Lost in a Crowd:
Anonymity and Incivility in the Accounting Classroom

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Abstract

This research examines the impact of anonymity on the level of incivility in the accounting classroom. Recent reports in the popular press have spotlighted the need to study factors contributing to bad behavior. Most Americans believe that incivility is a major social problem and have encountered incivility at work. Faculty have also encountered incivility in the classroom. Although the literature suggests that incivility is positively related to anonymity, to date no quantitative statistical evidence supports the relationship in the classroom or explores methods of reducing such behavior. Our research investigates whether the level of classroom incivility is higher in settings where size of the classroom, college, or community provides a cloak of anonymity. Using data from a survey of U.S. accounting faculty, we find evidence that incivility occurs more frequently in large classes and that irresponsible student behaviors occur more often in large academic institutions and in large metropolitan areas. These findings imply that classroom incivilities may be minimized through faculty use of immediacy behaviors as well as measures designed to increase community and accountability.

Background

Porath and Pearson (2004, p. 3) state that incivility "implies rudeness and disregard for others in a manner that violates norms for respect." Carter (1998) also explains that acting with civility signals respect for fellow citizens. Although stories of treating others with civility rarely make the nightly news, the popular press regularly prints articles reporting incidents of bad behavior (Anderson, 2001). A recent USA Today headline asked the question, "What happened to civility? From Wilson to Williams to West, a spotlight on bad behavior" (della Cava, 2009). Ferriss (2002) reports that incidents of incivility are widespread, taking place in or near the home, at the workplace, in the classroom, and in public places. An Emily Post Institute survey (2003) reveals that 81% of respondents believe that people are more uncivil today than twenty years ago. Almost nine out of ten Americans believe that incivility is a major social problem (U.S. News & World Report, 1996) and approximately three-fourths believe that the problem is getting worse (Libaw, 2003). Libaw reports that although a 2003 Public Agenda study revealed that Americans were more thoughtful and caring after the September 11 attacks, most believed that the positive change was only short-term.

Just as most Americans believe that incivility is a major social problem, Levine & Cureton (1998) found that most deans (57%) believe that civility has also declined on the college campus. Baldwin (2002) cites that frequent reports in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the popular press demonstrate that "incivility within the academic community is too damaging to ignore." Boice (1996) reported that incivility occurred in a majority of the general education classrooms he observed and coined the term "classroom terrorist" to describe students whose unpredictable and highly emotional outbursts make the entire class tense. A campus-wide survey of Indiana University faculty revealed that they have experienced student incivilities ranging from chewing gum to threatening physical harm (Indiana University, 2000). Meyers, Bender, Hill, & Thomas (2006) surveyed psychology professors to investigate correlates of classroom conflict. They found that incivility occurred in classrooms without regard to differences related to faculty gender, race, age, or years of teaching experience. Rowland and Srisukho (2009) recognize that classroom incivility has pervaded professional education. Clark and Springer (2007) state that faculty in nursing education perceive incivility as a problem both in and out of the classroom.

DeLucia & Iasenza (1995) observe that student incivilities can be classified into three categories. First, aggressive student behaviors are those that threaten the well-being of the professor and the other students in the classroom. Aggressive behaviors include both verbal and physical altercations between faculty and students either inside or outside the classroom. The most extreme form of aggressive behaviors are tragic shootings on campus as reported at Virginia Tech in 2007, at San Diego State in 1996, and at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966 (NPR, 2007). Next, irresponsible student behaviors are classroom specific examples of failures to show respect to the professor and the other students in the classroom. They include coming to class unprepared, dominating discussions, and cheating on exams or quizzes. Finally, inappropriate student behaviors include eating in class, acting bored or apathetic, and disapproving groans. Inappropriate student behaviors are not context specific and would be considered incivilities both inside and outside the classroom.

The presence of incivility is not without cost. Perhaps the greatest cost of classroom incivility is its negative impact on learning. Feldman (2001) defines classroom incivility as any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative *learning* atmosphere in the classroom (emphasis added). Kearney, Plax, and McPherson (2006) concur that student incivilities are not only irritating to teachers, but also hinder student learning. Hirschy and Braxton (2004) found that curbing student classroom incivilities can have a positive effect on student perceptions of their own academic and intellectual development. Student learning and productivity may be compromised by worrying about future interactions with instigators of incivility. Hirschy and Braxton (2004) suggest that students who frequently observe classroom incivilities may spend less energy thinking critically during the class and be less engaged with the course material afterward. Anderson (1999) states that the cumulative effect of even low-level classroom incivilities takes a toll on students, especially those from diverse populations, as they expend energy to cope with them.

Another cost of incivility in the college classroom can be drawn from the consequences of incivilities occurring in the workplace. Porath and Pearson (2004) report that one in eight targets of incivility actually leave their jobs. Similarly, students in a disruptive learning environment may choose to withdraw from the class, change majors, or even leave the university in extreme situations. Hirschy and Braxton (2004) found a negative relation between the presence of classroom incivilities and subsequent commitment to the institution. Hirschy and Braxton explain that since previous research has linked retention to subsequent commitment to the institution, their findings also suggest an indirect negative relation between the presence of classroom incivilities and retention. Thus, a final cost of classroom incivility may be reduced tuition income related to student attrition as well as lower future contributions related to reduced subsequent commitment to the institution.

The costs of incivility may be reduced by addressing factors that the literature has reported as contributing to misbehavior. Our research considers the impact that one such factor, anonymity, may have on the level of incivility in the accounting classroom. Forni (2002) suggests that incivility is positively related to anonymity. As individuals become more detached from their community, they tend to become more insensitive to the needs of others, more unrestrained in their actions, and less tolerant of the views of others. Ferriss (2002) calls for research in various social settings, including the classroom, where observations of incivility could inform programs to enhance civility.

Awareness of situations in which the risk of incivilities may be greater, such as increased anonymity, provides opportunity for faculty to be proactive rather than reactive in dealing with potential student disturbances and misbehavior. Baldwin (2002) states that implementing strategies to promote civility promotes respect and tolerance among students. Mitigating incivilities should provide a friendlier atmosphere contributing to enhanced learning in the classroom.

The remainder of this paper is organized in the following manner. The next section develops the research hypotheses preceded by a review of the literature pertaining to the relationship between anonymity and incivility. The succeeding sections present the research methodology and the statistical results. Finally, the last section provides a discussion of the results including limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The American Heritage Dictionary (2000) defines anonymous as "having an unknown or unacknowledged name" and traces its origin to Greek roots meaning "without a name." Postmes and Spears (1998) state that Le Bon's early research on crowd theory cites anonymity as a key factor contributing to the antisocial behavior of people in groups. More recently, Forni (2002) suggested that incivility is positively related to anonymity. He states that Americans often have few significant ties with the communities in which they live and thus the "penalties of shame" for boorish behavior that would be paid in a more cohesive community are nonexistent. Students at American universities also have fewer ties with their academic community. Instead of looking to the college campus for "community," Levine and Cureton (1998) note that students live off-campus, work off-campus, and socialize off-campus. Boyer (1990) suggests that as universities grew in size they changed from face-to-face communities where the president, a few instructors, and the students all knew each other well to administratively complex institutions organized as bureaucratic fiefdoms. Mathews (1998) states that students in large classes do not interact with others and feel anonymous. They become a nameless face in a sea of faces. Carbone (1999) observes that the anonymity and impersonal nature of a large class can inspire students to behavior they would never dream of exhibiting in their small classes. Although Meyers et al., (2006) did not find that classroom conflict was correlated to class size, the mean class size of their survey respondents was only 37 students. Faculty survey respondents at Indiana University (64%) indicated that incivility was more likely to occur in their large classes than in their small classes (Indiana University, 2000). Cooper and Robinson (2000) also reported that students associate large classes with an increase in noise and distractions. When students become lost in a crowd, whether in a large class, a large college, or a large community, their feelings of anonymity may lead to incivilities in the classroom that distract from an effective learning environment.

Incivility escalates when there is little or no chance of negative repercussion (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001). In an environment where anonymity is high, the probability of negative repercussions decreases because the instigators/targets are not known. Forni (2002) states that when many of our everyday encounters are with people we don't know, we recognize that uncivil behavior will go unreported. Ritchie (2000) notes that as the number of lawyers nationally almost tripled from 1970 to 1990, the profession faced the increased challenge of anonymity and increasing incivility. Mundy and Butts (2002) observes that as the bar expanded, collegiality declined. Attorneys came to believe that since they may only cross paths once with their adversary, there was no incentive to be civil. Ritchie (2000) states that "it is far easier to attribute base motives to an adversary you do not know than someone with whom you have dined and shared war stories." Flanagan (2008) suggests that the incivilities of the legal profession may actually begin in law school. Flanagan maintains that the anonymity of the typical law school classroom, that is large and has all seats facing the podium, contributes to disinhibited and aggressive behavior.

Incivility also escalates as anonymity contributes to deindividuation. Deindividuation is the process by which an individual's personal identity is replaced by the identity of the group (Harris, 2006). Harris states that as part of a large group, individuals view their own actions as just a small part of the whole and therefore insignificant. Deindividuation reduces inhibitions, reliance on internal standards that normally qualify behavior, and self-awareness (Zimbardo, 1969). Nogami (2009) states that self-interested behaviors increase among anonymous people, even when such behaviors are deemed unethical. Deindividuation and anonymity explain the behavior of a

normally restrained individual who shouts obscenities at a referee at a crowded sporting event (Carbone, 1999). Deindividuation also explains the behavior of a normally good student who sends text messages, naps, or even cheats, in a large anonymous classroom. Anonymous students believe that they can "hide" their actions within the group when they are in conformity with the groups' norms (Harris, 2006).

Suggested strategies for dealing with classroom incivility also demonstrate the relation between incivility and anonymity. First, the use of immediacy behaviors is recommended to prevent incidents of incivility (Boice, 1996, 2000; Goodboy & Myers, 2009). Cooper and Robinson (2000) note that large classes often set up a distance between instructors and students. Immediacy behaviors counter that perception through verbal and nonverbal cues that suggest closeness. Immediacy behaviors such as chatting with students before class, referring to the class as "our" class, and moving around the class while teaching, communicate that the instructor is available and welcoming to students (Wilson & Taylor, 2001). Wilson and Taylor report a strong correlation between immediacy behaviors and students perceptions' that the instructor cares for them, likes them, and wants them to succeed. Kearney and Plax (1992) also tie the immediacy of instructors to student perceptions of warmth, friendliness, and liking. These perceptions run counter to perceptions of invisibility and anonymity. Meyers (2009) reports that caring is an important dimension of effective college teaching that impacts not only students' learning and attitudes toward the class but also reduces classroom conflicts. Richmond, Land, and McCroskey (2006) also note that increased teacher immediacy results in reduced student resistance. Meyers et al., (2006) found that instructors who endorsed uncaring behaviors experienced higher levels of hostile conflict. They also reported that conflict management techniques that address the relationships between faculty and students were the most effective in reducing conflict. When faculty praise student work, invite students to seek help, maintain eye contact, or just smile at the class, they break through the veil of anonymity by showing their concern for the individual student.

A second recommended strategy for dealing with classroom incivility in large lecture classes, the use of small groups, is also based on the relation between incivility and anonymity. Cooper and Robinson (2000) suggest that use of small groups builds both involvement and important social bonds in the classroom. Cooper and Robinson explain that as students interact with each other, they learn to appreciate each others' diversity and build a sense of community. Meyers (2003) even refers to small groups as learning communities. Wolf-Wendel, Toma, and, Morphew (2001) state that students who engage in intense, frequent small group interaction begin to create the same sense of community that is shared by members of athletic teams. Meyers (2003) suggests the use of small group techniques such as think-pair-share, debates, or group analysis of case material as a means to build student cohesion and prevent classroom conflict. Thompson (2008) also uses a small group of "daily experts" to help students engage more actively in large classes. These daily experts are identified at the beginning of each class period on a projected slide. Thompson then directs questions to this group by name or requests opinions from the daily experts before opening discussion to the rest of the class. Thompson states that interacting with the daily expert small group facilitates a focus on individuals even in the midst of the large lecture class. Both focusing on individuals and building community decrease anonymity and thus can reduce the incivility associated with the large classroom.

Finally, instructional methods that increase accountability also decrease anonymity and disruptive behavior. Wallace (1999) states that anonymity always raises the issue of accountability. Halpern and Desrochers (2005) draw on this relationship and maintain that making students individually responsible is one way to gain control of large lecture classes. Holding students individually accountable, however, requires that faculty know their names. Sorcinelli (1994) links learning student names to reduced classroom incivility. When students are called by name they believe that the professor regards them as individuals and they know there will be no hiding in class (Howle, 2004). Thompson (2008) reports that an indirect benefit of appointing "daily experts" is that both the professor and the students in the class learn the names of the experts for the day. Further, accountability for class attendance and preparation improve because students know their names could be projected on the screen on any given day. Another way to hold students responsible is to seek student feedback. Harris (2006) recommends asking open-ended questions to encourage students to think for themselves. Encouraging individual thought is counter to anonymity and deviant group-think. Similarly, the traditional use of pencil-and-paper minute papers is well documented in the literature as a means of assessing each student's understanding or lack of understanding about topics discussed during the class session (Davis, Wood, & Wilson, 1983; Almer, Jones, & Moeckel, 1998; Rogerson, 2003; Stead,

2005). Murphy and Wolff (2005) recommend the use of electronic minute papers to encourage broader student responses and to facilitate instructor assessment of the responses. In the same way, employing mid-term evaluations allows each student the opportunity to make their voice heard relating to problems they may be experiencing in the classroom. Use of mid-term evaluations communicates that student feedback matters and fosters mutual respect and a collaborative learning environment (Brown, 2008; Coxwell, 1995). To facilitate interim evaluations, Anderson, Cain, and Bird (2004) recommend the use of online student course evaluations. The results of their pilot study indicate that students liked commenting on a class while still taking it, and that online evaluations were on average more frequent and lengthy than those handwritten on paper forms. Finally, the use of audience response system technology also establishes accountability and reduces anonymity by eliciting individual response. Even invisible students in a large classroom become "visibly active participants" when their personal responses are expected and recognized immediately by the instructor using the technology (Caldwell, 2007). Jackson and Trees (2003) report less sleeping, more discussion, and improved alertness during classes that use audience response systems.

This research investigates the relation between anonymous environments and incivilities in the accounting classroom. Matthews (1998) states that the foremost problem in teaching large classes is student anonymity in the classroom. Halpern and Desrochers (2005) discuss the "problem of anonymity" relating to students who behave in ways that do not support learning in the large lecture class. Boice (2000) reports chronic and demoralizing patterns of classroom incivility in about half of observed large survey courses and less incivility in smaller classes. In addition to students who enroll in large classes, students who attend large universities or live in large metropolitan areas may also feel anonymous and more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors, leading to the following hypotheses:

H1: The level of incivility in large classes is greater than the level of incivility in small classes.
H2: The level of classroom incivility in large institutions is greater than the level of classroom incivility in small institutions.
H3: The level of classroom incivility at institutions in large communities is greater than the level of classroom incivility at institutions in small communities.

Research Methodology

To investigate these hypotheses, we surveyed accounting faculty from across the United States. We obtained permission from the Center of Survey Research at the University of Indiana to use their survey instrument which was designed to assess faculty perceptions of the level of incivility across all disciplines on their campus (Indiana University, 2000). We then adapted and added to the questions included in their survey to update the instrument, modify the layout, and gather the demographic data needed to investigate our research hypotheses.

To generate a sample of faculty from all ages and experience levels, we mailed surveys individually to one professor, one associate professor, and one assistant professor within the accounting department at each U.S. school listed in *Accounting Faculty Directory* (Hasselback, 2002). Since some accounting departments did not have a faculty member at each rank, less than three faculty surveys were mailed to that institution. This sampling procedure resulted in a total of 1799 surveys in the initial mailing. A second mailing helped to achieve an overall response rate of 18.3% for our analysis. The responses to the survey came from faculty of all ranks as reported in Table 1.

The participants were asked to complete survey questions in the following format:

	How often do you observe this behavior?				
Student Behaviors	Always	Often	Some	Rarely	Never
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at,	5	4	3	2	1
other students.	5	4	3	2	1
directed at you in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1

directed at you outside the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
Inappropriate e-mails to you.	5	4	3	2	1
Threats of physical harm against you.	5	4	3	2	1

The survey instructions asked the participants to circle the number indicating their classroom experience in the last year for the 34 listed behaviors. The survey questions were listed in the order of inappropriate behaviors, irresponsible behaviors, then aggressive behaviors. The specific behaviors included in each category are reported in Table 3.

In addition, participants were asked to mark their experience with incivility in small versus large classes by answering the following question:

Would you say that classroom incivility is more likely to occur in small or large classes? _____ Much more likely in small classes. _____ A little more likely in small classes. _____ About equal _____ A little more likely in large classes. _____ Much more likely in large classes.

Finally, all participants were asked to indicate the enrollment at their institution and the population of their community.

Results

To determine the potential for non-response bias, we split the responses into early and late categories and compared responses across these two groups. In no instance did we find any significant differences in these groups' responses relating to the occurrence of incivility.

Further, we considered the possibility that rank might be a confounding variable. Feldman (2001) suggests that younger faculty are more likely to be targets of incivility. Since our sample was drawn from all three ranks, representing all ages and experience levels, we compared the responses across ranks. In no instance did we find any significant differences in these groups' responses relating to the occurrence of incivility. We concluded that rank was not a confounding variable and combined the groups for investigation of the research hypotheses.

Incivility Relating to Class Size
The responses of participants to our survey question, "Would you say that classroom incivility is more likely to occur in small or large classes?" are presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that 77.7% of the survey respondents believe that incivility is more likely in large classes. We used the Chi-square test to determine whether the reported frequencies are significantly different than equal distribution for all five cells. The Chi-square test is appropriate for use with categorical data when the expected frequency of each cell is greater than five (Kanji, 2006). The resulting Chi-square of 226.4 with four degrees of freedom indicated that the distribution was significantly different at $p <$ .001 supporting Hypothesis 1 that the level of incivility in large classes is greater than the level of incivility in small classes.

Incivility Relating to Enrollment and Population
The perceived levels of incivility in the classroom are presented in Table 3 by category of behavior. As one would expect, Table 3 shows higher percentages of faculty who have observed inappropriate and irresponsible student behaviors than faculty who have observed aggressive student behaviors. In the aggressive behavior category, the behavior observed most often was "inappropriate e-mails sent to you." In the irresponsible category, the behavior observed most often was "being unprepared for class." Finally, in the inappropriate category, the behavior

observed most often was "acting bored or apathetic."   To measure the level of incivility in each category, we averaged the coding of the behaviors within that category for each participant to calculate a summary variable.

We used a non-parametric test to investigate whether the average level of incivility within each category was significantly different based on enrollment of the institution or size of the community because the participant responses were measured on an ordinal scale (Gibbons, 1985). We chose the Mann-Whitney test to compare the two independent groups. We classified institutions as large if their enrollment was greater than 10,000 students and communities as large if their population was greater than 100,000 citizens. The cut-offs for these variables were determined to create groups that were approximately the same size.

Since the Mann-Whitney test ranks the observations from low to high and our summary variable, occurrence of incivility, is positively related to incivility, the group with the highest mean rank represents the group with the highest level of incivility (Gibbons, 1985). The results shown in Table 4 indicate that the mean rank and thus the level of incivility in each of the three categories is higher at large institutions than at small institutions. The Mann-Whitney test uses the difference in the sum of ranks to determine significance. Finding a greater difference in the sum of ranks indicates a lower probability that the groups are the same. The difference between the sum of ranks was significant at $p < .05$ only for the irresponsible student behaviors category. Our results support Hypothesis 2 that the level of incivility in large institutions is greater than the level of incivility in small institutions for the irresponsible student behaviors category.

The results shown in Table 5 indicate that institutions in large communities had the highest mean rank and thus the greatest level of incivility in each of the three categories of behaviors. The difference between the sum of ranks, however, was once again significant at $p < .05$ for the irresponsible student behaviors category only. Our results support Hypothesis 3 that the level of incivility at institutions in large communities is greater than the level of incivility at institutions in small communities for the irresponsible student behaviors category.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research provides important contributions to the teaching and learning literature by considering specific contextual situations in which effective learning may be at risk. Each of these contexts, the large classroom, the large college, and the large community, are environments in which students may feel anonymous. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact that being lost in a crowd may have on the level of incivility in the accounting classroom.

First, we present statistically significant evidence that incivility is indeed higher in large accounting classrooms than in small accounting classrooms. As hypothesized, the results of our analysis indicate that the level of incivility is higher in the anonymous setting of the large classroom. Our quantitative results support descriptive accounts in the literature that linked incivility and the large classroom (Harris, 2006; Indiana University, 2000; Sorcinelli, 1994). Our results do not support the findings of Meyers et al. (2006) who reported that class conflict was not related to class size. The average class size reported by their respondents, however, was only thirty-seven students.

Next, our research hypothesized that the level of classroom incivility would be greater when the students were enrolled in large academic institutions. Although the prior literature suggested that incivility may be connected to the anonymous nature of the campus (Boyer, 1990), the relationship has not been previously tested. Our results provided statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that the occurrence of incivilities classified as irresponsible student behaviors is significantly higher in the classrooms of large academic institutions.

Finally, our research hypothesized that the level of classroom incivility would be greater when the university is located in a large community. Although once again the prior literature suggested that incivility may be connected to the anonymous nature of the community (Forni, 2002), the relationship has not been previously tested. Our results provided statistical evidence to support the hypothesis that the occurrence of incivilities classified as irresponsible student behaviors is significantly higher in university classrooms located in large communities.

Although our research did show a link between anonymity and irresponsible student behaviors, our results did not show the same relationship between anonymity and either of the other two categories of student misbehavior. Perhaps inappropriate incivilities that are not classroom specific may be so common that the cloak of anonymity is not needed for students to engage in such behaviors. At the other extreme, aggressive student behaviors that threaten the well-being of the professor and other students in the classroom occur so rarely that any differences may not be easily identified by conservative non-parametric statistical tests. Since irresponsible student behaviors are classroom specific examples of failures to show respect to the professor and the other students in the classroom, finding a significant relation between anonymity of this category of incivilities should be the most interesting to college faculty. DeLucia and Iasenza (1995) state that student behaviors in the irresponsible category elicited the most anger and disappointment among faculty.

Our research is an early study in examining how one factor, anonymity, contributes to incivility and as such is subject to limitations. Although we did eliminate the possibility that rank of the faculty member could be a confounding variable in analyzing the relation between anonymity and occurrence of classroom incivilities, the impact of other factors relating to faculty, courses, students, and institutions should be considered in future research. In addition, our study analyzed separately the impact of the three different anonymous environments on the level of classroom incivility. We suggest that the potential interaction between size of class, college, and community be investigated in future studies examining the relation between anonymity and classroom incivility.

This study reported the level of classroom incivility observed by accounting faculty only. Although no studies have investigated the relation between incivility and academic discipline, prior studies in the accounting ethics literature have considered the effect of academic discipline on moral development. Early studies reported that accounting students had lower levels of moral development than non-business students (Armstrong, 1987; Ponemon & Glazer, 1990). Later studies reported that accounting students have higher ethical development than both their non-accounting business and their liberal arts counterparts (Jeffrey, 1993; Cohen, Pant, & Sharp, 1998). Recently, Emerson, Conroy, and Stanley (2007), however, found that the ethical attitudes of accounting practitioners were not significantly different than the attitudes of a multidisciplinary student sample. O'Leary and Pangemanan (2007, p. 218) summarize "that behaving ethically does not seem vital to students' attitudes to working in the accounting profession." Elias (2004) also found that accounting students were similar to management, marketing, and general business majors in their perceptions of corporate social responsibilities. Although the accounting ethics literature suggests that our research investigating the accounting classroom should be relevant to other academic disciplines, we recommend that the study be replicated with faculty from across campus to strengthen the generalizability of the results.

Providing a positive learning context is not viable when the presence of incivility is ignored. Faculty who are aware of the risks presented by anonymous environments can be proactive in mitigating potential classroom disruptions and irresponsible student behaviors. Faculty teaching in large classrooms, colleges, or communities should consider using measures designed to individualize students, create community, and increase accountability. As discussed in the literature review section, these measures include using immediacy behaviors that reduce classroom incivility by communicating concern for the students as individuals (Kearney & Plax, 1992; Boice, 1996, 2000; Cooper & Robinson, 2000; Wilson & Taylor, 2001; Meyers et al., 2006; Richmond et al., 2006; Goodboy & Myers, 2009; Meyers, 2009). Using small groups also individualizes students and creates learning communities (Cooper & Robinson, 2000; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001; Meyers, 2003; Thompson, 2008; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001). Finally, holding students' accountable reduces anonymity and the occurrence of classroom incivility. Calling students by name (Sorcinelli, 1994; Howle, 2004) and seeking student feedback (Davis et al., 1983; Almer et al., 1998; Jackson & Trees, 2003; Rogerson, 2003; Anderson et al., 2004; Murphy & Wolf, 2005; Stead, 2005; Harris, 2006; Caldwell, 2007; Brown, 2008) communicates that students cannot hide among the masses and will be held responsible for their behavior and active engagement in the classroom. When students are no longer lost in a crowd, the stage has been set for a harmonious and cooperative atmosphere conducive for effective learning.

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Table 1
Respondent Demographics

	Surveys Mailed	Surveys Returned		Response Rate	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**%**
Rank					
Assistant Professor	624	34.7	87	26.2	13.9
Associate Professor	653	36.3	112	33.9	17.1
Professor	522	29.0	120	36.4	23.0
No rank indicated			11	3.3	
Total	1799	100.0	330	100.0	18.3

Table 2
Frequency and Percentages of Incivility Occurring in Small and Large Classes

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Much more likely in large classes	113	35.0	35.0
A little more likely in large classes	138	42.7	77.7
About equal	60	18.6	96.3
A little more likely in small classes	8	2.5	98.8
Much more likely in small classes	4	1.2	100.0
Total	323		

Table 3
Perceived Occurrence of Incivility in the Classroom

Percent indicating	*Always or Often*	*Some*
Inappropriate Student Behaviors		
a. Chewing gum in class	17.4	38.9
b. Eating in class	23.1	43.2
c. Acting bored or apathetic	35.4	48.8
d. Disapproving groans	6.3	27.5
e. Sarcastic remarks or gestures	3.0	20.6
Irresponsible Student Behaviors		
f. Sleeping in class	6.7	29.5
g. Not paying attention in class	27.2	56.4
h. Not taking notes during class	31.8	47.4
i. Conversation distracting other students	14.3	45.9
j. Conversation distracting you	9.7	36.6
k. Reluctance to answer direct questions	17.5	37.3
l. Using a computer in class for purposes not related to the class	3.4	12.8
m. Cell phone or pager disruptions during class	6.0	23.6
n. Arriving late for class	37.9	44.3
o. Coming and going during class	15.7	41.0
p. Leaving early from class	7.9	35.8
q. Cutting class	33.0	48.9
r. Being unprepared for class	47.4	46.2
s. Creating tension by dominating discussion	2.4	26.8
t. Cheating on exams or quizzes	1.5	18.7
u. Demanding make-up exams, extensions, grade changes, or special favors	9.0	34.6
v. Taunting or belittling other students?	.3	4.9
w. Challenging your knowledge or credibility in class?	1.2	9.1
Aggressive Student Behaviors		
x. Harassing comments concerning race, ethnicity, or gender,		
1. made in the classroom?	0.0	2.4
2. directed at you in the classroom?	0.3	0.9
3. directed at you outside the classroom?	0.0	3.3
y. Other harassing comments including vulgarity or profanity		
1. made in the classroom?	0.0	2.4
2. directed at you in the classroom?	0.0	1.7
3. directed at you outside the classroom?	0.0	2.4
z. Hostile verbal attacks or challenges		
1. directed at other students?	0.0	3.6
2. directed at you in the classroom?	0.0	2.4
3. directed at you outside the classroom?	0.3	3.9
aa. Inappropriate e-mails to you?	0.0	6.6
bb. Threats of physical harm against you?	0.0	0.6

Table 4
Test of Differences in Occurrence of Incivility
By Institutional Enrollment[a]

Inappropriate student behaviors at:	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Sig.[b]
Small institutions	194	149	28,880	
Large institutions	108	156	16,873	
Total	302			.481
Irresponsible student behaviors at:				
Small institutions	189	141	26,573	
Large institutions	106	161	17,088	
Total	295			**.046**
Aggressive student behaviors at:				
Small institutions	203	154	31,352	
Large institutions	114	167	19,051	
Total	317			.234

[a]Small institutions—Enrollment <= 10,000
  Large institutions—Enrollment > 10,000

[b]Boldface indicates significance at p < .05

Table 5
Test of Differences in Occurrence of Incivility
By Community Population[a]

Inappropriate student behaviors in:	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Sig.[b]
Small communities	143	143	20,410	
Large communities	157	158	24,740	
Total	300			.138
Irresponsible student behaviors in:				
Small communities	140	134	18,819	
Large communities	152	158	23,960	
Total	292			**.019**
Aggressive behaviors in:				
Small communities	147	152	22,280	
Large communities	168	164	27,491	
Total	315			.237

[a]Small community—Population <= 100,000
  Large community—Population > 100,000

[b]Boldface indicates significance at p < .05