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How College Professors Perceive the Managements of Deliberate Acts of Classroom Incivility Among Students

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Abstract

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BS, Colorado Christian University, 2015

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology - Teaching

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Abstract

Despite the negative consequences of incivility, there is a lack of research on how professors handle intentional student-to-student incivility. To address this gap, this study used qualitative, interpretative phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of 14 professors who have been teaching for five or more years at the university level in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties in southeastern Wisconsin. The lens of facework and politeness theory was utilized. The data collected were analyzed using NVivo software, which identified five themes based on patterns within the interviews: intervention strategies, motivations, policies, participant worldview, and skills. These themes provided valuable insights into the experiences of professors and the strategies they use to address classroom incivility effectively. Findings suggested that effective interventions include establishing clear classroom norms and consequences, building relationships with students, and creating a supportive learning environment. Overall, this study provided important insights into the experiences of college professors dealing with intentional student-to-student incivility, which can facilitate positive social change in the classroom. As professors incorporate these strategies into their teaching practices, they can create a more respectful and supportive learning environment that benefits both students and faculty. Ultimately, reducing classroom incivility can enhance the quality of education and promote a more positive and productive college experience for all involved, contributing to a larger societal shift towards more respectful and constructive communication in all aspects of life.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work first and foremost to God, my constant supporter, and the one who gave me my passion for psychology and teaching so many years ago. Second, to my wonderful fiancé Gus. You joined me while I was on this dissertation journey, but I would never have achieved this goal without your unwavering love and support. This accomplishment is ours. Third, to my family, especially my parents, Bob and Sherry, thank you for always supporting my academic ambitions and supporting me through it all. My mom is a big part of why I had a love of teaching and have a love for education. It is your example that has gotten me this far and I am forever grateful. Finally, to my best friend Amanda. Thank you for always listening to my Ph.D. talk during our phone calls and for being my friend for the last 25 years.

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I could not have completed this dissertation without the unwavering support and guidance of my amazing committee. Dr. Elisabeth Weinbaum and Dr. Chet Lesniak, thank you for always supporting me and providing excellent feedback. To my fiancé, Gus, your love and support through this journey has meant everything to me. You are my rock. To my family and friends who have always supported my academic pursuits and shown me love through my busy academic life. I could not have done this without any of you. Finally, I could not have gotten through this without God. I would not be who I am today without the unconditional love and guidance from the Lord.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Classroom incivility is present at all educational levels and does not end when a person enters post-secondary education. It is a common phenomenon in numerous classrooms (Alt & Itzkovich, 2019; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Park & Kang, 2021). Incivility in the classroom can occur between professors or students and can be detrimental to both. More research is necessary regarding how professors handle classroom incivility from students.

This study reviewed what is already known about classroom incivility at secondary and post-secondary levels internationally and domestically, incivility in online classrooms, classroom management strategies, and conflict resolution strategies. This research contributes to the knowledge by expanding the information available regarding professors' experiences with handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. I examined how classroom incivility is a rising problem in post-secondary classrooms and how previous data show that more research is required on this phenomenon from the professors' perspective (Alt & Itzkovich, 2019; Park & Kang, 2021). This research implied a need for social change as identified by Walden University's 2014 Social Change Impact Report. I discuss future research as possible avenues for addressing this phenomenon.

Background

Professors' experiences with handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility at the postsecondary level is understudied. I reviewed articles for this study regarding conflict resolution strategies (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2016; Idris et al., 2017;

Muthanna & Sang, 2018), classroom management strategies (Ahmad et al., 2017), student and faculty incivility at post-secondary institutions internationally and domestically (Bantha et al., 2020; Boysen, 2021; Campbell et al., 2020; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Park & Kang, 2021), classroom incivility at other classroom levels (Spadafora & Volk, 2021), and incivility in online classrooms (Donathan et al., 2017).

Faculty incivility is a newly studied phenomenon. Faculty incivility is a crucial topic to note because it impacts student behavior. Alt and Itzkovich (2016; 2019), Bantha et al. (2020), Itzkovich and Alt (2016), Kalondu Kamolo and Wangui Njung'e (2021), and Park and Kang (2021) noted this phenomenon. Further research on this topic is needed. Student incivility has been studied significantly at all educational levels, but more research has emerged recently regarding incivility at the post-secondary level. Student incivility has been on the rise for years. A new focus of research has been incivility in online classrooms; Campbell et al. (2020) studied this phenomenon. It is an emerging phenomenon as online learning is on the rise.

Two common ideas emerge when looking at classroom incivility: student-teacher relationships and classroom management styles. First is the student-teacher relationship. Ingraham et al. (2018) wrote there is a correlation between the student-teacher relationship and classroom incivility. Second, how a professor manages their classroom can influence classroom incivility. The more effective a professor is at addressing the incivility in the moment, the less likely it is for incivility to be a lasting phenomenon (Clark, 2017; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Klebig et al., 2016).

By understanding classroom incivility and the differing perspectives, steps can be taken by researchers to address this concern adequately. The social problem of rising classroom incivility can be reduced. Numerous researchers have studied classroom incivility, but few studies focus on professors. It is vital to research the professors' experiences with it because it is a newly studied topic.

Problem Statement

The issue that prompted the search for this literature was student-to-student intentional classroom incivility, a major concern in global education classes today (Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019; Irwin & Cederblad, 2019; Muthanna & Sang, 2018; Weger, 2018; Yrisarry et al., 2019). Despite professors doing their best to handle negative classroom interactions between students, these negative interactions are still occurring worldwide (e.g., Croatia and Australia) at an alarming pace (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2016; Muthanna & Sang, 2018) despite various policy regimes implemented in some schools around the globe (Barratt-Pugh & Krestelica, 2019). According to Vuolo (2018), students who have experienced incivility in class tend to have a decreased level of learning involvement and personal well-being. This social problem negatively impacts students, professors, and the respective institutions.

There is very little literature on U.S. college professors' experiences involving intentional student-to-student classroom incivility in higher education classrooms (Muthanna & Sang, 2018). The experiences of students in higher education have been examined in Great Britain (Vuolo, 2018) and Israel (Yassour-Borochowitz & Desivillia, 2016), along with the experiences of students and teachers at lower educational levels in

countries around the world (Canada, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey) and/or in online classrooms (Donathan et al., 2017). Some research focused on both positive and negative behaviors in the U.S. college classroom (Goodlad et al., 2018) or on how to handle rudeness (Irwin & Cederblad, 2019) in Scottish university classrooms, or addressed the importance of understanding appropriate classroom behavior (Island, 2016). Neither of these studies specifically addressed intentional incivility. Only one U.S. study focused on faculty perceptions of the seriousness and frequency of classroom incivility in higher education (Strassle & Verrecchia, 2019). They found that faculty members who hold a higher academic rank see incivility more frequently than their lower academic ranked colleagues. There is a significant need to understand how college professors' experiences with incivility guide their classroom interventions in U.S. higher education.

This study provided needed insights into the experiences of professors regarding interventions they have found to be beneficial in their classrooms while dealing with intentional student-to-student incivility. For the purpose of this study, intentional incivility was defined as disrespect for authority, repeated interrupting when others are speaking, repeated excessive talking, repeated use of loud technology, and fighting. The specific research problem that was addressed through this study was the need for insights into professors' experiences with the interventions they have found beneficial in their classrooms while dealing with intentional student-to-student incivility. The specific research problem was that there is a lack of information on how college professors reduce student-to-student intentional classroom incivility in their respective classrooms.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve understanding of college professors' experiences of intentional student-to-student classroom incivility, defined as disrespect for authority, repeated interrupting when others are speaking, repeated excessive talking, repeated use of loud technology, and fighting, and explore their descriptive accounts of individual techniques involving how to address this problem in their respective higher education classrooms. There is a need for an increased understanding of professors' implementations of interventions. Engaging in classroom incivility is positively associated with poorer wellbeing, antisocial traits, and antisocial behavior (Spadafora & Volk, 2021). Vuolo (2018) said classroom incivility can reduce learning involvement or cause total detachment from the learning process.

Research Question

For college professors' recollections of intervention strategies to reduce student-to-student intentional classroom incivility in their classrooms, what themes emerge in their reports of the process that they used to develop it?

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I used the facework and politeness theory, first presented by Brown and Levinston in 1978. Politeness is the expression of a person's intention to mitigate face threats toward another person (Yrisarry et al., 2019). Brown and Levinston (1978) proposed five levels of politeness to mitigate a potentially face threatening remark or action. According to Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008), facework and face threat mitigation were employed in postsecondary education in the past. For example, Yrisarry et al.

(2019) looked at instructor responses to uncivil behaviors in their classroom using the politeness theory in a quantitative study design. The authors specifically looked at the student's perceptions of how their instructors responded to classroom incivility.

According to Yusuf and Anwar (2019), professors and students need to rely on their communication to create effective classroom interactions. Effective communication has two primary aims, to transmit the message and create comfortable communication between individuals. These aims are the premise of the importance of politeness in the classroom. When there is effective communication, politeness is more likely to occur. When politeness occurs, there is a greater chance of face threatening acts to be reduced or eliminated.

Researchers such as Locher and Watts (2005) have shown that cultures have conflicting views on what constitutes polite language use, especially when it relates to impoliteness. Locher and Watts's model is one of the most prominent alternatives for examining politeness. They argue that no language is innately polite. Rather, politeness arises from a negotiation between individual speakers and the context of the interaction. Brown and Levinson (1978) base much of their model on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle and Goffman's (1955) concept of face. Grice wrote about conversations and how they are cooperative efforts. His cooperative principle states that all people are cooperative to achieve the purpose of being efficient while interacting with others.

The logical connections between the framework presented and the nature of my study include that for competent instruction to occur, the professor needs to have the ability to mitigate face threats and negotiate mutually acceptable identities during

classroom interactions. It seems to imply that professors who experience student incivility will experience a dilemma where they would need to employ politeness.

Nature of the Study

To address the research question in this qualitative study, the specific research design included an interpretative phenomenological study (Boadu, 2021) through one-on-one interviews via face-to-face or video calls with professors in Dodge and Fond du Lac counties in southeastern Wisconsin. These interviews had a few demographic questions, including the type of institution and length of their teaching career. Also, the research question was posed during the interviews. These interviews were recorded verbally for the coding process. This type of study was necessary to understand the perceptions of professors on intentional student-to-student incivility in their classrooms. Interpretive phenomenological research was appropriate for this research because it provided insights into how the professor handles intentional student-to-student incivility and what policy changes are necessary for faculty and administration. This study focused on professors with at least 5 years of experience in the classroom.

Definition of Terms

Harassment: The act of systematic and/or continued unwanted and annoying actions of one party or a group, including threats and demands (Harassment, n.d.).

Intentional classroom incivility: Disrespect for authority, repeated interrupting when others are speaking, repeated excessive talking, repeated use of loud technology, and fighting.

Post-secondary/higher education: Any college or university level school.

Assumptions

I reviewed previous research about classroom incivility focusing on students and professors worldwide. The assumption was that these findings are applicable to professors' experiences with handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. In addition, professors are exposed to students exhibiting classroom incivility and have found ways to reduce the incivility. Another assumption is that saturation occurs with eight to 15 participants. Finally, that this study has positive social change implications.

Scope and Delimitation

For this study, participants were chosen through a response to interview requests via networking within technical colleges and universities located in Dodge and Fond du Lac counties in southeastern Wisconsin. An informed consent was provided, which detailed that I was looking to explore the professors' perspectives in handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility.

The scope and delimitations on which this study was based was that the professor must be currently employed by a college or university and have at least 5 years of experience in the classroom. Any respondent with a primary language other than English was not included to avoid language barriers or misinterpretations.

There were delimitations within this study. First, all participants were fluent in the language of the interviewer. There was no translation for this study. Second, I used numbers instead of names to identify the participants. This study was limited to one geographical area of Wisconsin because smaller Midwestern areas have not been

researched. Finally, the participants were limited to being currently employed in higher education and having at least five years of experience in the classroom.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in that it helps fill a gap in understanding by focusing on the professors' perceptions at post-secondary institutions with handling intentional student-to-student incivility. This research was unique because it addressed an under-researched area of post-secondary education (Muthanna & Sang, 2018). The professors' perceptions have sparsely been explored regarding intentional student-to-student incivility in the classroom. This study provided needed insights into which interventions work well and which are ineffective. Insights from this study aid professors in learning how to effectively handle intentional student-to-student incivility in the classroom and aid faculty and administration in making necessary changes to their policies regarding incivility. Intentional incivility occurs at every educational level; therefore, educators must have effective classroom management techniques. Therefore, this research was necessary to understand successful classroom management strategies and what policy changes are necessary. Positive social change is necessary in this regard because classroom incivility still occurs. This study facilitates positive social change because it illuminates intervention strategies that effectively reduce intentional classroom incivility.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this review of the literature, I identified a need to better understand professors' experiences who handle incivility in their classrooms. A professor will experience incivility in their classroom at some point because classroom incivility happens at every educational level (Bantha et al., 2020; Boadu, 2021). There is very little information on how professors handle intentional student-to-student incivility in the classroom. Research has determined that incivility is common in university classrooms (Cahyadi et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Urban et al., 2021; Vural & Bacioglu, 2020). While many studies provide significant information regarding the regularity of classroom incivility, there is little information about the professor's experiences of handling it. There is currently a lack of available research on professors' experiences with handling intentional classroom incivility at the university level. The purpose of this study was to explore and describe professors' experiences of handling intentional student-to-student incivility in their classrooms.

I used two primary search strategies to identify the most current and significant literature. First, I used multidisciplinary databases. I used EBSCOhost, ProQuest, PsychARTICLES, PsycINFO, and PsycExtra to search for peer reviewed journals with the following terms: *college professors, post-secondary education, intentional student incivility, college professors perceptions, bullying, offensive behavior, interpersonal relations, courtesy, incivility or uncivil behavior, classroom, college or university, higher education, interrupt, disruption, classroom management,* and *teacher student relationship*. Most of the articles produced from 2016 to 2021 focused on students'

experiences with incivility, faculty incivility, and incivility at primary and secondary education levels.

Next, I reviewed Walden dissertations published from 2016 to 2021, which included many of the same terms, to determine what other research is available. By reviewing current literature, I acquired new sources of information. These sources were full text only, completed after 2016, and written in English.

Theoretical Framework

In the following section, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the current research and describe a specifically relevant theory that supports my qualitative exploration of professors' responses to classroom incivility.

Facework and politeness theory was used to better understand professors' responses to classroom incivility behaviors. Facework and politeness theory (Brown & Levinston, 1978) is often used by professors because, for competent instruction to occur, a professor needs to have the ability to mitigate face threats and negotiate mutually acceptable identities during classroom interactions. Researchers use this theory as a theoretical framework to identify effective instructor responses to classroom incivility behaviors. In any interaction, facework is the communication used to uphold the image of the individuals in the interaction (Holtgraves, 1992; Metts, 2000; Yrisarry et al., 2019). Face is the social value people claim for themselves in social situations (Goffman, 1955). Professors expect respect in their classroom, and if students do not give them respect, the students threaten the face of that professor. Students expect the same, but when they get reprimanded, the students lose face.

According to Yusuf and Anwar (2019), the professor and students need to rely on their communication to create effective classroom interactions. Effective communication has two major aims, to transmit a message and create comfortable communication between individuals. These aims are the premise of the importance of politeness in the classroom. When there is effective communication, politeness is more likely to occur. When politeness occurs, there is a greater chance of face threatening acts to be reduced or eliminated.

Politeness is the expression of a persons' intention to mitigate face threats toward another person (Yrisarry et al., 2019). Brown and Levinston (1978) first presented facework and politeness theory, and they proposed five levels of politeness to mitigate a potentially face threatening remark or action. The levels range from avoidance, which is the least face threatening through direct politeness, up to disregarding the persons' face concerns, which is the most face threatening (Brown & Levinston, 1978). People are typically more polite when the other person has a higher power position or is not socially close to them (Yrisarry et al., 2019).

Researchers such as Locher and Watts (2005) have shown that cultures have conflicting views on what constitutes polite language use, especially when it relates to impoliteness. Locher and Watts's model is one of the most prominent alternatives for examining politeness. They argue that no language is innately polite. Rather, politeness arises from a negotiation between individual speakers and the context of the interaction. Brown and Levinson (1978) base much of their model on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle and Goffman's (1955) concept of face. Grice spoke about conversations and

how they are cooperative efforts. His principle states that all people are cooperative to achieve the purpose of being efficient while interacting with others.

According to Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008), postsecondary education employs facework and face threat mitigation. For example, Yrisarry et al. (2019) looked at instructor responses to uncivil behaviors in their classroom using the politeness theory in a quantitative study design. The authors looked at the students' perceptions of how their instructors responded to classroom incivility. They found that students responded more favorably to direct responses when incivility occurred than passive responses. Kerssen-Griep (2001) and Sabee and Wilson (2005) found that students respond favorably to professors who make face respecting comments. Research has also found that students respond favorably to professors who mitigate face threats when they provide negative comments on the students' performance (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008; Trad et al., 2014; Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011). According to Zhang (2011), when a professor uses a high level of politeness, it encourages positive responses from students, and both students and professors experience less of a face threat.

Yrisarry et al. (2019) were the only researchers that focused specifically on student incivility behaviors. All the studies on civility in the classroom implied that professors would experience a dilemma when faced with student incivility in the classroom. Holtgraves (1992) found that both the student and professor will be damaged or protected regarding face in any given situation. Boice (1996) and Boysen (2012) found that professors are ineffective when they avoid incivility. Incivility in the classroom is an attack on both professor and student face.

Guan and Eun Lee (2017) conducted a recent study that used facework. They focused specifically on facework strategies and intercultural face-threatening acts. Their study was unique because they focused on facework strategies in intercultural situations where people have disparate cultural backgrounds. It can be difficult for people to communicate when they have different cultural backgrounds and customs. There is a higher likelihood of a face threatening interaction occurring. For example, in Chinese culture, it is common to mention something about someone's appearance out of worry, whereas, in the United States, such an action would be considered rude. Guan and Eun Lee found that the use of intercultural communication mitigates face-threatening acts on all levels. While there will always be factors that cannot be determined, such as a person's disposition, employing facework strategies effectively handles classroom incivility. Each culture responds differently to these strategies. In the United States, people will often use avoidance and withdrawal (Clark, 2017; Irwin & Cederblad, 2019).

Face-Threatening Act (Losing Face)

People fear face threatening acts or the prospect of losing face. Goffman (1955) stated that this is an interaction where people fail in their attempt to present a particular face. For example, if someone identifies as an intelligent person but they engage in conversation with a person who tells them that they are stupid, it challenges their face as an intelligent person. This type of comment would hurt a person because it is not how they want to be seen. Goffman identified three levels of responsibility for threatening a person's face: unintentional, maliciously intentional, and incidental. Each type of threat

varies in intensity and incites different responses from the person receiving the threat (Goffman, 1955).

The way a person responds in social interaction is one of the best ways of knowing that a person's face has been threatened. When a person experiences a face threat, they often feel embarrassed, shamed, humiliated, confused, and defensive (Goffman, 1955). If a person can maintain their face when challenges arise, Goffman (1955) described that as demonstrating poise. When an individual experiences a face threat, they either demonstrate poise or respond emotionally to the threat.

Politeness theory, presented by Brown and Levinson in 1987, looks specifically at face threatening acts. Numerous communication acts can cause face threats. These threats can be geared toward both positive and negative face. Many variables define an action as a threat and the degree of that threat. For example, if a person perceives themselves to be a bad dancer, dancing badly at an event might not be a face threatening act. However, a person with a face of a good dancer might be very embarrassed by dancing badly because it is a threat to their positive face. Various factors influence the degree of a face threat. These include the relationship with the person who threatened an individual's face, the importance of that face, the culture, and the expectations of the relationship (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Facework (Maintaining Face, Restoring Face, Saving Face)

Goffman (1955) discussed the concept of *facework*, which is the action taken by an individual to either maintain, restore, or save face. The Chinese social imperative of helping people adopt any face that they desire is the basis of this concept. When a person

engages in facework, they attempt to maintain the face they have presented. A person will counteract the face threats against them. For example, if an individual is a good student yet they turn in an assignment late, they need to employ face saving strategies to support the face of being a good student. According to Goffman (1955), when a person does this, they are not only maintaining their face but also helping their interaction partner to maintain theirs.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

In this section, I present literature related to my topic of study and my chosen methods. It reviews research by Ahmad et al. (2017), Alt and Itzkovich (2016), Guan and Eun Lee (2017), Ibrahim and Qalawa (2016), Irwin and Cederblad (2019), Ingraham et al. (2018), Kalondu Kamolo and Wangui Njung'e (2021), Klebig et al. (2016), Mohammadipour et al. (2018), Rawlins (2017), Suk Kim et al. (2020), Vural and Bacioglu (2020), and Yassour-Borochowitz and Desivillia (2016).

Teacher-Student Relationships, Attitudes, and Behaviors

In education, the student-teacher relationship is critical because it determines what occurs in the classroom. According to Ahmad et al. (2017), a positive student-teacher relationship significantly affects effective classroom management. Ahmad et al. conducted their study in Pakistan, and their research needs replication in other countries, but it shows excellent possibilities for ensuring positive classroom management. Other researchers, such as Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018), Alt and Itzkovich (2016; 2018), Irwin and Cederblad (2019), Johnson et al. (2017), Mohammadipour et al. (2018), Urban et al. (2021), Vural and Bacioglu (2020), and Yassour-Borochowitz and Desivillia (2016)

found that there needs to be additional exploration of the relationship between professors and students regarding the experiences of incivility. Understanding this relationship may improve self-reflection and provide positive changes in the classroom. Strain on the professor-student relationship places a greater burden on professors to prevent and mitigate classroom incivility (Rawlins, 2017).

Classroom incivility is an inevitable part of the instructor-student dynamic in college classrooms. Many professors attempt to create a positive classroom, but classroom incivility is continuously on the rise. Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018) and Johnson et al. (2017) noted that since the 1970s, literature has been compiled about classroom incivility but focused on K-12 classrooms primarily. Vural and Bacioglu (2020) second this sentiment, stating that the literature focusing on Turkey showed the same thing. The detrimental effects are evident from the literature, but there is little research focused on the college and university level. Mohammadipour et al. (2018), Urban et al. (2021), and Vural and Bacioglu (2020) stated that professors need to be prepared to establish respectful relationships with their students to have a well-developed classroom. Incivility is less likely to occur when mutual respect between students and professors occurs. Effective communication between professors and students is one of the most effective ways to have mutual respect. Professors need to monitor the quality of interaction among students because those interactions can foster or hinder the classroom (Jacobs et al., 2016).

Professors' attitudes and behaviors will set the classroom expectations for the students. The most satisfied professors are the ones who expect their students to mirror

their behavior in the classroom (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017). Unfortunately, many students do not mirror the professor's behavior and behave in an uncivil manner. A lack of student mirroring negatively impacts both teacher-student attitudes and behaviors. One role of education is to rehabilitate undesirable student behaviors and replace them with positive behaviors (Ahmad et al., 2017; Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019; Goodlad et al., 2018; Irwin & Cederblad, 2019). Many educators fail to rehabilitate undesirable student behaviors. They will punish the undesirable behaviors, but they will not help the students replace them with positive behaviors.

Professors have to deal with uncivil behaviors in their classrooms. Reducing or eliminating uncivil behaviors is essential in creating a well-managed classroom (Campbell et al., 2020; Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019; Goodlad et al., 2018; Urban et al., 2021; Vural & Bacioglu, 2020). Island (2016) found that the changes over the past 30 years altered student etiquette. Things considered inexcusable, such as doing other things in class, being on a cell phone, etc., are now seen as typical behavior. Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018), Jacobs et al. (2016), and Johnson et al. (2017) noted that technological advances, changes in classroom expectations, and shifting social norms have transformed the college classroom. Based on this fact, much of the previous literature on classroom incivility is limited in applicability to higher education today.

Classroom Incivility

Classroom incivility is prevalent at primary and secondary education levels. Researchers have studied this topic for decades. Although classroom incivility is prevalent in those classrooms, studies have recently focused on post-secondary levels.

Negative behaviors by students are increasingly common in university classrooms around the world (Cahyadi et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Suk Kim et al., 2020; Urban et al., 2021). These behaviors are detrimental to both professors and other students in the classroom. Classroom incivility can reduce student achievement and produce financial constraints for students (Irwin et al., 2019; Mohammadipour et al., 2018). Reducing student achievement can produce numerous other problems in and out of the classroom. According to Huang et al. (2020) and Jensen et al. (2016), when a student experiences uncivil treatment, they often withdraw from their environment. Students may experience mental health concerns, such as depression or anxiety, social isolation and rejection, inferiority, and ostracism (Huang et al, 2020; Jensen et al., 2016).

Alt and Itzkovich (2016; 2018), Itzkovich and Alt (2016), Jacobs et al. (2016), Johnson et al. (2017), and Park and Kang (2021) reported that uncivil behaviors can occur within the faculty as well as the students. Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018) and Urban et al. (2021) found that both student and professor incivility seriously interfere with education objectives. Spadafora and Volk (2021) looked at children and youth but found similar results. Classroom incivility is positively associated with poor well-being, antisocial traits, and behaviors (Spadafora & Volk, 2021). Regardless of the type of incivility, it is inappropriate in academia.

A professor needs to handle negative student behavior at that moment, but the professor must handle the situation appropriately. Professors can prevent incivility to a point, but not all incivility can be prevented. Therefore, professors must address the

incident swiftly to deter extended classroom interference. The way a professor responds to student incivility will impact the students' response. Irwin and Cederblad (2019) found that when a professor uses an assertive response, the emotional impact on the student is significantly higher. Irwin et al. (2021) found similar results when working with a smaller group of students.

Weger (2018) hypothesized a connection between student incivility and professors not using active empathic listening behaviors. Empathic listening behaviors may lessen classroom incivility. Strassle and Verrecchia (2019) stated that the professor's age, experience, and academic rank will impact the severity of the incivility and how often they see it. According to Vural and Bacioglu (2020), the longer a professor has been working at one university, the less incivility they experience. Due to this fact, they give a verbal warning, which is the most effective way to handle incivility. These factors play an important role because what the professors bring to the classroom will significantly impact what occurs within that classroom. Klebig et al. (2016) looked at the role of a professors' communication and credibility and how they are related to student incivility in the classroom. They found that these variables play an equal role in student incivility compared to student personality traits.

There are many definitions of classroom incivility. Many researchers have defined this term to best relate to their research. Numerous researchers define classroom incivility as disrespectful and disruptive speech or behaviors that interfere with the learning environment (Campbell et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Vural & Bacioglu, 2020). This includes not abiding by the

lecture times, talking, texting, using technology for non-classroom purposes, inappropriate remarks to the professor or students, among other things. Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018) and Huang et al. (2020) stated that there needs to be a greater consensus regarding incivility. Harassment has a similar definition, the continued unwanted actions of one person or group (Harassment, n.d.). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I used the definition of incivility for both harassment and incivility.

There are different types of classroom incivility, student and professor incivility. Alt and Itzkovich (2016) looked at passive and active faculty incivility; they found that passive faculty incivility is more likely to occur. Alt and Itzkovich also found that when there is a higher level of incivility in the classroom, the students increase in negative emotional adjustment to their educational life. Itzkovich and Alt (2016) looked at faculty incivility and how students responded to it via exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. They found that when faculty incivility was present, the students were likely to exit versus the other options. Itzkovich and Alt stated that higher achieving students were less likely to exit compared to their low achieving classmates. Irwin and Cederblad (2019) found similar results regarding faculty incivility. Alt and Itzkovich (2018) found that having an active dialogue when incivility occurs is more beneficial than exerting power. Park and Kang (2021) and Urban et al. (2021) found that faculty incivility significantly influenced their students' psychological well-being and learning.

Incivility occurs in the classroom for various reasons, including mental health disorders and bullying. Huang et al. (2020) found that mental illness is active in over 20% of college students in China. They hypothesized that this number would be even

greater throughout the world. For this reason, psychological distress is a significant problem in college students and contributes to classroom incivility. Huang et al. found that when a student experiences incivility, they have a greater likelihood of experiencing physical, emotional, and psychological stress. Urban et al. (2021) second this statement, but they focused on United States classrooms. They found that incivility is a persistent universal problem that threatens the psychological health of both professors and students. Turnipseed and Landay (2018) looked at the role of the dark triad in relation to incivility and found that machiavellianism and narcissism increase the likelihood of incivility. Another significant incivility behavior is bullying by students and faculty. Barratt-Pugh and Krestelica (2019) found that bullying is a significant problem in many universities, even those with anti-bullying policies in place. Many universities have these policies in place, but there is a gap between those policies and reality within the classrooms. Urban et al. second this because additional policies need to be in place to address incivility in the classroom. There are unique challenges regarding student incivility with the prevalence of online education. Vural and Bacioglu (2020) found that bullying and other uncivil behaviors stem from students' emotional, physical, and cognitive issues.

Student incivility is more likely to occur in larger group settings, such as a lecture theatre, than in smaller class sizes (Irwin & Cederblad, 2019). Their research found that when students feel less seen or heard, they are more likely to behave uncivilly. Another point that Irwin and Cederblad found was that the higher person's status (i.e., senior staff member), the higher the emotional reaction from other staff members or students when handling incivility.

Classroom incivility is on the rise in online classrooms around the world. Suk Kim et al. (2020) looked at cyberincivility in the United States, Hong Kong, and South Korea. They brought up important points that need mentioning. First, cyberincivility is a problem worldwide, with 77% of their respondents saying that it was a problem. This is due to the significant increase of online activity in the current culture. Although every country will be different, more frequent online activity leads to a more accepting perception of cyberincivilty. Second, every culture will interpret incivility differently due to the social norms of each culture. What is deemed uncivil in one country may be commonplace in another country. Third, people of all ages and professional groups are affected by cyberincivilty. Finally, cyberincivilty has numerous negative psychological impacts on people. There has been a significant increase in the use of technology in the classroom because technology is more prevalent worldwide. This increase can be both beneficial and a hindrance to the classroom. It enhances the classroom because professors and students can use technology to further the presented information (Jacobs et al., 2016). Examples of this are taking notes, annotating notes from professors, accessing online material, and looking up unknown terms during the lecture. Technology can also hinder when used for non-class related activities during class. Jacobs et al. (2016) noted that there needs to be an increase in promoting responsible use of technology in the classroom instead of banning electronic devices.

Jensen et al. (2016) found that incivility is generalizable across different cultures, backed up by the international literature. The type of incivility may differ based on what is socially acceptable in a particular country, but students will still feel distress,

ostracism, and less than (Jensen et al., 2016). Incivility causes much psychological harm and social pain, whether from another student or professor. This is true whether incivility occurs within the students or professors (Aliakbari & Hajizadeh, 2018; Urban et al., 2021).

Rawlins (2017) reviewed current literature on faculty and student incivility in undergraduate nursing education and found four themes. The themes found were detrimental to health and well-being, disruption to the teaching-learning environment, stress as a catalyst, and incivility incite incivility. These are all themes found by other researchers as well. The themes found are negative and significantly impact the classroom environment. One interesting point is that classroom incivility is similar to being on a battlefield. This statement describes the long-term negative effects of classroom incivility. Although Smith and Freyd (2017) studied a more generalized topic, they found that incivility is associated with various health problems, which relates perfectly with the first theme. When a person experiences incivility, they will be less likely to desire to engage in the classroom. Mohammadipour et al. (2018) agreeed with this assessment. They found that people experienced numerous physical symptoms when exposed to long-term classroom incivility.

Adult Education and Future Trends

The articles presented in the previous sections relate well to adult education because they focused on teacher-student relationships and classroom incivility. Understanding the differences between professors and students is crucial in finding effective ways to reduce or eliminate incivility in the classroom. This research stated that

future studies are necessary to understand the most effective classroom management strategies. Vural and Bacioglu (2020) noted that additional research is needed because complicated reasons drive student incivility. The current literature has been conducted at secondary education levels, not post-secondary education levels, or in countries besides the United States. Therefore, additional research is necessary to determine if the results from outside of the United States can be generalized to this demographic. In addition, Island (2016) stated it is vital for professional etiquette to be taught to students because it is an employable skill. It will make the classroom environment more positive and help the students in their careers. Regardless of the specifics of the incivility, it is critical to address the incivility because a respectful academic culture is critical.

There have been no studies that examined how professors listen regarding how it influences student incivility. Island (2018) was the first to explore the relationship between professors' empathic listening with student incivility. The results warrant further research to see if the results will be replicated in other states and countries. Irwin et al. (2021) noted this and found that empathic and active listening is critical in the classroom. Similarly, Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) first examined the importance of professor confirmation behaviors and student incivility. They found a significant influence between the professor's attitudes toward the students and how they behave. Alt and Itzkovich (2016) and Itzkovich and Alt (2016) had similar findings regarding the influence between the professor's attitudes and how the students will behave. This research is the beginning of the necessary research to understand the extent of professor attitudes and behaviors on students' attitudes and behaviors. Segrist et al. (2018) expanded this thought and stated

that additional research needs to occur to look at other social norms and how they impact classroom incivility. Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018) and Irwin and Cederblad (2019) seconded this because social norms influence the classroom at numerous levels. This research suggested that social norms differ based on the subject taught. The articles from Alt and Itzkovich (2018), Itzkovich and Alt, Park and Kong (2021), and Urban et al. (2021) focused on faculty incivility in the classroom, which is an understudied topic.

Many researchers stated a limitation due to the demographics they studied. Yassour-Borochowitz and Desivillia (2016) said that their study was limited because it was conducted at one university in Israel and needs replication at other universities. Many other articles, including Aliakbari and Hajizadeh (2018), Alt and Itzkovich (2018), Campbell et al. (2020), Erdem and Kocyigit (2019), Huang et al. (2020), Ibrahim and Qalawa (2016), Irwin and Cederblad (2019), Irwin et al. (2021), Laverghetta (2018), Muthanna and Sang (2018), Park and Kang (2021), Sauer et al. (2017), Suk Kim et al. (2020), Turhan et al. (2019), and Urban et al. (2021) cited this limitation as well. Turnipseed and Landay (2018) noted a similar limitation in their study.

The majority of the research conducted on incivility is in face-to-face classrooms. Johnson et al. (2017) noted that research has been done within the last 10 years that focus on student incivility within online classrooms. They found that much of the incivility was similar to face-to-face institutions. Donathan et al. (2017) looked specifically at incivility in online classrooms and found different results than Johnson et al. Campbell et al. (2020) continued this research geared toward incivility in online classrooms. They stated that professors need to be proactive in handling classroom incivility, but it does not happen as

often in online versus face-to-face classrooms. All of the above research indicates that student incivility is constantly evolving, and the responses to the incivility will need to change. Continued research is necessary at both on-campus and online schools to understand how to effectively minimize incivility in the classroom. Clark (2017), Huang et al. (2020), Ibrahim and Qalawa (2016), Ingraham et al. (2018), and Urban et al. (2021) stated that there needs to be an increase in policies on uncivil behaviors in universities and that faculty need additional training to deal with incivility effectively. Irwin et al. (2021) stated something similar; professors need support in addressing incivility from the university. When a professor has support, there is a greater likelihood that they will address incivility in the classroom.

An emerging approach used in research on this topic is interpretative phenomenology. Boadu (2021) looked at teachers' experiences using an interpretative phenomenological approach. This research was unique because few articles focus on the teacher's experiences in the classroom. Interpretative phenomenology rarely is used in this type of research. There is a need to view interpretative phenomenology differently from the past (Boadu, 2021). It is more a series of decisions and actions instead of principles. When viewed in this way, the techniques used will differ.

When a student engages in classroom incivility, they may be struggling to find the motivation to become involved and integrated academically or socially (Johnson et al., 2017). This may play a role in why incivility occurs. Professors need to be aware of this fact and look for this behavior. This behavior may be an early warning sign that needs addressing promptly. Another aspect of classroom incivility may stem from a student

desiring attention that they have been lacking. A professor needs to be aware of all possible factors and be able to address the situation swiftly before it negatively impacts the classroom.

In the classroom, there are numerous contexts where teaching occurs. Irwin et al. (2021) noted that incivility occurred more frequently in a larger lecture hall compared to a small group. This is so because students are less likely to be heard and known in a larger lecture hall. Whereas in smaller groups, students are likely to be an active part of the classroom, and they have less likelihood of engaging in uncivil before because they will be caught doing so. According to Johnson et al. (2017), a more personalized approach may benefit students who engage in uncivil behavior. These students are often attempting to reach out and desire connection with others. Giving personalized attention to students is the goal is to decreasing incivility.

No matter why incivility occurs at the post-secondary level, educational institutions need to be cognizant of it, acknowledge it and its implications, and generate solutions for it (Vural & Bacioglu, 2020). Huang et al. (2020) seconded this statement and stated that everyone associated with college classrooms needs to be aware of incivility, accept responsibility, and do things to counteract it. Classroom incivility occurs at every educational level, and it is not going to disappear anytime soon. Colleges and universities, professors, and students need to be aware of the problem and work to counteract it in the institution and classroom.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter reviewed the literature that has set the foundation of the purpose of the research, the problem, and why this study was necessary. Many researchers focus on incivility internationally and domestically. However, limited studies address professors' experiences with handling negative, intentional, student-to-student classroom incivility. It is clear from the literature that student incivility is present in classrooms worldwide and that incivility is impacting the classroom. It is also evident that professors' inability to handle the classroom incivility effectively can lead to additional problems.

Research indicates that some of the professors' experiences may be unique depending on their geographic location. All of the research conducted has been internationally or in larger coastal areas in the United States. Research does not explain professors' experiences in rural communities in the middle of the United States. Therefore, this research addresses the gap by exploring professors' experiences handling negative intentional student-to-student classroom incivility in rural Wisconsin. The outcomes contribute to a better understanding of how a professor addresses classroom incivility.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology that will guide this research. A qualitative approach is explained as necessary to understand the professors' lived experiences in rural Wisconsin. The following chapter outlines my role as the researcher, data collection method, possible participant demographics, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Various international and domestic studies have addressed how classroom incivility is perceived by students and educators. However, in reviewing the literature, I found few studies from the United States dedicated to a professor's experiences with handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility (Erdem & Kocyigit, 2019). Current research does not adequately address the experiences of the educator in such situations, specifically at the college or university level in the United States, even though there has been an increase in classroom incivility. The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve understanding of college professors' personal experiences of intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. In this chapter, there is a discussion of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, population and sampling, data collection, instrumentation, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, the treatment of human participants, and the treatment of data.

Research Design and Rationale

Multiple studies have addressed the implications of incivility in the classroom at all educational levels, but few studies have addressed the professors and their experiences in relation to this issue (Alt & Itzkovich, 2016; Irwin & Cederblad, 2019; Park & Kang, 2021; Urban et al., 2021). This suggests that further research should be conducted. In selecting a research design, I did not consider a quantitative study even though such a study could be replicated because there are a significant number of quantitative studies that have been conducted in this area. A qualitative study was best for this research

because it was aimed at professors' lived experiences and finding themes among those experiences.

As I conducted a deep review of the literature, a common theme found was that further research is needed to determine which classroom interventions are effective in reducing incivility in the classroom. A qualitative approach best fit the needs of the study. A qualitative study was used to gain an understanding of college professors' lived experiences with handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility and what themes emerged regarding which interventions are the most effective.

Specifically, an interpretative phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences of professors who have 5 or more years of teaching experience at the college or university level. With this design, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the professors' experiences using data collected through interviews with chosen participants. This data collection method was effective because it offered the opportunity to explore current themes and develop new themes when they surfaced.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I actively recruited participants, conducted interviews, and voice recorded the interviews. The data collected was entered into a coding program for coding and analysis. I was an observer-participant in this study. None of the participants had any personal or professional relationship with me, and I did not share any personal biases or perspectives with the participants. If there was researcher bias that occurred, I would have managed it via keeping detailed records, including all data in the results, acknowledging the limitations, remaining neutral during the entire

research process, and asking for advice from my team while reviewing the data if necessary. Research was not conducted at my place of employment or with anyone from there, and I did not act in a supervisory role in relation to the participants.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of college professors in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties in southeastern Wisconsin with at least 5 years of teaching experience at the college or university level. Participants were required to be English speaking and were recruited from southeastern Wisconsin through professional contacts from a previous position. The professors were contacted for an interview via telephone or email. The study was limited to the geographic location of Dodge and Fond du lac Counties.

In determining the appropriate sample size, my concern was reaching saturation. Typically, phenomenological studies yield enough data to reach saturation with between six and 20 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). I believed that a sample size of 8 to 15 were desirable for this study because it allowed time for recruitment and in-depth interviews. The interviews continued until there are no new relevant themes that emerge.

Data Collection

The interview protocol used consisted of open-ended questions to address the research question. The interview questions were finalized after determining that no revisions are needed. This protocol allowed for flexibility in the ordering and wording of the questions based on the responses. The interviews were audio recorded, with consent, for accuracy of information.

Prior to the interviews, I told the participants what questions to expect and the interview would take approximately 1 hour, which included 15 minutes for follow-up questions if needed. I explained that the interviews were audio recorded for clarity. Additionally, I explained how analysis, storage, and use the information provided would occur, and when approximately the results were expected to be available.

I ensured participants' privacy by meeting with them in a private location. Alternatively, a phone or video call to conduct an interview, occurred in a private location where there were no other individuals present. The consent form included the participant's name, but I did not release or use this information for this study. I expected the time frame for data collection to be less than 4 months.

Instrumentation

The data was obtained through one-time audio recorded interviews; the recordings were maintained on a password-protected computer. The participants were assigned a number, to identify them. Working with my chair and dissertation team, I documented and reviewed all steps in the data collection process. If recruitment resulted in too few participants, I would contact local universities to recruit additional participants. Discrepant cases did not cause an issue because I did not try to elaborate, modify, or refine a theory. I gathered information from professors to get an accurate understanding of their experiences. All of the data collected was in relation to the research question.

I analyzed the data using a qualitative data program, such as NVivo. NVivo is a time- and work-efficient software that supports qualitative research by organizing, analyzing, and supporting insights into the entered data. It also helped in clearly

identifying themes. The data was categorized into specific aspects as they were experienced and organized larger bodies of text by breaking them down into smaller units based on similar words or experiences. Through integration and summarization of the data, I described the experiences of college professors regarding which interventions they used while dealing with intentional student-to-student classroom incivility.

After the interview was complete, the participants were debriefed. I restated the purpose of the study, when the results would be available and how to obtain them, contact information for IRB chair, additional resources for professors dealing with incivility, crisis hotline information if the study caused distress, my contact information, research references, a thank you to the participants, and an opportunity to ask questions. Participants did not need to come in for follow-up interviews, but if it is necessary, I would contact them via email or telephone.

The following is a sample of the interview questions that were presented to participants:

1. What intervention strategies do you use when student-to-student incivility occurs in your classroom?
2. What was your experience handling incivility before becoming a professor?
3. How have your intervention strategies changed from your first 5 years as a professor until now?
4. How has your experience with previous student incivility altered the interventions that you use now?

5. What skills do you feel you have developed from the experience of handling intentional student incivility?

Data Analysis

Interpretive phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences of professors. It is based on Boadu (2021) and was appropriate because it provided insights into how the professor handles intentional student-to-student incivility. The data was collected from interviews with professors in Dodge and Fond du lac counties in Wisconsin with 5 or more years of teaching experience in higher education. After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed and entered into NVivo to extrapolate themes and assist with data coding and analysis.

Credibility

The strategies used to validate credibility were triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, member checks, saturation, and reflexivity. I used different data sources within the same method, specifically private versus public universities. Analyst triangulation was used by having my dissertation team review my data analysis. Member checks occurred because they allowed participants to provide additional information and correct errors. Saturation occurred by completing fourteen interviews with professors. As stated earlier, this number reached saturation for this type of research. Reflexivity occurred by internally reflecting on the research process and maintaining an open dialogue with my dissertation team to reduce researcher bias.

Transferability

This research provided readers with enough evidence to prove that the results were applicable to other populations and contexts. There was a variety of participants based on gender, race, university type, and age. This helped the research be transferable to other populations and contexts. In addition, Houghton et al., (2012) proposed thick description. Thick description allowed the reader to determine the transferability based on details obtained by a researcher. Using thick description allowed detailed themes to arise.

Dependability

To achieve dependability within this qualitative research, triangulation and an audit trial were in place. The audit trial within this research contained an organized description of the documentation, procedures, data, and analysis tools for reproduction purposes. Triangulation, discussion with peer researchers, and an audit trial were employed for dependability reasons (Qazi, 2011).

Confirmability

The research detailed the procedures used, the data itself, and analysis tools. While this helped achieve dependability, it also allows future researchers the opportunity to confirm this study. An audit trial also ensured confirmability. Therefore, the details on the data collection process, data analysis, and my interpretation of the data were included.

Ethical Procedures

Permissions

I provided participants with informed consent prior to agreeing to an interview. Participants understood the purpose of the research through the informed consent process.

The participants chose to cooperate with the research by volunteering to participate in interview. Since the participants were not part of a specific organization or university, there were no permission requirements.

Treatment of Human Participants

This population was not a vulnerable population. Therefore, there were no expected risks for emotional or physical harm. The informed consent and interview questions were written in a format that is understandable by potential participants. There was not compensation associated with this study. I did not conduct this study at my place of employment or with current or former colleagues. Participants remained anonymous, and the data collected were not labeled with any identifying information. The participants signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study.

I recruited participants via networking from former employment. An ethical concern present was the risk of a prior relationship. To avoid this, I did not conduct an interview with any former colleagues or professors. If the recruitment process did not warrant enough participants, I would have asked for recommendations from current participants. There was a question posed at the end of the interview, where I asked if there were other professors who were a good candidate for the study.

An ethical concern related to data collection was participants refusing to answer all the interview questions or needing to withdraw before the interview was complete. If this occurred, I would have asked if the participant needed to stop the interview or wanted to withdraw completely. I would have rescheduled the interview if the participant needed to stop. If the participant chose to withdraw, the data collected would not have

been included. I gained approval from Walden Universities Institutional Review Board prior to conducting research.

Treatment of Data

The data collected was confidential because there was demographic information collected about the participants. There were no identifying data collected, but with the inclusion of demographic questions, it was considered confidential. There were no concerns regarding confidential data. I ensured that participants were not identifiable in the data collected.

Confidential data was protected through four safeguards. First were physical safeguards. Data was collected in secluded interview rooms and stored away from the public. The computer it was stored on was private and not accessible by other people. Second were administrative safeguards. I was the only person who has access to participants' information. Third were technical safeguards. The computer data was stored on was password protected and had active firewalls and anti-virus software in place. Finally, were research design safeguards. I anonymized the information, transcribed raw data as soon as possible, and stored de-identified data separately from coding lists.

As stated above, I was the only person who had access to the data. I also created a data dissemination plan, including when the research was complete and available and data editing steps. Data collected in this study will be kept for 5 to 7 years under lock and key. After that time, the data will be destroyed.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I provided an in-depth discussion of the research methodology used in this study. I used a qualitative phenomenological approach. I used an interview protocol that consisted of open-ended questions to address the research question. Fourteen professors were selected to go through the interview process. Data collection occurred by using open-ended interview questions. Interviews were conducted via phone or face to face. I analyzed the data using a qualitative data program, such as NVivo to find themes that emerged from the interviews. The results of this study are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the interventions professors use while handling intentional student-to-student incivility in their classrooms. It also illuminated which interventions have lessened incivility in a professor's classroom and which ones do not. The research question was answered through the interview questions. In this chapter, I restate the research question. The data collection method and demographic characteristics are outlined. A summary of the results is provided, along with tables and figures for illustrations. The chapter ends with an overview of the results answering the research question.

The research question for this study was as follows: What are professors' lived experiences of handling intentional student-to-student incivility in their classrooms? What themes emerge?

Setting

For the purpose of this study and research design, participants were recruited through connections from work colleagues at a previous job. An invitation email (Appendix A) was sent to the work colleagues, who passed it along to any professors interested in participating in the study. If they were interested in participating in an interview, they either called or emailed me to set up the interview. All correspondence with participants was done via phone and email until the interview date.

There were 14 participants who met the criteria and contacted me to set up an interview. During the time of data collection, there were still some COVID-19

precautions in place for participants who requested to do the interview via Zoom. The interviews conducted via Zoom were done in my home with a closed door, and no one else was present to maintain confidentiality. The interviews done in person were at each participant's personal offices with a closed door to maintain confidentiality. During the interviews, the participants ensured they had no classes to teach and did not have office hours. They confirmed that the interview would not be interrupted by putting out a sign that stated they were busy and not to be interrupted.

Demographics

Table 1 represents the participant demographics for all 14 participants, including their gender, age range, type of institution they teach at, how long they have been a professor, and their education level. Sixty-five percent of the participants were female, and 35% were male. They ranged in ages from 30s through 70s, with 71% being aged 40-59 years. The majority of participants, 57%, taught at a 4-year university. There were two participants who taught at a 2-year college and four at the graduate level. The participants were required to teach for at least 5 years, but most participants were educators for at least 20 years or more. Four participants were teaching for only 5 years and two participants for over 30 years. There were seven participants with a master's degree and seven with a Ph.D.

Table 1

Demographics

Participant	Gender	Age range	Institution type	Years teaching	Education level
One	Female	60-69	4-year	5	Masters
Two	Male	60-69	4-year	32	Masters
Three	Male	40-49	4-year	15	Ph.D.

Four	Female	50-59	2-year	22	Masters
Five	Female	50-59	2-year	20	Masters
Six	Male	50-59	4-year	5	Masters
Seven	Female	40-49	Grad level	10	PhD
Eight	Female	70-79	Grad level	30	PhD
Nine	Female	50-59	Grad level	20	PhD
Ten	Female	50-59	4-year	20	Masters
Eleven	Female	40-49	4-year	20	Masters
Twelve	Male	50-59	Grad level	20	PhD
Thirteen	Male	40-49	4-year	5	PhD
Fourteen	Female	30-39	4-year	5	PhD

Data Collection

Before beginning recruitment or data collection, approval from Walden University's IRB was given on October 28, 2022, with an approval number of 10-28-22-0744686 for the research to be conducted. Once this was given, I reached out to previous colleagues, and they reached out to their contacts. They provided the invitation email to their contacts, and if they were interested, they called or emailed to schedule an interview. There were 14 participants who met the necessary criteria and signed the consent form. The needed criterion being a college professor in Dodge or Fond du Lac counties in Wisconsin with at least 5 years of teaching experience.

Due to the COVID-19 protocol that some participants followed, all communication before data collection was done virtually. Half of the interviews were conducted via Zoom, and the other half were done face-to-face. The participants who did the interviews via Zoom were emailed the consent forms, including permission for the interview to be recorded, and had to respond, via email, "I consent," for participation. The other participants completed the consent form in person before the interview started. Interviews were scheduled either via Zoom or in person. Participants' chosen interview times were based on their convenience. The participants were all aware and understood

that they could withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Their participation was voluntary without any monetary gain or incentives, as noted in the consent form.

Due to some of the interviews being conducted via Zoom, the participants were informed to make sure they were in a comfortable, non-distracting, and quiet space for the duration of the interview. I ensured the same thing during the Zoom interviews. During the face-to-face interviews, each participant ensured the environment was comfortable, non-distracting, and quiet. Once the participant and I were present, I sought permission to begin recording via voice recording on the phone. All participants agreed to have the interview recorded.

When interviews began, each participant was asked the same six questions along with three demographic questions (Appendix C). There were also other questions that came up during the interviews based on responses from the participants. Each participant was asked to be as honest and descriptive as possible. I remained an active listener during the interview and asked follow-up questions. After all the interview questions were complete, the participants were asked if they had any additional information they wanted to share, but all participants declined. Each interview lasted around 30 to 45 minutes long. The participants were informed that they would receive a complete transcript from their interview within 72 hours for review to heighten the trustworthiness of all data and associated study results. The interviews, participant information, and all data were stored on a password-protected computer, where it will remain for 5 years and then will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

For this qualitative study, an interpretative phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences of professors. This design is effective because it offered the opportunity to explore current themes. It is based on Boadu (2021) and was appropriate because it provided insights into how the professor handles intentional student-to-student incivility. Once each interview was completed, recorded, and fully transcribed, the participants were given a copy to review and correct if necessary. There were no corrections made to the finished transcriptions. After member checking, the full data analysis began.

During the data analysis process, six core themes were common among participants, and numerous subthemes are addressed in the results section of this chapter. Those six core themes were intervention strategies, motivations, policies, participant reactions, participant worldview, and necessary skills.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Within Chapter 3, potential issues of trustworthiness were addressed, and the methods that could ensure this trustworthiness. The six methods addressed included member checking, data saturation, an audit trial, saturation, reflexivity, participant variation, and thick description. The first step to ensure trustworthiness within the research, the first step was to have data saturation. Data saturation occurs when the researcher finds no additional data about the phenomenon (Baker et al., 2018). For data collection, the research conducted a semi-structured interview with 14 participants. The interviews continued until there was no new information from the participants regarding

the phenomenon. These 14 participants were of different genders, races, university types, and ages, which helped ensure trustworthiness via transferability.

Another step taken to ensure trustworthiness was member checking. Member checking is when the data get returned to participants to explore and confirm the credibility and validation of what was collected and reported. For this data collection, each participant was given the transcriptions from their interviews to review for accuracy, validity, credibility, and overall trustworthiness. This study used reflexivity to ensure trustworthiness, and this occurred through the researcher internally reflecting on the research process and maintaining an open dialogue with the dissertation team.

This study used thick description as another way to ensure trustworthiness. Houghton et al. (2012) stated that thick description allows the reader to determine transferability based on details obtained by the researcher. This method allowed detailed themes to arise in the data. The final method used to ensure trustworthiness was an audit trial. The audit trial contains an organized description of the documentation, procedures, data, and analysis tools for reproduction purposes.

Thematic Results

The conducted data analysis led to five core themes and numerous subthemes based on one research question:

For college professors' recollections of intervention strategies to reduce student-to-student intentional classroom incivility in their classrooms, what themes emerge in their reports of the process that they used to develop it?

Theme 1: Intervention Strategies

The first theme found based on the participants' responses as intervention strategies used. This topic was one that was talked about significantly in the interviews because every participant had a lot of information to share regarding their intervention strategies they had used throughout their tenure as a professor. There were nine subthemes within the intervention strategies they used. Those subthemes were confidence, direct, passive, do nothing, role model, communicate standards, university standards, consistent consequences, and self-care.

Direct

All 14 participants stated that being direct and abiding by their university standards was most effective for them. For example, participant two shared, "My university provides a specific plan for addressing incivility, and they expect that every professor follows that plan in their classroom." All the other participants echoed those thoughts. Participant 5 stated, "Being direct when addressing classroom incivility is one of the most effective techniques. My students prefer a direct approach and respond more favorably when I am direct with them." All the other participants said something to the same extent.

Confidence

Over half of the participants stated that being confident with their interventions was critical. For example, Participant 9 shared, "When I started teaching, I lacked confidence in my classroom. I did not have effective intervention strategies because I lacked confidence. Once I gained confidence in my abilities, I used the same strategies,

and they were more effective because of how I delivered them." Other participants echoed those sentiments and expanded on them. Participant 13 shared, "I could not have gained the confidence I now have if it weren't for my mentor. My mentor taught me effective intervention strategies and how to deliver them."

Role Model

There were only 28.5% of participants that stated they had a mentor provided by their university, but the ones who did praised their mentors for their success. Participant 1 said, "My mentor is why I am an effective professor today. She took me under her wing and taught me everything that she knew. I still use the techniques I learned from my mentor today, which was over 25 years ago." As another example, Participant 12 shared, "When I first started teaching, my university paired me up with a mentor in my department. My mentor had been in the department for over 20 years, and he shared his knowledge with me and taught me everything I know. I had never heard of a university providing mentors before, which is what drew me to where I teach now. None of my professors ever spoke about receiving a mentor and they struggled greatly. My university has the right idea, providing a mentor for new professors to teach them how to succeed. Now, I try to do the same for new professors. I am now a mentor." While not all of the participants are mentors themselves, many of them cited that they try to help new professors in any way that they can. Some of them in a mentorship program and other through personal interactions with new professors.

Do Nothing

The next subtheme was doing nothing when incivility occurred. There were three participants who stated that at the beginning of their careers, they did nothing when incivility occurred in their classroom. For example, Participant 4 said, "One of the worst things I did in my classroom was nothing. Doing nothing made the incivility worse." The two other participants who did nothing echoed this statement. Doing nothing to combat incivility is one of the worst things they could have done. Participant 13 shared expanded on that thought: "There were many instances early in my career when I did nothing when incivility occurred. It was the worst choice I ever made. My classroom was out of control, and it gave my students cause to test the limits regarding incivility. Things continued to get worse, and I thought about quitting my job because things were out of control." The three participants who cited this intervention shared their struggles during the time they did nothing and explained how it impacted them, as well as their students.

Passive

A small percentage of participants stated that at the beginning of their careers, they were passive in their intervention strategies. Five participants indicated they were passive in their intervention strategies at the beginning of their teaching careers. Participant 7 said, "I am not naturally direct, and I am more passive. This extended into my classroom at the beginning of my career. I was incredibly passive with my intervention strategies, which were not effective because my students walked all over me." Another participant echoed those sentiments: "I teach in a male dominant field and had all male students for many years. As a woman in a male dominant field, some

students thought they could domineer over me, and for some time, I let them. I was passive in my classroom because that is what the male students expected from me. My students took advantage of this passiveness, and the intervention strategies I used were not effective." All the participants who stated they were passive at one point in their career also noted that it was not effective, and they needed to learn how to be more direct.

University Standards and Classroom Standards

Over half of the participants noted that communicating university and classroom standards of incivility was critical. For example, Participant 3 stated, "my university has specific standards regarding incivility, and I based my classroom standards on those. What I have found to be effective is to communicate those standards at the beginning of each course." The other participants who cited this method also spoke about the importance of being transparent regarding the standards at the beginning of each term. Another example, Participant 9 shared, "one of the best ways that I have found to combat incivility is to be upfront with my students about the standards of the university and the standards for my classroom. I have found that my students react positively to the direct communication of the standards. It also streamlines the process of dealing with incivility because every student acting uncivil will be punished in the same way."

Consistent Consequences

Slightly less than half of the participants stated that having consistent consequences are essential. All the participants who cited this said that all professors following the same consequences for incivility are the only way that the consequences can be effective. For example, Participant 8 stated, "I used to work at a university where

the department I worked in had many professors who did not follow the same consequences, and the students suffered. When they were in my class, they would get punished by the university standard, but when they were with another professor, the punishment was not the same. It was confusing for the student, and it made the students react to my techniques in an even more negative way." Other participants echoed this exact thought. For example, Participant 2 stated, "I think consistent consequences are critical in the classroom. In my experience, when there is a disconnect between punishments, students continue to act uncivil. If they know that there is a possibility that they won't get punished, then they choose to continue to engage in incivility."

Self-Care

Finally, three professors brought up using self-care as an intervention strategy. The three participants who noted this method talked about effective self-care techniques in their classrooms, but they all emphasized the importance of using self-care. Participant 11 stated, "using self-care in my classroom is one of the most effective ways to help everyone relax and reduce incivility. I try to implement self-care from the first class and regularly throughout the course. Then when incivility occurs, I address it immediately and use self-care to help calm down the situation." Participant 6 agreed and shared, "Self-care is something that I love to do in my classroom. It helps me to remain calm in the face of incivility, but it also helps my students. I try to look at my students as a whole person, not simply their behavior. Students go through a lot of stress and some students experience trauma; this can impact their behavior. I have found that by using self-care techniques in the classroom, this helps to lower the stress levels of my students and their

behavior increases. I have seen a significant decrease with incivility in my classroom when I use self-care versus when I don't use it." Although most participants did not note self-care, the ones who did mention it praised the use of it.

Table 2

Intervention Strategies

Intervention	Number of participants	Sample quote
Confidence	9	"When I started teaching, I lacked confidence in my classroom. I did not have effective intervention strategies because I lacked confidence. Once I gained confidence in my abilities, I used the same strategies, and they were more effective because of how I delivered them." (P9)
Directness	14	"Being direct when addressing classroom incivility is one of the most effective techniques. My students prefer a direct approach and respond more favorably when I am direct with them." (P5)
Passiveness	5	"I teach in a male dominant field and had all male students for many years. As a woman in a male dominant field, some students thought they could domineer over me, and for some time, I let them. I was passive in my classroom because that is what the male students expected from me. My students took advantage of this passiveness, and the intervention strategies I used were not effective." (P-)
Do nothing	3	"There were many instances early in my career when I did nothing when incivility occurred. It was the worst choice I ever made. My classroom was out of control, and it gave my students cause to test the limits regarding incivility. Things continued to get worse, and I thought about quitting my job because things were out of control." (P13)
Role model	4	"When I first started teaching, my university paired me up with a mentor in my department. My mentor had been in the department for over 20 years, and he shared his knowledge with me and taught me everything I know. I had never heard of a university providing mentors before, which is what drew me to where I teach now. None of my professors ever spoke about receiving a mentor and they struggled greatly. My university has the right idea, providing a mentor for new professors to teach them how to succeed. Now, I try to do the same for new professors. I am now a mentor." (P12)
Communicate standards	8	"One of the best ways that I have found to combat incivility is to be upfront with my students about the standards of the university and the standards for my classroom. I have found that my students react positively to the direct communication of the standards. It also streamlines the process of dealing with incivility because every student acting uncivil will be punished in the same way." (P9)
University standards	14	"My university has specific standards regarding incivility, and I based my classroom standards on those. What I have found to be effective is to communicate those standards at the beginning of each course." (P3)
Consistent consequences	6	"I think consistent consequences are critical in the classroom. In my experience, when there is a disconnect between punishments, students continue to act uncivil. If they know that there is a possibility that they

		won't get punished, then they choose to continue to engage in incivility." (P2)
Intervention	Number of participants	Sample quote
Self-care	3	"Self-care is something that I love to do in my classroom. It helps me to remain calm in the face of incivility, but it also helps my students. I try to look at my students as a whole person, not simply their behavior. Students go through a lot of stress and some students experience trauma; this can impact their behavior. I have found that by using self-care techniques in the classroom, this helps to lower the stress levels of my students and their behavior increases. I have seen a significant decrease with incivility in my classroom when I use self-care versus when I don't use it." (P6)

Theme 2: Motivations

A second theme that emerged from the data were different motivations. Each participant noted different motivations that drove their desire to teach and their intervention strategies. The seven motivations mentioned: making a difference, passion, paycheck, family career, job security, job satisfaction, and sharing knowledge.

Making a Difference

Most participants stated that they wanted to make a difference in their students' lives, and that desire influenced their intervention strategies. Participant 7 shared, "I became a professor to make a difference in my students' lives. This influences everything I do in my classroom, including my intervention strategies. I use strategies that will help my students learn and make a change in their life. I don't want only to stop the incivility at that moment, but in the long run." Many other participants echoed this statement. Another example, Participant 3 shared, "one of my favorite things about being a professor is being able to make a difference in my students lives. It is the thing that drives me to be an effective professor. How I handle incivility in my classroom can alter my student's days and sometimes their lives. Due to this, I choose my intervention strategies

carefully because I want to make sure I am making a positive difference in my students lives."

Passion

The second subtheme noted by participants was having a passion for the job, which influenced their interventions. Half of the participants cited this fact. Participant 2 expanded on the first subtheme and included passion in their response, "I have a passion for making a difference in my students' lives. This passion affects every intervention strategy I use. I am also passionate about improving my classroom, which means ensuring there is no regular incivility occurring." This is something that many participants shared, their passion driving the intervention strategies they use. Participant 13 expanded on this and shared, "The intervention strategies I use are driven by the passion I have for teaching and my students. I try to make my classroom a positive environment, which means keeping incivility at a minimum. The interventions I use are effective because I have spent many years perfecting them. Every time I help a student overcome their uncivil behavior; it drives my passion further."

Paycheck

Another subtheme from a small fraction of the participants is being a professor for a paycheck. Two participants cited this as a motivation for them, especially earlier in their careers. These professors also mentioned doing nothing when incivility occurred early in their careers. Participant 11 said, "When I started my career, I only did it for a paycheck. Thinking back on it now, it was not a smart reason to become an educator. Plus, all the schooling I had to go through to start teaching at the college level and the

money I spent. Thankfully, my motivation changed over time, and I became a more effective professor, and the intervention strategies I use became more effective." The other professor who stated they became a professor for a paycheck also brought up how other jobs would have been easier and taken less schooling and money. They both cited how it was not wise to spend so much time and money to make money.

Family Career

One participant stated that education is in their blood. Both of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were educators. Being a professor was what they wanted to do from early on in their life because it was all they knew. This participant stated, "I knew what I was going to do with my life from a young age. Education is in my blood, and my parents expected that I pursue education. My parents were both college professors, and I have either college professors or lower-level teachers within my family on both sides. My grandparents, great-grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles worked in education in some fashion." This participant shared that they grew to love teaching, and cannot imagine doing anything else, but it started as a family legacy. When they first started teaching, their intervention strategies were lacking because of the reason they were teaching. The moment they began to loving teaching, their interventions changed and became more effective.

Job Security and Job Satisfaction

Roughly half of the participants noted that their job security and satisfaction influenced their incivility interventions. When they did not feel secure in their job, their job satisfaction lessened, which led to their interventions lacking. For example,

Participant 1 shared, “When I started as a professor, my job satisfaction was high. I was thrilled to be teaching, but as a few years passed, I desired more job security. That lack of job security made my job satisfaction decrease. I noticed that when my job satisfaction decreased, the effectiveness of my interventions decreased. It was almost as if I did not care as much when I was not completely happy with my job.” The other participants who noted these things also said something similar. Their job security and satisfaction directly correlated to the effectiveness of their intervention strategies. Participant 9 expanded on that thought, “my job security and job satisfaction directly linked to the effectiveness of my intervention strategies. When I was offered a full-time role at my university, a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt free enough to be the best professor I could be, and every aspect of my classroom improved, including my interventions.”

Sharing Knowledge

Most participants stated that one of their primary motivations is to share knowledge, and when incivility occurs, that cannot happen. Twelve participants noted that they want to share knowledge with their students, but incivility significantly impacts that process. For example, Participant 14 stated, “I became an educator because I want to share knowledge with my students. When incivility occurs, I cannot share that knowledge because too many other things take away from the learning process. I need to handle the incivility first, and then I can continue sharing my knowledge with the students.” The other participants gave similar responses. For example, Participant 1 shared, “one of my favorite things is sharing knowledge with my students. Sharing knowledge is one of the greatest joys of my life because I believe that knowledge is power. The more we know,

the better we become. One thing that gets in the way of sharing knowledge is when incivility occurs. Incivility disrupts the learning process. It disrupts the entire classroom because now everything needs to focus on the student creating the incivility. When incivility occurs, I want to get back to sharing knowledge, so I deal with the incivility. My desire to share knowledge drives the intervention strategies I use."

Table 3

Motivations

Motivations	Number of participants	Sample quote
Making a difference	11	"I became a professor to make a difference in my students' lives. This influences everything I do in my classroom, including my intervention strategies. I use strategies that will help my students learn and make a change in their life. I don't want only to stop the incivility at that moment, but in the long run." (P7)
Passion	7	"I have a passion for making a difference in my students' lives. This passion affects every intervention strategy I use. I am also passionate about improving my classroom, which means ensuring there is no regular incivility occurring." (P2)
Paycheck	2	"When I started my career, I only did it for a paycheck. Thinking back on it now, it was not a smart reason to become an educator. Plus, all the schooling I had to go through to start teaching at the college level and the money I spent. Thankfully, my motivation changed over time, and I became a more effective professor, and the intervention strategies I use became more effective." (P11)
Family career	1	"I knew what I was going to do with my life from a young age. Education is in my blood, and my parents expected that I pursue education. My parents were both college professors, and I have either college professors or lower-level teachers within my family on both sides. My grandparents, great-grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles worked in education in some fashion." (P?)
Job security	6	"My job security and job satisfaction directly linked to the effectiveness of my intervention strategies. When I was offered a full-time role at my university, a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt free enough to be the best professor I could be, and every aspect of my classroom improved, including my interventions." (P9)
Job satisfaction	8	"When I started as a professor, my job satisfaction was high. I was thrilled to be teaching, but as a few years passed, I desired more job security. That lack of job security made my job satisfaction decrease. I noticed that when my job satisfaction decreased, the effectiveness of my interventions decreased. It was almost as if I did not care as much when I was not completely happy with my job." (P1)
Sharing knowledge	12	"I became an educator because I want to share knowledge with my students. When incivility occurs, I cannot share that knowledge because too

	many other things take away from the learning process. I need to handle the incivility first, and then I can continue sharing my knowledge with the students." (P14)

Theme 3: Policies

The third theme found from the data were necessary policies. One of the interview questions asked what policies the participants thought needed to be in place regarding incivility. There were four policies noted by participants, flexible punishments, harsher punishments, consistent punishments, and additional faculty training regarding incivility.

Flexible Punishments

Less than half of the participants said they think universities need to use flexible punishments. Five participants noted flexible punishment because incivility occurs for various reasons and thought its basis is on an individual student's case. For example, Participant 5 stated, "punishment for incivility should not be so rigid. Every student is different, and incivility occurs for many reasons. There needs to be a policy where universities handle punishments on a case-by-case basis." Another example came from Participant 11, "I think that punishments for incivility need to be more flexible. Strict punishments do not do anyone good, and many students have experienced trauma or other stress, which leads them to engage in uncivil behavior. Punishments need to be geared toward a specific student and their situation."

Harsher Punishments

There was one participant who took another stance. This participant stated that harsher punishments should be in place for students who engage in uncivil behaviors. Participant 9 said, "there need to be harsher punishments for uncivil students in the

classroom. They are in college now and should know how to act maturely. Harsher punishments will help teach them that incivility is not acceptable. There is no way around it because incivility has been on the rise for many years. It's obvious that these lax punishments are not working, and we need to put an end to it now. These lax punishments are similar to doing nothing at all."

Consistent Punishments

More than half of the participants stated that consistent punishment were necessary. These nine participants do not think it needs to be harsher or more lenient but consistent. According to these participants, each university has different punishments that are not universal. Participant 10 stated, "I have been a professor for a few decades and worked at a few different universities throughout the years. Each university has different policies in place regarding incivility. There was one university that I worked for that had no consistency when it came to punishing incivility. One moment they would do nothing, and the next, they would expel someone for the same infraction. It was not beneficial to anyone." A few other professors shared similar experiences.

Additional Faculty Training

All participants agreed on one thing, and that is that additional faculty training is necessary regarding incivility. Each person shared that during their education, there was not any coursework or training done on how to handle classroom incivility. They did not learn how to handle incivility until after they started their career. For example, Participant 2 stated, "I had no idea how to handle classroom incivility before I started my career. My education took over a decade, and there was not a class in all those years that spoke a

word about handling incivility in the classroom. There were not any classes on how to manage your classroom at all. It was gross negligence because educators go into their careers unprepared for one of the most common situations that arise." Every other participant shared similar experiences.

Table 4

Policies

Policies	Number of participants	Sample quote
Flexible punishments	5	"I think that punishments for incivility need to be more flexible. Strict punishments do not do anyone good, and many students have experienced trauma or other stress, which leads them to engage in uncivil behavior. Punishments need to be geared toward a specific student and their situation." (P11)
Harsher punishments	1	"There need to be harsher punishments for uncivil students in the classroom. They are in college now and should know how to act maturely. Harsher punishments will help teach them that incivility is not acceptable. There is no way around it because incivility has been on the rise for many years. It's obvious that these lax punishments are not working, and we need to put an end to it now. These lax punishments are similar to doing nothing at all." (P9)
Policies	Number of participants	Sample quote
Consistent punishments	9	"I have been a professor for a few decades and worked at a few different universities throughout the years. Each university has different policies in place regarding incivility. There was one university that I worked for that had no consistency when it came to punishing incivility. One moment they would do nothing, and the next, they would expel someone for the same infraction. It was not beneficial to anyone." (P10)
Additional faculty training	14	"I had no idea how to handle classroom incivility before I started my career. My education took over a decade, and there was not a class in all those years that spoke a word about handling incivility in the classroom. There were not any classes on how to manage your classroom at all. It was gross negligence because educators go into their careers unprepared for one of the most common situations that arise." (P2)

Theme 4: Participant Worldview

During the interviews, twelve of the participants shared their worldview and how it influenced the interventions they used. This was the next theme to emerge in the data.

Two main subthemes emerged from this, Christian values and non-faith-based values. There were also two participants who did not share their worldviews in the interviews.

Christian Values

Slightly over half of the participants stated that they have Christian values of some kind, and that influenced their interactions with their students. For example, Participant 1 shared, "I work for a Christian-based university, and it influences everything I do in my classroom. The interventions I use go back to my Christian worldview, especially the golden rule. The way that I treat my students, especially in those difficult moments when incivility occurs, the same way that I would want to be treated." The seven other participants who cited Christian-based values stated something similar. For example, Participant 8 shared, "I have a strong Christian faith-based background and it influences everything I do in my classroom. I may not teach at a Christian university, but I still implement my Christian values into my classroom. The golden rule is something I practice in my classroom, which comes from the book of Matthew 7:12, 'in everything, then do to others as you would have them do to you.' This is what I based my interventions on and how I treat everyone in my classroom. Incivility does disrupt the classroom, but I also know that there is typically more to it than simply acting uncivil. So, my intervention strategies, while effective, are also kind and respectful."

Non-Faith-Based Values

Four participants stated that they do not have a faith-based value in their classroom and that unbiased opinion influenced the interventions they use. Two

participants noted that they have faith-based views, but do not want them to affect their classroom. They try to keep their religious beliefs out of the classroom because they have students who do not share those beliefs, and they want to remain unbiased. For example, Participant 11 shared, "I do have strong religious beliefs, and in my personal life, I am incredibly devout. My university is public, and many students do not share my beliefs. I do my best not to let my religious beliefs influence what I do in my classroom. Bias is something that I have seen a lot of, and I did not want to be the kind of professor who was biased against their students due to their religious beliefs." Another example, Participant 3 shared, "I do not have any faith-based values in general. Personally, I don't care if my students have different values than me. I will treat everyone the same, no matter their values or demographics. They're my student and that's all that matters. Even though I don't have faith-based values that influence my intervention strategies, I still try to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Those values influence my intervention strategies."

Table 5

Participant Worldview

Participant worldview	Number of participants	Sample quote
Christian values	8	"I work for a Christian-based university, and it influences everything I do in my classroom. The interventions I use go back to my Christian worldview, especially the golden rule. The way that I treat my students, especially in those difficult moments when incivility occurs, the same way that I would want to be treated." (P1)
Non-faith-based values	6	"I do not have any faith-based values in general. Personally, I don't care if my students have different values than me. I will treat everyone the same, no matter their values or demographics. They're my student and that's all that matters. Even though I don't have faith-based values that influence my intervention strategies, I still try to treat everyone with kindness and respect. Those values influence my intervention strategies." (P3)

Theme 5: Skills

The final theme found from the data collection process were skills. Throughout the interviews, the participants brought up various skills they learned based on incivility in their classrooms. There were four subthemes that emerged from this: patience, directness, confidence, and mentorship.

Patience

Eleven participants cited that patience was a skill they learned while handling incivility. For example, Participant 8 stated, "the process of learning how to become effective at handling classroom incivility, I needed to learn patience. I thought that I was a patient person, but I was not. The incivility process taught me how to be and be more understanding toward my students." This was a common sentiment with the other participants with cited this skill. Participant 2 shared, "patience is the best skill I learned throughout all my struggles with incivility in my classroom. My students needed me to be patient with them, both the students behaving uncivilly and the students who are bystanders. Incivility is a difficult thing to deal with and it can cause major strife in a classroom. Being patient with my students as they are finding themselves and as they learn how to behave civilly in the classroom is critical. This skill is also important outside the classroom. I'm not more patient with my family, friends, colleagues, and strangers."

Directness

All the participants noted a second subtheme, directness. Not all the participants started as direct, but they all gained that skill throughout their time handling classroom incivility. For example, Participant 3 shared, "I am not a direct person. People would

describe me as passive to a fault. That did not work well in my classroom because my students would walk all over me. I could only learn how to be an effective professor by becoming direct with my intervention strategies." A few other participants made similar statements, and the other participants agreed that directness was critical. Each participant needed to become more direct in their intervention strategies. Another example came from Participant 13, "I always thought I was a direct person. I was always called bossy and commanding, even as a child. Even though I have always been like this, it did not prepare me for the level of directness I needed to be an effective professor. I needed to further develop my directness and gear it toward handling incivility."

Confidence

Another skill that slightly more than half the participants noted was confidence. The nine participants who cited confidence as a skill they learned spoke about the importance of gaining confidence in their classroom and their intervention strategies. For example, Participant 6 noted, "before I could become effective in my classroom, I needed to gain confidence in my teaching abilities and the interventions I used. It took many hours of practice and many failures, but eventually, I gained the confidence I needed." The other eight participants shared similar experiences. For example, Participant 14 shared, "when I started teaching, my confidence levels were lacking. All my years of education and I wasn't prepared to take control in my classroom. College didn't teach me how to be a confident educator. Since I lacked confidence, my intervention strategies weren't effective. My students suffered because I allowed incivility to occur. My intervention strategies didn't work because I didn't employ them with confidence. After I

learned how to be more confident in my classroom, my intervention strategies began to work better. Gaining confidence was one of the best things I could do for myself and my students."

Mentorship

The final skill that a few participants noted was mentorship. Four participants cited this skill. For example, Participant 11 stated, "I had a mentor when I started my career. They took me under their wing and helped shape me into the professor I am today. I owe them my entire career, and I want to be able to do the same for my students. In my experience, students are uncivil in the classroom for many reasons, but a big reason is that they need someone to show them the right behavior. Many of these students did not receive discipline from their parents while growing up and they now have bad behaviors. My goal is to show my students the correct way to behave in class and life, and I do that by modeling behavior and using effective intervention strategies." The three other participants who cited this skill shared similar experiences. For example, Participant 14 shared, "the way that I gained confidence as an educator was through the help of my mentor. My mentor taught me everything they knew. I owe everything to my mentor. Now I try to do the same thing for others. I try to mentor my students and new professors."

Table 6

Skills

Skills	Number of participants	Sample quote
Patience	11	"Patience is the best skill I learned throughout all my struggles with incivility in my classroom. My students needed me to be patient with them, both the students behaving uncivilly and the students who are bystanders.

		Incivility is a difficult thing to deal with and it can cause major strife in a classroom. Being patient with my students as they are finding themselves and as they learn how to behave civilly in the classroom is critical. This skill is also important outside the classroom. I'm not more patient with my family, friends, colleagues, and strangers." (P2)
Directness	14	"I am not a direct person. People would describe me as passive to a fault. That did not work well in my classroom because my students would walk all over me. I could only learn how to be an effective professor by becoming direct with my intervention strategies." (P3)
Confidence	9	"When I started teaching, my confidence levels were lacking. All my years of education and I wasn't prepared to take control in my classroom. College didn't teach me how to be a confident educator. Since I lacked confidence, my intervention strategies weren't effective. My students suffered because I allowed incivility to occur. My intervention strategies didn't work because I didn't employ them with confidence. After I learned how to be more confident in my classroom, my intervention strategies began to work better. Gaining confidence was one of the best things I could do for myself and my students." (P14)
Mentorship	4	"I had a mentor when I started my career. They took me under their wing and helped shape me into the professor I am today. I owe them my entire career, and I want to be able to do the same for my students. In my experience, students are uncivil in the classroom for many reasons, but a big reason is that they need someone to show them the right behavior. Many of these students did not receive discipline from their parents while growing up and they now have bad behaviors. My goal is to show my students the correct way to behave in class and life, and I do that by modeling behavior and using effective intervention strategies." (P11)

Overall Study Results

The purposes of this study were not to make conclusions but to understand the experiences of college professors handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. A consensus has been established based on the thematic results regarding the interventions used, following university standards, and being direct with the intervention strategies. There was also a consensus that universities need to provide additional faculty training regarding handling incivility. These study results are not representative of all college professors. Yet, these results were able to provide insights into these experiences.

Summary

This chapter provided an outcome and summary of the research study's results. Each participant shared their experiences regarding how they handled incivility in their classrooms, including how they did things at the beginning of their career versus the 5-year and beyond. The emerging themes contributed to the research question and overall research study by summarizing these college professors' experiences with intentional student-to-student incivility in southeastern Wisconsin. The final chapter is a more explanatory discussion of how this research study's themes and results are harmonious with and contributes more information to current literature. The last chapter will consist of an interpretation of the study's findings, limitations, interpretations of the findings, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This general qualitative study was conducted with the purpose of exploring the experiences of college professors handling intentional student-to-student incivility in their classrooms. For this study, 14 college professors in Dodge and Fond du Lac counties of southeastern Wisconsin who have worked for 5 or more years at 2-year, 4-year, or graduate-level institutions each completed a semi-structured interview. These interviews, and the study, were constructed around one qualitative research question:

RQ- For college professors' recollections of intervention strategies to reduce student-to-student intentional classroom incivility in their classrooms, what themes emerge in their reports of the process that they used to develop it?

Within the introductory chapter of this study was a background on the study, the problem statement, a description of the purpose of the study, and the research question that were examined. Furthermore, a report of the theoretical framework, facework and politeness theory, was given, a description of the nature of the study was provided, and an explanation of the operational definitions used in the study was noted. Finally, the study scope, assumptions, significance, and limitations were stated. Chapter 2 of this study was a concise but descriptive literature review of all the present literature regarding the theoretical foundation of the study, as well as classroom incivility at all educational levels, students' and professors' experiences, and intervention strategies. The purpose of this second chapter was to communicate the evident gaps in literature surrounding college professors' experiences handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility.

Chapter 3 provided an explanation of the research design and rationale for this study, a description of my role as the researcher, a breakdown of the methodology of the study, as well as details on issues of trustworthiness within the study. Contained in Chapter 4 was a description of the data collection procedures of the study, the data analysis, the setting of the study, participant demographics, the recruitment and interview process, study results, and the proof of trustworthiness in the study.

The concluding chapter is an interpretation of the findings of the study, how the theoretical framework can be applied, the limitations of the research study, recommendations for future research, and the implications for social change based off this research study.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study, using a qualitative design, was conducted to examine college professors' experiences of handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. Using semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth understanding of college professors, their intervention strategies, and the process of getting to that point.

The data collected for this study were analyzed using NVivo. All discovered themes were based on patterns within the semi-structured interviews with the 14 college professors. There were five total themes that emerged: intervention strategies, motivations, policies, participant worldview, and skills.

Thematic Results

Theme 1, intervention strategies, brought insights into professors' strategies when incivility occurred in their classroom. This theme is highlighted through literature

findings that classroom incivility is increasingly common in universities around the world (Cahyadi, et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2023; Campbell et al., 2020; Huang et. al., 2020; Kalondu Kamolo & Wangui Njung'e, 2021; Suk Kim et al., 2020; Urban et al., 2021). One of the results was that direct intervention strategies are the most effective. Irwin and Cederblad (2019) and Irwin et al. (2021) found that using an assertive response is beneficial in the classroom, which correlates to that result. Rafique (2022) found the same and shared that direct intervention strategies are most effective, but only when they are positive and more encouraging to students.

A second result was that a professor needs to respond to the incivility with confidence. Viral and Bacioglu (2020) found that being confident in your intervention strategy was critical. They stated that all a professor should need to do is give a confident verbal warning and that is an effective way to handle incivility. Klebig et al. (2016) expanded on this and stated that a professor confidently communicating with students greatly impacts student incivility because their students know that the professor is in control and will manage their classroom well. A third result was noted by eight professors, and they stated that communicating standards is critical. This is back up by previous literature stating that changes in classroom expectations have conformed the college classroom and professors need to clearly communicate their standards to ensure that expectations are clear (Aliakbari & Hajizadeh, 2018; Jacobs et al.; 2016, Johnson et al., 2017).

A fourth and fifth result were university standards, which were noted by all fourteen participants, and consistent consequences, cited by six of the participants.

Barratt-Pugh and Krestelica (2019) found that incivility is a significant problem in many universities, even in those where there are policies in place against it. This relates well with the results of this research because university standards need to be communicated and consistent. Urban et al. (2021) seconded this fact because there is a lack in communicating and being consistent in the consequences of classroom incivility. Campbell et al., (2023), Clark (2017), Huang et al. (2020), Ibrahim and Qalawa (2016), Ingraham et al. (2018), and Urban et al. (2021) went further regarding university standards and stated that there needs to be an increase in policies on uncivil behaviors.

There were no articles found that cited positive reactions to using passive intervention strategies or doing nothing in response to classroom incivility. In this research study, there were five participants who brought up being passive in the past and three participants who shared that they did nothing when incivility occurred. These participants did not cite these as positive interventions. As showcased in this research and previous research, direct and confident intervention strategies are the best option when it comes to handling classroom incivility.

Theme 2, motivations, brought insights into professors' motivations for getting into the field of education and the motivation behind their intervention strategies. Professors' motivations and behaviors will set classroom expectations for students (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017). Multiple participants stated their primary motivations were to make a difference and share knowledge. In addition, the professors wanted job satisfaction, desired job security, and had a passion for teaching and managing their classrooms. Although no articles focused on professor motivation and its impact on

student incivility, Johnson et al. (2017) wrote about student motivation and how their performance in the classroom was reflected. The result of this research shows a need for both professor and student motivation for the classroom environment to be beneficial.

Theme 3 details the policies professors think need to be implemented based on their classroom interactions with students and incivility. All 14 participants noted that there needs to be additional faculty training regarding handling incivility. This was the only policy that the participants agreed upon, but nine of them stated that consistent punishment is crucial. These participants shared that their universities would not punish the same acts of incivility equally. Some students were punished harshly, and others were not punished at all. This agrees with current literature results on incivility. Campbell et al., (2023), Clark (2017), Huang et al. (2020), Ibrahim and Qalawa (2016), Ingraham et al. (2018), and Urban et al. (2021) found that an increase in policies and faculty training, and equal punishment is necessary regarding uncivil behavior. In addition, Irwin et al. (2021) found that when a professor has support, there is a greater likelihood that they will address incivility in the classroom. There were only five participants who noted flexible punishments, but Johnson et al. (2017) found that a more personalized approached may benefit students who engage in uncivil behavior.

Theme 4, participant worldview, explored the participants' worldviews and how their worldviews influenced their intervention strategies. It was a minor theme, but the eight participants who noted having a Christian worldview stated that their faith-based worldview influenced their intervention strategies. The four participants who cited using a non-faith-based worldview in their classroom and the two participants who did not

specify their worldview also noted the same. This theme was not cited in the current literature often. Whether that is due to not being an important influence or not being studied is unknown. Barni et al. (2019) did find that personal values, and particularly faith-based values, can play a role in how professors manage incivility in the classroom. This theme will vary based on the faith communities in different geographic locations. The major faith community in the geographic of this research is various denominations of Christianity.

Theme 5, skills, explored the necessary skills the participants possessed once they could successfully handle classroom incivility. Knepp and Knepp (2022) found that most professors, especially new ones, are not trained to handle classroom incivility. Each participant noted that directness is a critical skill when dealing with incivility. Yrisarry et al. (2019) found that students responded more favorably to direct responses to incivility, which correlates with these results. There other two primary skills noted were patience, which 11 participants cited, and confidence, 9 participants stated this skill. Patience was not found in the current literature on incivility. Viral and Bacioglu (2020) found that being confident in intervention strategies is critical. They stated that all a professor should need to do is give a confident verbal warning and that is an effective way to handle incivility. Klebig et al. (2016) expanded on this and stated that a professor confidently communicating with students greatly impacts student incivility because their students know that the professor is in control and will manage their classroom well.

A partial connection between the two can be found in the thematic results of this study and the current literature on this population. In addition, some of the participants'

findings, related to the current literature, demonstrate a deeper confirmability and generalizability. A few themes were not found in the literature, which means that they have not been researched before or were not of note in the literature.

Theoretical Framework Application

Brown and Levinston first presented facework and politeness theory in 1978. It is often used by professors because, for competent instruction to occur, a professor needs to have the ability to mitigate face threats and negotiate mutually acceptable identities during classroom interactions. There have been a few researchers who have used this theory as a theoretical framework to identify effective instructor responses to classroom incivility behaviors. According to Holtgraves (1992), Metts (2000), and Yrisarry et al. (2019), facework is the communication that is used to uphold the image of the individuals in an interaction. This theory is based off of Grice's (1973) cooperative principle and Goffman's (1995) concept of face. Grice stated that any interaction is a cooperative effort. Each person is responsible for their side of the interaction. Face is the social value people claim for themselves in social situations (Goffman, 1955). Professors expect respect in their classroom, and if students do not give them respect, the students threaten the face of that professor. Students expect the same, but when they get reprimanded, the students lose face.

Kerssen-Griep et al. (2008) stated that postsecondary education employs facework and face threat mitigation. For example, Yrisarry et al. (2019) looked at instructor responses to uncivil behaviors in their classroom using the politeness theory in a quantitative study design. They found that students respond more favorably to direct

responses when incivility occurs, which correlates to the current research. Kerssen-Griep (2001) and Sabee and Wilson (2005) found that students respond favorably to professors who make face respecting comments. Research has also found that students respond favorably to professors who mitigate face threats when they provide negative comments on the students' performance (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2008; Trad et al., 2014; Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011). According to Zhang (2011), when a professor uses a high level of politeness, it encourages positive responses from students, and both students and professors experience less of a face threat. This relates well to the current research, as well. Having open communication with students regarding standards was noted by over half of the participants. Guan and Eun Lee (2017) conducted a recent study that used facework at the theoretical framework. This study differs from the current study, but they found that communication amongst different cultures can be difficult. When people from differing cultures communicate, there is a greater likelihood of face threatening interactions to occur.

During the interview process for the current research, participants detailed ways in which they mitigate face threats (incivility) in their classrooms. They described the intervention strategies they use to mitigate those threats, which skills are needed to handle them successfully, the motivations behind their mitigation strategy, their worldview, and the university policies needed to punish acts of incivility. All participants noted the importance of mitigating face threats through direct intervention strategies. The facework and politeness theory as a theoretical framework for this study assisted the

study by giving insights into why intervention strategies are essential and how to best mitigate these face threatening behaviors.

Limitations of the Study

There were 14 participants with whom I conducted interviews to complete this qualitative study. Interviews continued until the data became saturated. The participant criteria can be deemed limiting due to the participants' ages typically being in the 50-69 range. One participant was 30-39, three 40-49, and one 70-79. There are various reasons by this is deemed limiting. First, only four universities were in the geographic location and only certain professors fit the criteria. Second, becoming a professor takes numerous years, which only allows a few professors to teach for 5 or more years while in their 30s. On the other end of the age spectrum, it varies based on when a person decides to retire. While these data were not intentionally representative of all college professors, these participants' data provided insights into the experiences of college professors handling intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility.

Recommendations

Upon analyzing the findings of this study, two potential recommendations for future research have emerged. While these two recommendations, detailed below, have been noted as potential options, this is not an extensive list of recommendations as there are numerous ways this research can open the door for future research developments within this topic area.

Due to the research gap regarding college professors' experiences handling intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility, this study is a starting point

for future research regarding this population to fill this gap further. A second recommendation for this research is the lack of faculty training in handling intentional student-to-student classroom incivility. Boysen (2012) found that this lack of faculty training leads to difficulties addressing incivility. He went on to say that this can lead to an environment that is not conducive to learning, respectful, or effective. Faculty training on handling classroom incivility is critical for educators to maintain their classrooms.

In addition to these two recommendations, it is also worth exploring how a professor's values may influence their approach to handling incivility. Barni et al. (2019) found that personal values, particularly faith-based values, can play a role in how professors manage incivility in the classroom. It is important to note that this is not the only factor, but it is an important one. A final potential recommendation for this research is to expand on this topic and explore it in additional geographic locations and a more diverse population to increase generalizability and insights. Potential populations could be younger professors, especially those in their 30s, or professors 70 or older. The geographic location could be larger with additional universities in the target location.

Implications

The aim of this research study was not only to fill a literature gap but also to contribute to positive social change. While it is hopeful that this research educates all regarding college professors experiencing handling intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility and the intervention strategies they use. Certain populations may benefit more than others from these results. This study could create social change in college professors and other personnel at the college level who are interreacting with

students regularly. These individuals help educators manage their classrooms by handling incivility right away. Additionally, the study's findings inform the administration of the policies needed to address and decrease incivility in the long term. Moreover, this study has opened up a new realm of research by exploring the experiences of college professors in managing intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility and understanding the intervention strategies used. By building upon these findings, future research further investigates and develops effective strategies for managing classroom incivility, ultimately contributing to positive social change in post-secondary education. Overall, this study's implications for social change are significant as it sheds light on the importance of addressing classroom incivility and implementing effective interventions to create a more positive and productive learning environment for students and faculty alike.

Conclusion

This chapter covered various aspects related to the qualitative study conducted to explore the experiences of college professors in managing intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility. The study aimed to fill the research gap in this area and provided valuable insights into the topic. The chapter included discussions on the interpretation of the study's findings, the application of facework and politeness theory, research limitations, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change. This qualitative study was chosen to provide insights into and fill a research gap regarding the experiences of college professors' handling intentional negative student-to-student classroom incivility based on the results of interviews with 14 professors. The

themes found during data analysis detailed the skills needed to appropriately address incivility, motivations, the professors' worldview, intervention strategies they used, and necessary policy changes at the university level. While this study provides valuable insights, it is only the beginning of exploring the experiences of college professors in managing classroom incivility, especially in smaller, rural communities. Further research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this issue.

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Appendix A: Invitation Email

Dear Professor [insert name],

My name is Sara Bengsch, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Walden University. I invite you to participate in a study regarding professors' experiences with intentional student-to-student incivility at the university level. I would be interested in hearing about your experiences with intentional student-to-student incivility and which interventions you used when it occurred.

If you choose to participate, we will do a one-hour interview either face-to-face, on the telephone, or on Zoom. During this time, I will ask you a few questions and ask you to share your experiences. The interviews will be audio recorded for clarity and accuracy of the information you provide.

If you want to verify me or my work, you may contact Walden University's Research Ethics Committee at or .

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email me at or call me at .

Thank you for reading and considering this request. I look forward to working with you.

Yours Sincerely,

Sara Bengsch

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What is your highest level of education?
2. How long have you been a professor?
3. What type of institution do you teach at? (2-year, 4-year, or other)

Interview Questions

1. What intervention strategies do you use when student-to-student incivility occurs in your classroom?
2. What was your experience handling incivility before becoming a professor?
3. How have your intervention strategies changed from your first 5 years until now?
4. How has your experience with previous students altered your interventions?
5. What skills do you feel you have developed from the experience of handling intentional student incivility?
6. What policies do you think need to be in place regarding incivility in higher education?