Nursing Students' Perceptions of Student-to-Faculty and Faculty-to-Student Incivility in the Online Learning Environment

Dr. Rachel Lull, DNP, RN, CMSRN

Abstract & Overview

Throughout this research, incivility in nursing education was examined, with a specific focus on the online environment. Incivility in nursing education has been widely researched in the traditional classroom, but limited research has been conducted to examine the occurrences and types of incivility in the online environment. With vast differences between the traditional classroom and the online classroom, it is essential to develop an enhanced understanding of these behaviors. Student perceptions were gathered from graduate nursing students enrolled in at least one online course at one Midwestern, private, faith-based university.

The purpose of this study was to determine student's perceptions of incivility in student-to-faculty and faculty-to-student interactions. This knowledge provides nursing educators with an improved understanding of the interventions needed to be proactive and decrease the frequency of incivility in online learning The Incivility in the Online Learning Environment (IOLE) survey developed by Dr. Cynthia Clark was used to answer the question: In students who are actively enrolled in one school of nursing and who are taking at least one online course, what are their perceptions of faculty-to-student and student-to-faculty incivility in the online learning environment. Results of this study can be used to contribute to guiding faculty development through education of incivility and promotion of civil behaviors
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Conceptual Model

Dr. Cynthia Clark's Fostering Civility in Nursing Education model

Dr. Clark created this structure in 2008 to help address causative factors leading to incivility in nursing education (Clark, 2008).

This model demonstrates the importance of identifying stressors such as student entitlement, faculty superiority, student and faculty workload, technology immersion, and knowledge deficits on managing conflict.

The model focuses on the intersection of stress between student and faculty. When these high-stress moments occur and intersect, this is when incivility takes place (Clark, 2008).

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR FOSTERING CIVILITY IN NURSING EDUCATION
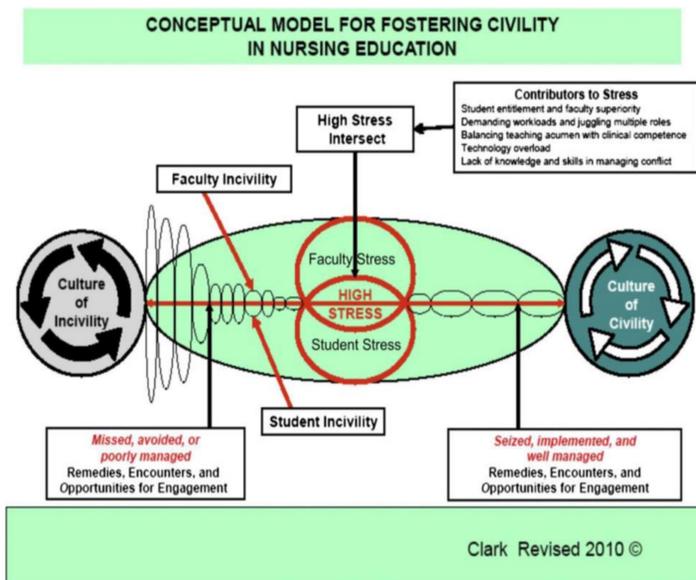
Methodology

Quantitative cross-sectional survey design

Survey Distribution
- The IOLE survey was entered into SurveyMonkey then dispersed using the university's program-specific communication forum.
- All student enrolled in the RN to BSN and BSN to MSN programs received access to the link.
- Reminders were posted to the forum after two-weeks and again after four weeks.
- The survey remained open for two additional weeks following the last notification to allow for final response time.

Data Analysis
- Data were analyzed to determine the students' perceptions of incivility in the online learning environment.
- The SurveyMonkey data was transferred into SPSS version 11.0 for statistical analysis.
- Data were sorted according to the variable name, variable type, level of measurement, response categories, and survey questions.
- Data were scored to provide a numerical value for each response category question of the survey.
- A total score was issued for the subscales of both faculty behaviors and student behaviors and general multiple-choice questions.
- Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data to provide a snapshot of the population.
- Descriptive statistics were also used to examine the students' perceptions of incivility for both student and faculty behaviors.
- A secondary analysis was done to determine if variations exist between the two groups.
- Two Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were then utilized to determine if there was a statistical difference between the two sets of scores on the same population of participants.

Participant Demographics

Sample Participant Demographics

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	1	7.7
Female	12	92.3
Total	13	100.0
What is your age range in years?		
18–33	4	30.8
34–49	5	38.5
50–65	4	30.8
Total	13	100.0
What is your ethnic/racial background?		
Black/African American	1	7.7
Latino	1	7.7
White/Caucasian	10	76.9
Other	1	7.7
Total	13	100.0
Current program level		
Master's degree	13	100.0

Results

Two multiple-choice questions examined the extent incivility is perceived as a problem

- For the first question, to what extent do you think incivility in the online learning environment is a problem, the median was 2.0 which is considered a mild problem.
- On the second question, based on your experienced or perceptions in online classes, do you think that students or faculty are more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors?, the median was a 4.0 which is interpreted as students are a little more likely.
- The individual responses concluded that 53.8% of students reported incivility to be a mild problem, with 46.2% perceiving that students are a little more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors than faculty.

Multiple Choice Questions

Question	Response	Frequency	Percent
To what extent do you think incivility in the online learning environment is a problem?			
	No problem at all	5	38.5
	Mild problem	7	53.8
	Moderate problem	1	7.7
	Total	13	100.0
Based on your experiences or perceptions in online classes, do you think that students or faculty are more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors?			
	About equal	3	23.1
	Students are a little more likely	6	46.2
	Students are much more likely	4	30.8
	Total	13	100.0

Comparison of perceptions using two Wilcoxon signed-rank tests

- The first Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the grouped median of student-to-student incivility on disruptive behavior (64.00)) and faculty-to-student incivility on disruptive behavior (68.33) at $z = -3.184$, $p = 0.001$. *The results indicate that students perceived faculty-to-student behaviors as more disruptive than student-to-faculty behaviors.*

- The second Wilcoxon signed-rank test's results showed a statistically significant difference between the grouped median of student-to-student incivility (28.50) and faculty-to-student incivility on disruptive behavior (23.00) regarding whether or not the participant had experienced the behavior in the last 12 months ($z = -3.184$, $p = 0.001$). *The results indicate that in the last 12 months students perceived faculty-to-student incivility to be significantly less than that of student-to-faculty incivility*

Wilcoxon Sign-Rank Test[a]

Test	Faculty-to-Student Incivility - Student-to-Student Incivility
Disruptive Behavior	
Z	-3.184[b]
p (2-tailed)	.001
Experienced the Behavior in the last 12 months	
Z	-3.081[b]
p (2-tailed)	.052

Notes. a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test; b. Based on positive ranks.

Implications and Recommendations

This research showed an upward trend towards students viewing incivility as a problem, with students being more likely than faculty to engage in uncivil behaviors in the online environment. With student perceptions of incivility highlighted, this data provides further insight for nursing educators and leaders on incivility and its detrimental effects to the online learning environment.

To decrease incivility, administration should take a firm stance to ensure policies and procedures are in place to address incivility, not only among students but faculty as well. Clear behavioral expectations should be in place, with education and guidance provided to faculty and students on appropriate interactions. An incivility policy should be outlined with appropriate behaviors and expectations. It is also recommended to invest further research into this area of nursing education that is inclusive of a more diverse student population as well as other forms of incivility.

Conclusion

Academic incivility encompasses behaviors that are disrespectful, rude, or destructive, to the teaching-learning environment (Clark & Springer, 2007). Throughout this research, incivility in nursing education has been examined, with a specific focus on the online environment. Incivility in nursing education has widely been researched in the traditional classroom, but limited research has been conducted to examine the occurrences and types of incivility in the online learning environment. With vast differences between the traditional classroom and the online classroom, it is essential to develop an enhanced understanding of these behaviors as perceived by the student.

Ultimately, the findings of this study showed that students perceive students as more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors than faculty. With the results of this study, nursing leaders and faculty are urged to develop policies to improve the online learning environment by outlining actions that are deemed uncivil and providing upfront disclosure at the beginning of each course on the consequences of engaging in or instigating these behaviors. Finally, the results of this study should be used to contribute to guiding policy development and faculty education on incivility and promotion of civil actions to influence the future state of online learning.

References

Clark, C. (2008). Student voices on faculty incivility in nursing education: a conceptual model. Nursing Education Perspectives (National League for Nursing), 29(5), 284-289. Available from https://wgu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ccm&AN=105700688&site=eds-live&scope=site

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Contact

Rachel Lull, DNP, RN, CMSRN
Rachel.Lull@WGU.edu
913-908-3677