get career encouragement to pursue this area."

Influence on Professional Work or Scholarship
2015-2016 Fellows

> "I am more focused on issues of diversity and inclusion in education. The confidence I gained from POD helped me solidify this direction for my work and scholarship."

> "I've attended to issues and concepts I'd been previously unaware of prior to the conference (using session materials and information from the listserv to inform my practice when I was working)"

Former Fellows

> "The fellowship helped me to connect with colleagues and a network of like-minded people who have a passion for faculty development, and in my case, also for social justice, equity, and inclusion."

> "My work does not directly relate to faculty development but there is some overlap with regards to chapters I've written on faculty who lead education abroad programs, or are going through career changes."

> "It exposed me to many more possibilities for my career and also have me a platform to share my work/interests with potential employers. I actually received a job offer while at the POD Conference the year that I attended."

> "Yes! I got to meet people that are doing similar kinds of work to what I want to do -- when I think about those I would reach out to for thoughts/resources on my postdoctoral project, I often think of folks I met at POD."