

Faculty and Student Perceptions of Incivility Behaviors in the Counselor Education Classroom

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A paucity of research exists on the topic of classroom incivility, defined as actions that disrupt the classroom learning environment, initiated by counseling graduate students and faculty. Through a quantitative descriptive survey design examining current perceptions of incivility in the graduate counseling classroom for both graduate students (N = 173) and faculty (N = 72), the authors found that (a) graduate students and faculty were consistent in their perceptions of the types, frequency, and severity of incivility behaviors; (b) students view faculty actions taken to reduce incivility as less effective compared to faculty perceptions; and (c) graduate faculty contribute to graduate classroom incivility. Practice implications and issues for future research are discussed.

Keywords: classroom incivility, graduate education, graduate students, graduate faculty, counselor education

Incivility – broadly defined as “the quality or state of being uncivil” or “a rude or discourteous act” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) – occurs across a wide range of social settings, including higher education where it is often referred to as classroom incivility. Numerous definitions of classroom incivility or related behaviors exist throughout the literature (cf. Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Charles, 2011; Feldmann, 2001; Hernandez & Fister, 2001; Meyers, 2003; Morrissette, 2001). Defining classroom incivility is subjective since what one considers an act of incivility may not be viewed in the same light by another (Rowland, 2009). Morrissette (2001) defined classroom incivility “as the intentional behavior of students to disrupt and interfere with the teaching and learning process of others” (p. 12). One problem with this definition is that it focuses solely on student actions and fails to capture contributions of faculty. Further, this definition

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highlights intentional behavior, yet uncivil behavior may also occur without intentionality. Feldmann's (2001) definition, used for this study, is more comprehensive and inclusive, defining classroom incivility as "any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom" (p. 137).

Incivility in Higher Education

One outcome of incivility in U.S. higher education is the deleterious effect on the quality of campus life (American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). Even though incidents of incivility existed in U.S. higher education as far back as the 17th century (Twale & DeLuca, 2008), it has only been since the 1990s that classroom incivility has garnered greater attention as evidenced by the increase in literature on the topic, specifically related to undergraduate education. During this period, several researchers have noted an increase in the frequency and types of incivility within higher education (Amada, 1992; Boice, 1996; Schneider, 1998; Seidman, 2005). Findings from various studies on undergraduate incivility (e.g., Boice, 1996; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Shepherd, Shepard, & True, 2008) have suggested both students and faculty are able to identify the types of problematic behaviors, the frequency with which these behaviors occur, and the level of disruption in the classroom. Caboni, Hirschy, and Best (2004) indicated that while greater emphasis has been placed on improving undergraduate instruction, inadequate attention has been paid to addressing undergraduate classroom incivility. As incidences of undergraduate classroom incivility have increased, Seidman (2005) found that most students do not cause problems, but instead place a high value on learning, are mature, and have an appropriate level of self-control. Seidman noted that when incidents of classroom incivility do occur they are often the result of actions by a few students who disrupt and hinder the learning experience of others.

Two possible explanations have been advanced for the increased prevalence of undergraduate classroom incivility. First, this increased prevalence may be due to the type of students seeking higher education. Anderson (1999) reported that for many undergraduate students their classroom behaviors often mimic their real world experiences, and unlike previous generations of college students, *Generation X* students are often viewed as self-centered, having a poor work ethic, and aspiring to different motivations for attending college. Second, faculty behaviors may also explain this increased prevalence. Goodboy and Bolkan (2009) investigated teacher misbehaviors as it related to student learning outcomes. Findings indicated that teacher misbehaviors had both a direct and indirect effect on student resistance. They suggested that student resistance was due to frustrations with teacher competence, laziness, and offensiveness toward students. Goodboy and Bolkan's findings on teacher misbehaviors and student incivility were also supported by Boice (1996), who examined the role that faculty play in contributing to classroom incivility and found that faculty were instrumental in initiating classroom incivility. Boice also reported that faculty who were aware of the nature of classroom incivility often had the fewest incidents of incivility.

Numerous student behaviors contributing to undergraduate classroom incivility have been documented. Some of these behaviors include side conversations, excessive tardiness, leaving class early, being disrespectful to the professor, sarcastic comments, acting bored or uninterested, sleeping during class, poor cellular phone etiquette, playing computer games, being unprepared, alcohol or drug use, and complaining about course content and workload (Boice, 1996; Gonzalez & Lopez, 2001; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004; Nordstrom, Bartels, & Bucy, 2009; Seidman, 2005). Rowland (2009) discussed student demands for special treatment and a consumerism attitude (e.g., “I can do what I want because I paid for it”) as contributing to negative classroom behavior. Burroughs, Kearney, and Plax (1989) identified categories of student incivility, including *deception* (lying to teacher), *blame* (passive approach that shifts responsibility onto the instructor for being boring thus leading to student boredom), *disruption* (an active destructive behavior that is based on the notion that the student is right and the teacher is wrong), *avoidance* (passive measures by the student to avoid facing the instructor), *active resistance* (student consciously defies instructor requests), and *challenging the basis of power* (a form of resistance that attempts to use explicit and implicit statements to defy instructor control of material and classroom). Gonzalez and Lopez (2001) identified six categories under which most uncivil classroom behaviors fall: disengagement, disinterest, disrespect, disruption, defiance, and disturbance.

Faculty Contribution to Classroom Incivility

Conventional wisdom dictates that classroom incivility results from student misbehavior, which may explain the preponderance of research focusing on student behavior. Yet, faculty are also culpable and their behaviors both in and out of the classroom contribute to classroom incivility (Boice, 1996; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2009; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991). Faculty who display attitudes such as apathy and negativity toward students, who demonstrate a lack of interest in student learning, fail to properly prepare for class, or take no action to confront student misbehavior may be responsible for not only creating an environment that fosters incivility, but also perpetuating further incivility. Kearney et al. (1991) identified 28 different teacher misbehaviors divided into three themes: *incompetence* (teacher is apathetic to students, lacks competence in course content), *indolence* (arriving late to class, information overload, and unprepared for class), and *offensiveness* (sarcasm, verbally abusive, and displays negativity toward students). Barbetta, Norona, and Bicard (2005) provided a list of 12 common classroom behavior management mistakes that result in incivility such as avoiding follow through with classroom rules, learning what behaviors to ignore and which ones demand attention, inconsistent expectations and consequences, implementing effective academic instruction, and taking student behavior personally. A study conducted by the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities [UMN-TC] Student Conflict Resolution Center (2007) demonstrated support of faculty’s role in contributing to incivility. In this study, graduate students reported faculty, advisors, staff, and administrators accounted for nearly 75% of the harassment they encountered with the most frequent types of harassment being

verbal harassment, being talked about negatively, receiving hostile electronic communications, and receiving threats to academic status.

Several theories of, and factors contributing to, classroom incivility have been advanced. Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, and Beneke (2009) theorized that undergraduate classroom incivility may be due to incongruity between the demands of school work and critical feedback students receive, and student's beliefs about themselves and whether they can handle the stress. Shepard *et al.* (2008) suggested that certain types of negative behaviors may be attributed to environmental circumstances (e.g., hostile environments, poor role modeling). Shepard *et al.* found that students who demonstrate a consumer attitude may not see anything wrong with leaving class early or coming in late because that attitude is consistent with all other areas of their lives. Nordstrom *et al.* (2009) reported that undergraduate students who displayed narcissistic tendencies tend to view uncivil behavior as acceptable in the classroom. They added that students who took a consumer-oriented philosophy, with the end goal to increase earning potential rather than knowledge, were as likely to engage in uncivil behaviors as were those who demonstrated narcissistic tendencies. Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman (2008) found that narcissism scores for the average college student were 65% higher than those of college students two decades prior.

Hannah (2006) argued that placing a greater responsibility for classroom incivility on faculty who lack certain skills (e.g., immediacy-addressing issues in the moment) ultimately absolves students of their adult responsibilities. Anderson (1999) believed classroom incivility may be a product of academic expectations for faculty to establish expertise in the discipline often leaving them ill prepared to develop classroom training. Anderson indicated that most faculty model their teaching based on positive learning experiences they had during their graduate training.

Feldmann (2001) identified three psychological factors that may be implicated in student incivility: (a) the need for power specifically power over another, (b) verbal expression of frustration when situations seem tenuous and unsolvable, and (c) to obtain something of value. Amada (1992) believed that incivility may be directly related to the increased number of students diagnosed with mental health issues. He observed that with the advent of, and advances made with psychotropic medications, individuals with severe mental illness were attending college in increasing numbers, yet may also be contributing to classroom incivility as a result of issues related to symptom management. Morrissette (2001) cautioned that psychiatric disorders may not compromise the learning environment, but rather the stress associated with college demands may intensify the psychiatric symptoms, which may manifest as inappropriate behaviors.

Classroom Incivility in Counselor Education

What is not evident in the literature is the degree to which incivility exists in graduate education and counselor education in particular. The authors hypothesize that one explanation for the paucity of literature is the belief that graduate students are less likely to engage in classroom incivility due to the importance they assign to their academic

program and the implicit and explicit academic and cultural expectations regarding graduate student conduct and behavior. In addition, the dearth of the literature in classroom incivility may be associated with faculty embarrassment in discussing the issue (Boice, 1996).

In graduate education and counselor education specifically, classroom incivility has not been well documented. With the exception of one study examining graduate student's perception of incivility (see UMN-TC Student Conflict Resolution Center, 2007), no studies have been identified that investigate graduate students and faculty perceptions of the type, frequency, and severity of classroom incivility behaviors and how faculty interactions contribute to incivility at the graduate level, especially in counselor education programs. Counselor educators have attempted to address student incivility using the gatekeeping function. The intent behind the gatekeeper role is for counselor educators to monitor student competencies in the development of clinical skills (Pope & Klein, 1999). Frame and Stevens-Smith (1995) reported that gatekeepers use tools like continuous student reviews to monitor, among other issues, ethical and classroom behaviors. Even though the gatekeeper function attempts to address classroom behaviors as part of clinical competencies, there is little evidence indicating that counselor educators serving in this gatekeeping capacity have specifically focused on classroom incivility behaviors.

To address a gap in the counselor education literature, this study intends to examine: (a) counselor education graduate student and faculty perceptions of the types, frequency, and severity of classroom incivility behaviors; (b) counselor education faculty interventions to address these behaviors and perceived effectiveness of these interventions; and (c) counselor education faculty perceptions of their role in contributing to classroom incivility. A quantitative survey design with a descriptive and explanatory focus was used to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Which incivility behaviors do graduate students and faculty perceive as frequently occurring?
- 2) Which incivility behaviors do graduate students and faculty perceive as severe?
- 3) Do graduate faculty address incidents of incivility and are these approaches perceived as effective?
- 4) Do faculty behaviors contribute to incivility?

Method

Participants

To answer the research questions, the authors focused on participants who were enrolled in graduate counseling programs and their faculty. Graduate counseling programs were targeted due to the availability and access to participants. Approximately 5,500 prospective participants were identified. Of the 5,500 prospective participants, 245 individuals accepted the invitation to participate ($N = 173$ graduate counseling

students and $N = 72$ graduate counseling faculty), yielding a response rate of 4.5%.

Graduate students. Of the 169 graduate students who responded to the question of degree concentration, 77% ($n = 130$) were pursuing a graduate degree in counselor education, 17% ($n = 29$) were enrolled in a double master's counseling and psychology program, and 6% ($n = 10$) did not designate a program of study. Of the 171 graduate students who responded to the other demographic questions, 76% ($n = 130$) were pursuing a master's degree and 24% ($n = 41$) a doctoral degree. One-fourth ($n = 43$) were in their first year, 42% ($n = 72$) were in their second year, 19% ($n = 32$) were in their third year, and 14% ($n = 24$) were in years four through six. Nearly all respondents (96%; $n = 164$) were U.S. residents. Racial/ethnic background indicated 72% ($n = 123$) identified as White, 14% ($n = 24$) as Black/African American, 5% ($n = 9$) as Native American, 4% ($n = 7$) as Latino American, 2% ($n = 3$) as Asian American, and 3% ($n = 5$) did not identify. A majority of respondents (55%) attended public universities ($n = 94$), 43% ($n = 74$) attended private universities, and 2% ($n = 3$) reported not knowing the type of university they attended.

Graduate faculty. Of the 72 graduate faculty who responded to the question of primary teaching responsibility, 60% ($n = 43$) reported counselor education, 38% ($n = 27$) counselor education and psychology, and 2% ($n = 2$) education. Faculty taught at the graduate level an average of 10 years ($SD = 7.8$) and ranged from 1 to 32 years. A majority of faculty (56%; $n = 40$) taught at a public university, 41% ($n = 30$) taught at a private university, and 3% ($n = 2$) did not respond. In terms of current rank, 38% ($n = 27$) were assistant professors, 27% ($n = 19$) were associate professors, 18% ($n = 13$) were full professors, 15% ($n = 11$) were adjuncts, and 2% ($n = 1$) indicated instructors. Slightly more than 72% ($n = 52$) reported they were in a tenure-track position. Nearly 89% ($n = 63$) identified as White, 4% ($n = 3$) as Black/African American, 4% ($n = 3$) as Other and less than 2% ($n = 1$) each for Latino American and Asian American. Descriptive data and independent t -tests were used to answer the research questions. An *a priori* power analysis was conducted based on a medium effect size (.5), power level of .8, and alpha of .05. Minimum sample size was $N = 128$ and minimal sample size per group was $n = 64$.

Instruments

Two separate instruments, one measuring graduate students' perceptions of classroom incivility and the second measuring graduate faculty's perception of classroom incivility, were used to answer the research questions. The graduate student incivility instrument was comprised of 32 questions and the graduate faculty instrument was comprised of 35 questions. The two instruments were adapted from the 24-item questionnaire developed by the Indiana University Center for Survey Research (2000). Permission was granted by Indiana University Center for Survey Research for use and adaptation of this instrument. Both instruments were adapted to address questions related to their educational institution, degree program, and policies and procedures regarding incivility using Likert-type and narrative responses. The instruments focused on: (a) the importance of

incivility in the classroom and its effect on learning, teaching, and classroom atmosphere; (b) perceptions of whether identified behaviors constitute incivility and the frequency with which they occur; (c) behaviors exhibited by graduate faculty that were perceived as contributing to incivility; (d) actions taken by faculty and their effectiveness; and (e) prevalence of incivility across various groups of students and faculty. The main difference between the two instruments was demographic questions related to participants identifying as a graduate student or faculty member.

Graduate student instrument. The 32-item graduate student instrument included questions developed to identify demographic background (questions 1-6); address evidence of course, department, and university policy/language addressing incivility (questions 7-13); examine overall perceptions of student incivility (questions 14-20); identify student perceptions of specific student behaviors that constitute incivility and the frequency with which they occur (question 21 with 40 response options); identify student perceptions of specific faculty behaviors that constitute incivility and the frequency with which they occur (question 22 with 28 response options); identify student perceptions of faculty action taken and whether these actions were effective (question 23 with eight response items); and specific demographic groups that students perceive as contributing to incivility (questions 24-32).

Graduate faculty instrument. The 35-item graduate faculty instrument was similar to the graduate student instrument with variations in demographic questions to account for graduate faculty demographic data teaching discipline, years of service, rank, role of course evaluation in tenure, and percentage of time dealing with classroom incivility. Minor modifications were made to the incivility questions listed under the graduate student instrument to accommodate graduate faculty responses. For example, in the graduate student instrument the question "incidents of student incivility have increased during the time in my degree program" was modified in the graduate faculty instrument to "there have been increased incidents of incivility by graduate students."

Psychometric data. Reliability data were generated for both instruments. For the graduate student instrument, Cronbach's alphas were .85 for the incivility items, .90 for perceptions of behaviors constituting incivility items, .97 student perceptions of faculty behaviors constituting incivility items, and .91 effectiveness of faculty action taken items. For the graduate faculty instrument, Cronbach's alphas were .87 for the incivility items, .95 for faculty perceptions of behaviors constituting incivility items, .85 for faculty perceptions of faculty behaviors constituting incivility items, and .96 for faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of faculty action taken items.

Procedures

After receiving IRB approval, prospective participants were contacted through several counseling listservs, including *CESNET* (a listserv for counseling students, counselor

educators, and counseling professionals), *COUNSGRADS* (a listserv for graduate students who are members of the American Counseling Association), and *DIVERSEGRAD* (a listserv for graduate students and faculty focusing on multicultural counseling issues). The invitation letter directed participants to a URL that contained the informed consent and survey instrument. An electronic copy of the invitation letter was also sent to colleagues at other universities. Colleagues were asked to upload the invitation letter to their program, department, or school listserv(s) that best targeted the identified sample. Reminder emails were sent at two and four weeks. Data were collected anonymously via *Survey Monkey*.

Subscribers to leading counselor education listservs include counselor educators and counseling psychologists who teach in counselor education programs and train professional counselors. Also, many students who take elective courses in counseling related fields that are taught by psychology faculty were considered. Counseling psychologists were retained for the study because they teach and train professional counselors.

The authors also recruited participants through colleagues and personal contacts at counselor education programs at various public and private universities in the Southern, Midwestern, and Mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S. One of the program included in the survey offered a double master's in counseling and forensic psychology requiring a complete curriculum in clinical mental health counseling and additional credits in forensic psychology.

Results

Pre-analysis Steps

Data were analyzed for missing values, outliers, and scores beyond the theoretical range of values. During inspection of the data, a missing value analysis was conducted to determine the pattern of missing data for the student and faculty datasets. Little's MCAR test was conducted to determine if data were missing complete at random (MCAR). For the student dataset, Little's MCAR test revealed data were MCAR ($\chi^2 = 6665.884$, $df = 6532$, $p = .121$) and for the faculty dataset, Little's MCAR test revealed data were also MCAR ($\chi^2 = 332.531$, $df = 5010$, $p = 1.00$). These findings indicate that for these samples, the pattern of missing data was completely at random (i.e., values are randomly distributed across the dataset), which is not only preferred to data missing at random (MAR) or missing not at random (MNAR), but also creates more options to address missing values than data MAR or MNAR (Sterner, 2011).

In the student dataset, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0% to 10.6% with an average percentage of missing data of 1.02%. In the faculty dataset, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0% to 47% with an average percentage of missing data of 3.33%. It should be noted that nearly 90% of the missing data across the study variables in the faculty dataset were below 6%. Only four variables had missing data greater than 20%. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006) suggested that

with a sufficient sample size, randomness of the missing values, and the small number of cases and variables with missing data, pairwise deletion can be used to address missing values. Croninger and Douglas (2005) added that pairwise deletion is preferred to listwise deletion to ensure statistical power and integrity of the dataset is maintained especially for smaller sample sizes. For research questions one and two, frequency of behaviors was based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1 = *never occurs*, 2 = *rarely occurs*, 3 = *often occurs*, 4 = *always occurs*) and severity of behaviors was based on Likert scale ranging from 1 to 3 (1 = *never constituted incivility*, 2 = *constituted incivility under some conditions*, and 3 = *always constituted incivility*).

Common Incivility Behaviors among Students and Faculty

For the first research question, Table 1 shows students and faculty were consistent in their perceptions of the frequency of occurrences of behaviors. "Texting during class" and "students unprepared" were the only two types of incivility not appearing in both student and faculty rankings. Students perceived texting during class as occurring often ($M = 3.08$) whereas faculty perceived it as almost never occurring ($M = 1.17$) $t(234) = 16.85, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.68, 2.13]$. Comparing differences in average frequency scores across students and faculty, only "checking emails" $t(235) = 2.97, p = .003, 95\% \text{ CI } [.15, .57]$; "computer use" $t(236) = 2.43, p = .016, 95\% \text{ CI } [.05, .49]$; chewing gum $t(230) = 2.57, p = .011, 95\% \text{ CI } [.08, .61]$; and "surfing the Internet" $t(234) = 2.43, p = .016, 95\% \text{ CI } [.06, .57]$ were significant. A number of the items in Table 1 had high scores on both frequency of occurrence and severity indicating that these behaviors may be perceived as more problematic within the graduate classroom.

TABLE 1

Type of Classroom Incivility Perceived as Most Frequent by Graduate Students and Faculty

Type of Incivility (Students)	Avg. Freq. of Occur ^(a)	Type of Incivility (Faculty)	Avg. Freq. of Occur ^(a)
1) Eating in class	337	1) Eating in class	3.13
2) Texting during class	3.08	2) Students arriving late	3.03
3) Checking emails	2.97	3) Students' conversations distracting others	2.99
4) Students arriving late	2.95	4) Students unprepared	2.97
5) Unauthorized computer/ electronics use	2.94	5) Side conversations	2.93
6) Chewing gum	2.89	6) Student's conversations distracting faculty	2.84

7) Surfing the Internet	288	7) Unauthorized computer/ electronics use	273
8) Students conversations distracting others	285	8) Students creating tension by dominating discussion	272
8) Cellphone disruption	285	9) Not paying attention	271
9) Side conversations	284	10) Cellphone disruption	269
10) Not taking notes	282	10) Checking emails	269
11) Not paying attention	280	12) Students bored or apathetic	263
12) Students conversations distracting you	278	13) Not taking notes	259
13) Students bored or apathetic	277	13) Surfing the Internet	259
14) Students creating tension by dominating discussion	275	15) Chewing gum	256

Note: (a) 1 = Never occurs, 2 = Rarely occurs, 3 = Often occurs, 4 = Always occurs.

Incivility Behaviors Viewed as Severe by Students and Faculty

For research question two, Table 2 ranks the type of incivility for students and faculty by severity of behavior. Both groups were consistent in what they viewed as constituting the most severe forms of incivility with "students taunting/belittling," "arriving on alcohol/drugs," "harassing comments," "hostile verbal attacks," and "threats of physical harm" scoring the highest. Average severity scores across students and faculty responses were equivalent with the exception of faculty's perception of gaming ($M = 2.83$) compared to students ($M = 2.66$) $t(237) = 2.29$, $p = .023$, 95% CI [-0.32, -0.02] and faculty's perception of students not paying attention ($M = 2.77$) compared to student's ($M = 2.58$) $t(236) = 2.48$, $p = .014$, 95% CI [-0.35, -0.04].

TABLE 2

Type of Classroom Incivility Perceived as Most Severe by Graduate Students and Faculty

Type of Incivility (Students)	Avg. Rank Severity ^(a)	Avg. Freq. of Occur ^(b)	Type of Incivility (Faculty)	Avg. Rank Severity ^(a)	Avg. Freq. of Occur ^(b)
1) Students taunting/ belittling	2.92	1.71	1) Vulgarities directed at faculty	2.94	1.43
2) Harassing comments	2.92	1.37	2) Arriving on alcohol/ drugs	2.93	1.32
3) Threats of physical harm	2.91	1.10	3) Harassing comments	2.93	1.29
4) Arriving on alcohol/ drugs	2.91	1.33	4) Students taunting/ belittling	2.92	1.94

5) Cheating on exams/ quizzes	2.89	1.57	5) Hostile verbal attacks/ challenges at faculty	2.92	1.43
6) Other harassing comments	2.86	1.36	6) Threats of physical harm	2.90	1.17
7) Hostile verbal attacks/ challenges	2.86	1.49	7) Cheating on exams/ quizzes	2.90	1.89
8) Vulgarity directed at you	2.85	1.24	8) Other harassing comments	2.90	1.40
9) Disrespecting faculty	2.80	1.87	9) Harassing comments to faculty outside class	2.86	1.57
10) Harassing comments/ behaviors outside class	2.79	1.29	10) Gaming	2.83	1.69
11) Sarcastic remarks	2.77	2.11	11) Not paying attention	2.77	2.71
12) Sleeping in class	2.75	1.85	12) Disrespecting faculty	2.72	2.08
13) Students' conversations distracting others	2.75	2.85	13) Students' conversations distracting others	2.68	2.99
14) Students' conversations distracting you	2.67	2.78	14) Unauthorized computer /electronic use	2.68	2.73
15) Cellphone disruption	2.66	2.85	15) Sarcastic remarks	2.67	2.24
16) Gaming	2.66	1.92	16) Texting	2.67	1.17
17) Unauthorized computer/electronic use	2.59	2.94	17) Checking emails	2.64	2.69
18) Not paying attention	2.58	2.80	18) Students' conversations distracting you	2.63	2.84

Note: (a) 1 = *Never constitutes incivility*, 2 = *Constitutes incivility under some conditions*, 3 = *Always constitutes incivility*.

(b) 1 = *Never occurs*, 2 = *Rarely occurs*, 3 = *Often occurs*, 4 = *Always occurs*.

Effectiveness of Faculty Action Taken to Address Incivility

Of the students who responded to research question three, over 62% ($n = 63$) reported that faculty were inclined to address those students engaging in incivility during class. Sixty percent ($n = 63$) indicated faculty tended to ignore the problem and 59% ($n = 60$) indicated faculty took no action. Nearly 89% of faculty ($n = 55$) reported speaking with those students engaging in incivility outside of class, 87% ($n = 53$) sought advice from colleagues or explored department or university resources, and 84% ($n = 52$) addressed students involved or the entire class during class time. Nearly 68% of faculty ($n = 42$) either ignored the problem or took no action (Note: percentages reflect that students and faculty could select more than one option).

Student responses. Concerning efficacy of actions taken (1 = *not effective*, 2 = *not very effective*, 3 = *somewhat effective*, and 4 = *very effective*), students perceived that, on

average, overall actions taken by faculty were not very effective ($M = 2.04$) in reducing incivility and the summated score of student responses for the eight items in the "effectiveness of action" subscale was 16.33 out of a total possible score of 32. Students reported specific actions such as faculty addressing students involved during class ($M = 2.51$); faculty making class more fun/entertaining ($M = 2.43$); and faculty changing course requirements, grading, or deadlines ($M = 2.40$) were viewed as slightly more effective in addressing incivility compared to faculty deciding to not take action ($M = 1.80$) or ignoring the problem ($M = 1.84$).

Faculty responses. Faculty perceived that, on average, overall actions taken were somewhat effective ($M = 2.90$) in reducing incivility (overall effectiveness of actions score = 23.22). Faculty viewed speaking with students outside of class ($M = 3.34$), seeking advice from colleagues or exploring department or university resources ($M = 3.26$), reporting student behavior to the department or university ($M = 3.09$), and addressing students involved or entire class during class time ($M = 3.08$) as more effective than ignoring the problem or taking no action ($M = 2.55$). Faculty perceived their overall actions as more effective ($M = 23.22$) relative to students perceptions ($M = 16.33$) $t(91) = 5.18, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [-9.54, -4.25]$.

Faculty Behaviors and Incivility

For research question four, Table 3 listed key faculty behaviors contributing to graduate classroom incivility. A majority of students "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that faculty behaviors contributed to incivility, including displaying negativity toward students ($n = 114$); being too rigid, inflexible, and authoritarian ($n = 98$); and demonstrating favoritism ($n = 116$). Compared to students' observations of faculty behaviors, faculty ranked the severity of their behaviors higher. Both students and faculty ranked negativity toward students the highest. Other behaviors faculty ranked high included missing appointments ($n = 106$), being apathetic toward students ($n = 109$), making insensitive responses ($n = 111$), and inconsistent grading ($n = 113$). When asked whether they contribute to incivility in the graduate classroom, 69% ($n = 50$) of faculty responded affirmatively. Over 73% ($n = 52$) indicated they received little-to-no training on managing classroom incivility and 70% ($n = 50$) would attend training.

TABLE 3

**Faculty Behaviors Contributing to Incivility as Perceived
By Students and Faculty**

Faculty Behaviors (Students)	Rank	%(a)	Faculty Behaviors (Faculty)	Rank	%(a)
Display negativity toward	1	68%	Display negativity toward	1	93%

Students			Students		
Too rigid, inflexible, & authoritarian	1	68%	Misses appointments	2	91%
Demonstrate favoritism	1	68%	Insensitive responses	3	89%
Not grading per syllabus	4	67%	Apathetic toward students	3	89%
Insensitive responses	5	66%	Not grading per syllabus	3	89%
Unprepared for class	6	65%	Demonstrate favoritism	6	88%
Apathetic toward students	7	64%	Unprepared for class	7	87%
Lectures confusing or vague	7	64%	Uninterested in course	7	87%
Misses appointments	9	63%	Too rigid, inflexible, & authoritarian	9	86%
Unorganized	9	63%	Lack enthusiasm for content	10	85%
Lack competence in content	11	62%	Lack competence in content	11	84%
Uninterested in course	12	60%	Use of offensive language	12	81%
			Insufficient breaks (3 hour course)	12	81%

Note. (a) Based on five point Likert scale. Percentage scores based on responses of “4 = agree” and “5 = strongly agree.”

Discussion

Results for research questions one and two indicate that students and faculty have a sense of the types of classroom behaviors that are more likely to be innocuous (e.g., chewing gum, eating during class) and which ones are more pernicious (e.g., expressing vulgarities, taunting, harassing comments, using alcohol or drugs before class). Data also reveal that as the average rank of severity decreased, the frequency with which incivility behaviors occurred generally increased possibly indicating that students are aware of which behaviors are more tolerated and which ones are not. The results also indicate that students and faculty appear to be consistent in identifying not only what constitutes severe incivility behavior, but also their perceptions of the frequency with which these behaviors occur. Student incivility behaviors appear to align closely with the categories of disengagement, disinterest, disrespect, disruption, defiance, and disturbance identified by Gonzalez and Lopez (2001). Even though students and faculty appear to be consistent in identifying behaviors they frequently experience, it is not clear which behaviors were most disruptive or problematic to the respondents and the learning environment. Severity and frequency scores provide some indication of how students and faculty perceive these behaviors yet to what degree are they causing disruption in the classroom is unclear. For example, eating in the classroom was perceived as the most frequently occurring type of uncivil behavior but it ranked low in terms of perception of severity. Based on the results, behaviors such as eating in the classroom appear to be

quite common, however it is not known the extent to which they create a disruption to the professor, students, and quality of the learning environment.

For research question three, students ranked the overall effectiveness of actions taken lower than faculty. One possible reason may be students do not believe many of the actions mentioned will address the problem. There was agreement that addressing the offending party or individual during class or outside class was the most effective action, while ignoring the problem or taking no action may only exacerbate incivility incidents. Faculty reaching out to colleagues appears to contradict Downs' (1992) hypothesis that faculty are less inclined to seek support from colleagues for fear of being perceived as incompetent. Counseling faculty may be more inclined to discuss with colleagues given the increase in frequency and prevalence of incivility events in the graduate classroom. Adjusting lectures to making them more engaging or entertaining appears to have some impact on how students viewed faculty actions. This action appears consistent with Morrissette's (2001) observation that altering lecture preparation or devising methods to avoid conflicts may lower classroom incivility at the graduate level.

Results from research question four challenged the implicit belief that the root cause of classroom incivility rested solely with the student, as a majority of faculty indicated they also contribute to classroom incivility. Responses to this question indicated students and faculty were consistent in what faculty behaviors contributed to classroom incivility with "displaying negative attitudes toward students" ranked highest. Results align with Kearney and Plax's (1992) finding that faculty perceive antisocial motivators such as intimidation, negativity toward students, or insensitive behaviors as contributing to incivility. Many of the faculty behaviors reported in this study are consistent with behaviors identified in the categories of incompetence, indolence, and offensiveness as reported by Kearney et al. (1991). Further, some incidents of incivility appear to be the byproduct of mistakes in managing classroom behaviors further supporting Barbetta et al.'s (2005) finding that not properly managing classroom behavior can result in incivility. It is interesting to note that in McKinne and Martin's (2010) study, undergraduate faculty responded "yes" fewer times than expected and "no" more frequently than expected to their perception of contributing to classroom incivility.

Implications for Counselor Educators

Faculty training. Hirschy and Braxton (2004) found that institutions of higher education must train doctoral students and those preparing for a faculty career to deal with classroom incivility. The current study reiterates the importance of Hirschy and Braxton's finding as managing classroom incivility appears to be an issue with nearly 3 out of 4 faculty respondents indicating they lack skills to deal with classroom problems, and, as a result, may not be prepared to address these issues when preparing doctoral students to become counselor educators.

Prior to starting their academic career, most faculty have little-to-no training in pedagogical methods or theory. Many of these faculty assume that having the knowledge base in their discipline is sufficient (Anderson, 1999; Seidman, 2005), placing little emphasis on developing techniques for teaching and managing a classroom (Anderson, 1999); however, Boice (1996) indicated that this experience alone is insufficient to address classroom incivility. Numerous researchers identified approaches and techniques to address classroom incivility (e.g., Anderson, 1999; Barbetta et al., 2005; Downs, 1992; Feldmann, 2001; Morrissette, 2001; Nordstrom et al., 2009; Seidman, 2005; Sorcinelli, 1994) many of which can easily be used by counselor educators and in their training of doctoral students, specifically within the teaching foundations and internship courses. Teaching approaches such as encouraging active listening, fostering a collaborative learning environment, modeling appropriate behavior, and dealing with troublesome behaviors in the classroom can help doctoral students be better prepared to recognize and address problematic behaviors. Counselor educators can discuss the importance of doctoral students administering informal course evaluation throughout the semester to identify what approaches have been effective and which ones created potential concerns (Morrissette, 2001; Seidman, 2005; Sorcinelli, 1994). As part of the training experience, counselor educators can create mock classroom settings that mimic current incivility behaviors to allow doctoral students opportunities to practice various techniques, methods, and approaches designed to reduce incivility.

Counselor education considerations. Counselor educators need to be aware of how they may be contributing to the disruptive environment (Feldmann, 2001; Sorcinelli, 1994). Counselor educators can engage in a personal reflection on how they contribute to classroom incivility by examining their philosophy of and approach to teaching, attitudes toward students, personal issues (e.g., fear of confrontation, self-esteem, negativity, need for control) in confronting student behaviors, philosophy toward classroom management, degree of competence and training in managing incivility, level and importance of support from colleagues and administrators, and previous experiences in dealing with incivility. One approach for counselor educators is to reach out to colleagues who had similar experiences and discuss how they addressed the issue (Downs, 1992). Counselor educators may consider establishing a peer process group with colleagues to discuss issues with their teaching that may result in incivility (Morrissette, 2001). Inviting colleagues to observe a classroom lecture (Morrissette, 2001) or videotaping classes can be an effective tool for identifying dynamics leading to disruptive behavior. Dedicating faculty meetings throughout the year to address incivility issues can be a way to spur conversation amongst faculty.

Other approaches faculty can take to address classroom incivility include educating students on the impact incivility has on the learning environment, providing examples of incivility, and indicating how these behaviors can be disruptive (Seidman, 2005). Establishing specific, uniformed policies and procedures to address incivility can be included in the course syllabus (Barbetta et al., 2005; Nordstrom et al., 2009; Seidman, 2005; Sorcinelli, 1994). Faculty can outline consequences for behaviors in the syllabus and communicate and reinforce them throughout the course. The student handbook

may include a section on incivility and faculty can discuss its importance during student orientation (Morrissette, 2001; Seidman, 2005). Including a student-faculty agreement on classroom conduct as part of student orientation outlining expected student and faculty behavior may help minimize incivility events.

Classroom boundaries. The client-counselor relationship requires the establishment of informed consent and communication of limits to confidentiality. The best practice is to provide this at the beginning of the client-counselor relationship to establish clear boundaries set forth by the counseling profession and licensure statutes. When counselors provide this information during the initial session, clear boundaries are established outlining counselor responsibilities when addressing specific client behaviors. The process is similar for counselor educators and students with respect to classroom incivility. When expectations are not reviewed upfront, and incivility occurs, it is more difficult to address these behaviors, which can delay consequences or minimize the effectiveness of actions taken. If faculty establish these expectations, then behaviors such as taking no action or ignoring the problem may be minimized, possibly reducing their role in contributing to classroom incivility.

Established boundaries and expectations should be consistently expressed and supported by the department. Similarly, establishing classroom expectations are most effective when conveyed verbally and in writing during the initial class meeting. In this study, a majority of students were uncertain if there was a department policy on incivility or if incivility was referenced in the student handbook. A majority of faculty reported that course syllabi lacked any reference to an incivility policy and 50% of the faculty surveyed indicated not having a department policy on incivility.

Gatekeepers of the classroom. Gatekeeping often requires the time consuming practice of regular student reviews. Gates that should be continuously, and simultaneously, monitored include admissions, grades, classroom behavior, interpersonal relations, and ethical behaviors (Frame & Stevens-Smith, 1995). Faculty members who focus on their specific courses and classroom problems are often not aware that other faculty may have similar concerns and experience similar problems. Providing a forum for scheduled student reviews is necessary for initial gatekeeping issues that arise, tracking patterns of concerns, and providing due process for the student to address concerns. Students who are not made aware of the concerns have not been given due process to correct or address their concerns. Departments who are able to document consistent concerns which have been addressed with the student have more substantial cause for remediation or transition from the program (Jackson-Cherry, 2007).

Effective gatekeeping includes an adoption of established processes and procedures for dealing with any concerns in the classroom or issues that impact the training of counselors in practice. Glance, Fanning, Schoepke, Soto, and Williams (2012) found among 51 counseling programs, 89% reported having a gatekeeping policy process in place with 48% using the policy proactively and 25% using it retroactively after a problem was noted. A clearly written departmental policy and procedure and student review process is effective when reviewed with students prior to the start of a program (e.g., during a mandatory counseling program orientation) and a signed acknowledgment

of understanding should be collected and placed in the student file (Jackson-Cherry, 2007). Similar to the counseling process, a departmental policy can assist in providing informed consent prior to the start of a program so that students can understand the expectations regarding their behaviors and the procedure for student review and due process. A majority of student and faculty appear to agree on what constitutes classroom incivility and are consistent in their perceptions of which behaviors are deemed severe. Having a consistent and uniformed departmental policy on incivility appears to be a best practice for managing classroom incivility in counselor education programs. Establishing a policy and procedure may also improve student and faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of actions taken.

The idea of counselor educators serving as gatekeepers for the counseling field is primarily connected to competence in the development of clinical skills of students (Pope & Klein, 1999) and competency in supervisory skills in doctoral training programs. Doctoral programs also play a key role in training gatekeepers of the classroom in order to provide a positive learning environment and an environment for effective teaching. This requires the assessment of students' academic, clinical, and interpersonal behaviors. Counselor educators are often confident with clinical assessments but feel less competent in the assessment of the interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviors of students (Homrich, 2009). Often, negative personal attributes are evident prior to admission (Mearns, 1997) and can continue during a training program, especially in the classroom.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Limitations include survey responses were based on self-report data. Also, presence or absence of recent incidents of incivility may have biased responses. The survey could have assessed specific behaviors that were deemed personally frustrating or problematic.

Concerning directions for future studies, further adaptations to the instrument would allow participants to identify behaviors they believe are disruptive in addition to the frequency and severity. Increasing the response rate of counselor education students and faculty would allow for more extensive evaluation of incivility. Further exploration of graduate student and faculty characteristics is warranted to understand how these attributes contribute to incivility. Exploring whether incivility occurs at higher rates at public versus private institutions may help examine the how academic environment contributes to incivility. This study did not examine the role that administration plays in supporting faculty. Faculty may find there is support amongst colleagues; however, further information is needed on the influence administration plays in classroom incivility and whether incivility is inherent to the university culture. Addressing the role of university administration and university culture as part of the overall incivility problem are important considerations, as well as exploring various policies, rules, and procedures that occur within departments and programs related to incivility.

Conclusion

Classroom incivility has long been considered an academic problem, yet only recently was it perceived as an issue in graduate education and counselor education specifically. Evidence exists that both counseling students and faculty are culpable in classroom incivility and are consistent in identifying the frequency and severity of behaviors. Students and faculty report actions are taken to address incivility, however they often differ in the efficacy of these actions. Perceptions by students and faculty indicate that graduate faculty also appear to influence classroom incivility in the counseling classroom. Implementing training to address classroom incivility as part of the doctoral level curriculum may provide faculty with the skills, approaches, and techniques to minimize classroom misbehavior. Faculty may be better positioned to reduce incivility when they identify and understand how their role contributes to classroom behaviors. Establishing policies and procedures in course syllabi and the student handbook can help establish and reinforce expectations, boundaries, and consequences for student misbehavior. Counselor educators who effectively address classroom incivility are not only providing a positive learning environment, but also fulfilling their responsibility as gatekeepers for the counseling field.

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