Instructor Response to Uncivil Behaviors in the Classroom: An Application of Politeness Theory

Natalie Yrisarry
University of Central Florida
INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE TO UNCIVIL BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM: AN APPLICATION OF POLITENESS THEORY

by

NATALIE YRISARRY
B.A. University of Central Florida, 2010

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Nicholson School of Communications in the College of Sciences at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2015

Major Professors: Lindsay Neuberger and Ann Miller
ABSTRACT

This study examines levels of politeness in real time instructor responses to classroom incivility behaviors. Student participants were randomly assigned to view a video of an instructor responding to either passive or active student incivility behaviors in various ways. The responses were based on politeness theory conceptualizations of avoidance, mid-level politeness, or bald on record responses. A 2 (i.e., passive, active student incivility) x 3 (i.e., avoidance, mid-level, or bald on record instructor response) experimental design formed six conditions. High quality video simulations of a classroom environment, portraying one of the six conditions, were created to specifically address these dimensions. Participants took a web based survey and evaluated the instructor with respect to effectiveness, credibility, and impact on student motivation. Results demonstrate students had most positive responses to bald on record instructor responses to active student incivility. When responding to passive student incivility, a less harsh response (i.e., avoidance, mid-level), while not significantly different from a bald on record response, indicate better outcomes. Therefore, in accordance with politeness theory, instructors should consider the level of imposition created by uncivil student behavior when calibrating responses, as student perceptions can be greatly affected. Theoretical and practical considerations as well as avenues for future research are presented.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I must thank my thesis committee for their guidance and dedication during this project. Dr. Neuberger, thank you for the many hours spent turning my original concept into this final thesis. You never let me settle for anything less than my best and I learned so much from you. Dr. Miller, thank you for your advice during this project and for our years of doing research together. When you first introduced me to academic research I had no idea where that would lead. Dr. Katt, your practical advice and insight into communication theory were extremely beneficial to this study and I thank you for it.

I also want to acknowledge my family and friends who were always there when I needed inspiration. I thank Kirsten Seitz for always having an answer and pointing me in the right direction. Kate O’Neal and Summer Braeseke, thank you for being true friends, without you I would not be the teacher I am today. Mom, Dad, Candice, and Eric thank you for the constant phone calls, visits and practical advice, your never ending encouragement means more than I can say. Brant, thank you for your love and support and for always believing in me.

This project has turned into so much more than I originally imagined and I could not have done it without the people who supported me throughout the thesis process. I can’t thank all of you enough.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ...................................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................. 1

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................... 4

Classroom Incivility Behavior .......................................................................................... 4
Types of Incivility .............................................................................................................. 5
Related Areas of Research ................................................................................................. 5
Causes of Incivility ............................................................................................................ 6
Technologic Incivility .......................................................................................................... 7
Faculty Contributions to Incivility ....................................................................................... 8
Incivility Prevention ........................................................................................................... 8
Instructor Responses to Incivility ......................................................................................... 9

Facwork and Politeness Theory ....................................................................................... 11
Types of Facework ........................................................................................................... 12

From Facework to Politeness Theory ............................................................................. 13
Politeness and Requests ................................................................................................. 15

Facework, Politeness and the Classroom Environment ................................................ 16
Facework in the Classroom .............................................................................................. 16
Facework During Feedback .............................................................................................. 16
Politeness in the Classroom ............................................................................................. 17
Politeness in Digital Classrooms ..................................................................................... 18

Politeness Theory and Classroom Incivility ................................................................. 19

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY ....................................................................................... 22

Participants ..................................................................................................................... 22
Procedure ....................................................................................................................... 22
Stimulus Materials ......................................................................................................... 23

Measures ........................................................................................................................ 25
Demographics ................................................................................................................ 25
Instructor Effectiveness ................................................................................................. 25
Instructor Credibility ....................................................................................................... 26
Student Motivation ......................................................................................................... 26
Manipulation Check ....................................................................................................... 26
Data Preparation ............................................................................................................ 27

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS .................................................................................................... 28

Manipulation Checks ...................................................................................................... 28
Hypothesis and Research Question Testing ................................................................. 28
Hypothesis One: Mid-level Politeness Strategy vs. Avoidance Strategy ..................... 29
Research Question One: Mid-level Politeness Strategy .............................................. 30
Hypothesis Two: Mid-level Politeness Strategy vs. Bald on Record Strategy .......... 31
Hypothesis Three: Active Incivility Condition ............................................................ 32
Hypothesis Four: Passive Incivility Condition ................................................................. 33
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION .......................................................................................... 35
Summary of Results ......................................................................................................... 35
Theoretical Implications ................................................................................................. 37
Practical Implications ..................................................................................................... 40
Limitations ....................................................................................................................... 41
Future Research ............................................................................................................... 42
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER ........................................................................ 44
APPENDIX B: SCREENSHOTS, VIDEO LINKS, AND VIDEO SCRIPTS ....................... 46
APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVED SURVEY ...................................................................... 53
APPENDIX D: TABLE 8 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL
CONDITIONS .................................................................................................................... 57
REFERENCES ................................................................................................................... 59
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Experimental Conditions ........................................................................................................... 23
Table 2. Student Interruptions and Instructor Responses ........................................................................... 24
Table 3. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Avoidance and Mid-level Conditions (Hypothesis 1)........................................................................................................................................ 29
Table 4. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the mid-level instructor response condition (Research Question 1) .......................................................................................................................... 30
Table 5. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in Mid-level and Bald on Record Conditions (Hypothesis 2) ........................................................................................................................................ 31
Table 6. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Active Incivility Conditions (Hypothesis 3) ............................................................................................................................................. 32
Table 7. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Passive Incivility Conditions (Hypothesis 4) ............................................................................................................................................. 33
Table 8: Mean and Standard Deviations for all Experimental Conditions ............................................. 58
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Classroom incivility behaviors can be defined as, “any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom” (Feldmann, 2001, p. 127) and are on the rise at many colleges and universities (Alberts, Hazen & Thebald, 2010; Boice, 1996; Boysen, 2012; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001). Incivility behaviors such as arriving late and leaving early, talking in class, packing up early, eating in class and even sleeping in class have become increasingly common in higher education classrooms (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Royce, 2000). These behaviors affect students and instructors alike. Instructors may feel uncertain when they must make fast decisions about how to instantly respond to incivility behaviors in the classroom. Additionally, instructor responses to uncivil students can have important repercussions for the entire class (i.e., the instructor, uncivil students, other students in the class). Boice (1996) notes that how instructors handle incivility behaviors in the first few days of the semester may have lasting repercussions for classroom management for the entire semester; therefore, knowing the best ways to handle uncivil behavior can be especially important to new instructors who do not yet have firsthand experience to build on.

Considerations of face and politeness are especially relevant when managing classroom incivility. Goffman (1955) describes face as the way an individual presents themselves during an interaction. On one hand, instructors may be concerned about maintaining their own face when students have been openly uncivil. On the other hand, they may be concerned about threatening the face of the student who has been uncivil. Politeness theory describes ways people determine how face threatening an action is by weighing the social and power distance between individuals and the level of imposition of an act (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Brown and Levinson (1978)
also posit that there are levels of politeness that individuals can use during interactions. These range from not imposing on another individual by avoiding making a request, several levels of polite responses, to making a bald on record statement that is the least polite. This study examines how these levels of politeness may change instructor perceptions and classroom outcomes when used in response to classroom incivility. In addition, some uncivil behaviors are more face threatening than others; classroom incivility behaviors can be divided into categories from more mildly disruptive behaviors like talking in class to purposely disruptive behaviors such as being intentionally rude to the instructor in front of one’s classmates (Berger, 2002). When students commit incivility behaviors in the classroom, instructors must balance the need for classroom management with not wanting to offend their students through an unsuitable response. The way instructors choose to resolve this tension may have important impacts on classroom management and student expectations.

This study uses an online experiment to examine which real time instructor responses to different classroom incivility behaviors lead to the most beneficial classroom outcomes. Actors and extras were used to play the parts of an instructor and her students in high quality video scenarios portraying a realistic classroom environment. Each video presents a single condition. Video footage remains consistent through all conditions with the only variations being the experimental manipulation of the exchange between student and instructor. Participants view only one video simulation showing a student performing an incivility behavior and an instructor responding in a mock classroom environment. The participants then evaluate the instructor’s response for levels of effectiveness, credibility, and impact on student motivation. Results help
illustrate which instructor responses to each type of student incivility behaviors have the best classroom outcomes.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This manuscript proceeds by providing an overview of the classroom incivility literature before delving into facework and politeness theory.

Classroom Incivility Behavior

Uncivil behavior in college classrooms is on the rise and has become an area of concern for faculty at many colleges and universities (Alberts, Hazen & Thebald, 2010; Boice, 1996; Boysen, 2012; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001). Instructors are not the only ones disturbed by classroom incivility; students are also greatly affected by interruptions to classroom learning. Classroom or student incivility behaviors can be defined as disrespectful and disruptive speech or actions that interfere with the classroom learning environment (Clark & Springer, 2007; 2008; Feldmann, 2001). Royce (2000) and Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) have independently established lists of over twenty, often corresponding, student incivility behaviors seen frequently in college classrooms.

Some of the most common incivility behaviors in college classrooms include arriving late or leaving early, talking after being asked to stop, sleeping in class, text messaging or letting a cell phone go off, using a computer for non-class purposes, and making rude or inappropriate remarks (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Royce 2000). More severe incivility behaviors are less common but do occur, including coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs and making threats of harm to the instructor (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Royce 2000).
Types of Incivility

Classroom incivility behaviors vary greatly in their levels of disruptiveness (Boysen, 2012). In Boysen’s (2012) study he describes disorderly incidents (i.e., incivility behaviors apparent to every individual in a classroom) in contrast with nondisorderly incidents (i.e., incivility behaviors only immediately apparent to the instructor). Although this study was more practical in nature he has touched on an important distinction between incivility behaviors that are more or less disruptive in a classroom. Berger (2002) suggests classroom incivility behaviors can be divided into two main categories (i.e., passive and active or overt). Passive incivility behaviors are mild disruptions, like reading during class time or talking quietly to another student. Active incivility behaviors are insulting, disrespectful and may even involve direct challenges to the instructor such as insulting comments or vulgar language (Berger, 2002). Passive incivility behaviors can be described as less intentionally disruptive than active incivility behaviors that are clearly intentionally disruptive to the classroom environment. Thus, there are substantive differences in types of incivility. This research focuses on the difference between active and passive incivility behaviors from students toward instructors.

Related Areas of Research

Before proceeding, incivility should be distinguished from other similar instructional communication concepts. Instructional dissent refers to expressing negative reactions to issues related to the classroom through disagreement (Goodboy, 2011). Student nagging behaviors describe when, “a person makes persistent, non-aggressive requests which contain the same content to a respondent who fails to comply” (Dunleavy, Martin, Brann, Booth-Butterfield,
Student misbehaviors are any actions on the part of a student that interferes with learning (Kearney, Plax, Hays & Ivey, 1991). Challenge behaviors describe behaviors students use to obtain clarification and co-construct classroom culture (Goodboy & Myers, 2009). Student behavior alteration techniques (i.e., BATs) are communication techniques used by instructors and students to gain compliance (McCroskey, Richmond, Plax & Kearney, 1985). While there is some overlap in these subject areas, they are by no means synonymous. The listed strategies represent student responses to instructors and usually involve students trying to gain power or exert change in relation to the classroom (Miller, Katt, Brown & Sivo, 2014). That is, student incivility behaviors are not always intentional or reactive. Students do not always perform incivility behaviors to be rude and do not generally perform them strategically with a goal in mind. Sometimes students act with disregard for other students or the instructor, with their own self interests in mind, despite being in a classroom environment.

Causes of Incivility

Various contributing causes to classroom incivility behaviors include the growth of incivility in the United States at a societal level (Clark & Springer, 2007; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Parental pressure on students for better performance (Bray & Favero, 2004), larger class sizes and more low status instructors such as those who are young females, can also affect classroom incivility (Nilson & Jackson, 2004). Additionally, expectations that instructors be available to accommodate students constantly and students being less prepared for college life and academics than previous generations may also contribute (Alberts, Hazen & Thebald, 2010). Several causes of incivility have been empirically tested including a student’s feelings of academic entitlement or “the expectation that one should receive positive academic outcomes,
often independent of performance” (Kopp & Finney, 2013, p. 232). Consumer orientation in the education system has led some students to believe “the customer is always right” and because they have paid for their education they can act however they want in the classroom (Nordstrom, Bartles and Bucy, 2009). Nordstrom, Bartles and Bucy (2009) also found that student narcissistic tendencies (i.e., self-preoccupation) are visible in the lack of empathy that many students display toward their peers and instructors and do not realize how their uncivil behavior is affecting others.

*Technologic Incivility*

The rise of incivility behaviors characterized by the inappropriate use of technology has been especially noticeable to instructors in recent years (Gilroy, 2003; Ravizza, Hambrick & Fenn, 2014; Sana, Weston & Cepeda, 2013). Cell phones were once a simple communication tool but now they are multifaceted multimedia devices (Azad, Papakie & McDevitt, 2012). Cell phones and laptops with instant internet access can be learning tools but they also open students to countless distractions from what is actually currently going on in the classroom. These technologic distractions adversely affect student learning (Gingerich & Lineweaver, 2013). Additionally, students who are near those using distracting technology can also be negatively affected (Sana, Weston & Cepeda, 2013; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012). Changes in mobile technology may have occurred faster than changes in the ways instructors manage their classrooms. Many instructors now ban the use of cell phones and even laptops, but banning their use does not mean that students do not still bring them to class (Gilroy, 2003). This leads to classroom incivilities ranging from cell phones going off accidentally to students blatantly
disregarding anti-technology policies by texting or using the internet on their phones during class time (Tindell & Bohlander, 2012).

Faculty Contributions to Incivility

While there is little debate that faculty and students alike find student incivility harmful, faculty members, and not just students can contribute to classroom incivility (Alberts, Hazen & Thebald, 2010; Boice, 1996; Bray & Favero, 2004; Clark, 2008; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001). Faculty behaviors identified by students as uncivil include being condescending, acting superior or arrogant, criticizing students in public, and threatening to fail students (Clark & Springer, 2007). Even a lack of instructor response to uncivil student behaviors can be harmful. Feldman (2001) states, “Failure to address incivility degrades the learning environment in our classes and in schools as a whole. The result of this degradation is that students learn less” (p. 138). Berger (2002) identified several additional faculty behaviors that likely contribute to classroom incivility (e.g., being late to class, ending class early or late, canceling class, rudeness, displaying less immediacy and caring, surprise assessments such as quizzes, and not acting to end classroom disruptions).

Incivility Prevention

Prevention of classroom incivility is vital and can start with syllabi that make behavior policies clear from the beginning of the semester, and continue with the instructor acting as a role model for appropriate behavior (Clark, 2009). Nilson and Jackson (2004) suggest classroom incivility behaviors can be reduced by having instructors and their students together develop a
detailed classroom bill of rights that both parties would then be held accountable to. They believe this will further reaffirm the classroom rules for conduct.

Perceptions of college instructors as credible and nonverbally immediate have also been correlated with fewer classroom incivility behaviors (Miller, Katt, Brown & Sivo, 2014). In his five year study of classroom incivility, Boice (1996) suggests instructors work to develop immediacy, warmth and approachability in their relationships with their students. This may also help develop a sense of community within the classroom environment, thus decreasing incivility through collaboration with students (Meyers, 2003). Boice (1996) also notes classroom incivility behaviors can develop in a classroom within the first few days of a semester. This suggests how important it can be for instructors to set a consistent and civil classroom tone from the very first day of class. However, Wei and Wang (2010) found instructor immediacy did not reduce how frequently students text message while in class, possibly because the behavior has become habitual rather than intentionally disruptive. Unfortunately, not all classroom incivility behaviors are preventable and it may be beneficial for instructors to be equipped with effective student incivility management strategies.

**Instructor Responses to Incivility**

When classroom incivility behaviors occur during class time, immediate instructor responses vary and instructors may feel pressure to respond correctly and quickly. Berger (2002) described different strategies that are necessary to address passive and active incivility behaviors. Given that both passive and active student incivility behaviors may also represent less and more rudeness, it is not surprising that different strategies can be more effective at addressing different types of incivility. Suggestions for instructors when dealing with passive incivility include
making eye contact, moving to that part of the classroom, getting students actively involved, and 
speaking to the student privately (Berger, 2002). These suggestions can be described as less 
directly confrontational in nature. The student, when performing a passive incivility behavior, is 
not being overly disruptive so a less direct response may be appropriate (e.g., a student talking 
quietly to a friend during class and the teacher walks to that side of the room to discourage them 
from continuing). Suggestions for dealing with active incivility behaviors include listening, 
reassuring the class, being honest if something is not working and, if further action is necessary, 
making use of the campus chain of command (Berger, 2002). These actions are slightly more 
direct than the suggestions made for responding to passive incivility behaviors. If a student is 
performing an extreme incivility behavior then a decisive and direct response may be necessary, 
for example if a student is making threats to the instructor or another student then contacting the 
school’s chain of command may be necessary.

Students want instructors to take immediate effective action to end poor classroom 
behaviors (Berger, 2002; Boysen, 2012). In a recent survey of over 500 students, who were 
asked about incivility behaviors in the classroom, the students responded that over 82% of 
faculty do inform students about what behaviors are appropriate in the classroom and over 72% 
of faculty rebuke and impose penalties on students for inappropriate classroom behavior 
(Alkandari, 2011). Instructors respond to student incivility behaviors in a variety of ways. Some 
instructors take a “soft approach” such as staring at the student or making a joke (Ali, Papakie & 
MsDevitt, 2012, p. 227). Others may use a more direct approach such as responding by 
informing the student of their inappropriate behavior or speaking directly with the student about 
their behavior (Boysen, 2012).
Despite these wide ranging suggestions available to faculty who want to know how to deal with incivility when it arises, little empirical research has tested the effectiveness of various approaches. Boysen (2012) used text vignettes to empirically test the perceived effectiveness of several instructor response strategies (e.g., discussing the behavior with the class, telling the student privately that the behavior was inappropriate, presenting counter arguments). These responses were not theory guided but rather taken from his previous research on bias in the classroom. He found instructors directly or privately addressing inappropriate behaviors with students were seen as the most effective by other students (Boysen, 2012). Boysen’s (2012) study is the first study to empirically test the effectiveness of incivility response strategies and more research needs to further establish which strategies are the most effective in response to various types of incivility.

While a very useful glimpse into student perceptions of instructor responses, Boysen’s (2012) study was exploratory in nature. More research grounded in communication theory, and executed using experimental methods, is needed to further establish which strategies are the most effective in response to various types of incivility. The body of research on facework and politeness theory provides a theoretical framework for creating and analyzing instructor responses to classroom incivility behaviors that may be most effective at producing beneficial classroom outcomes.

*Facework and Politeness Theory*

In social situations, people present themselves in strategic ways in order to achieve their goals. Goffman (1955) was the first to conceptualize *face* and *facework*. He defined the term face as, “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he
has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1955, p. 222). Face is therefore an image one presents and maintains in a social interaction and facework is the communication used to maintain that image and the images of others in the exchange (Holtgraves, 1992; Metts, 2000). The concept of facework “refers to those communications designed to create, support, or challenge a particular [face]” (Holtgraves, 1992, p. 141). Facework is used to help project the image a person wants to show to others. Although there is some haziness about the exact relationship between face and identity, American communication scholars have always maintained that face and identity are separate (Blitvich, 2013). The main distinction between face and identity is that face is only constructed and maintained when people are engaging in social interaction, while identity is a more stable representation of a person (Blitvich, 2013; Holtgraves, 1992).

Individuals often feel tension between “negative face, or the desire to have autonomy of action, and positive face, or the desire to be approved of by others” (Holtgraves, 1992, p. 143). People want both autonomy and social approval but they can be difficult to achieve simultaneously. Additionally, there are two main types of positive face: “(a) “fellowship face”, defined as the desire to be included and to be viewed as a worthy companion; and (b) “competence face”, defined as the desire to be respected for admirable traits” (Metts, 2000, p. 84). Positive and negative face needs have value and should be considered in social exchanges. Types of Facework

Face is not always easy to maintain; individuals often use face saving measures or “defensive measures that are designed to avoid threats to one’s own face… or protective measures, designed to maintain the face of others” (Holtgraves, 1992, p. 142). When these
measures are preventive, they are called *avoidant facework*, for example choosing not to tell someone that you do not like what they are wearing. When face saving measures take place after a threat has already been made to someone’s face to try to correct for the threat, they are then called *corrective facework* (e.g., someone saying “My apologies I should not have said that.”) (Metts, 2000). There are a variety of ways to address concerns of face and repair problems that occur during interactions. Some people are more sensitive to the loss of face than others.

*Aggressive facework* seeks to enhance the face of one person in the interaction by harming the face of the other person; however, people who do this are thought of in a very negative light (Metts, 2000). An example of aggressive facework is a person explaining how well they did on a test by revealing how poorly others did. Aggressive facework is an extreme example but leads to an important principal of facework, a person cannot destroy the face of another without harming their own face. Face is maintained in interactions with others and because of this, it is beneficial to both parties to maintain the face of others (Holtgraves, 1992). Individuals look bad when they maintain their own face without showing any regard for the other people they are interacting with.

*From Facework to Politeness Theory*

Brown and Levinson (1978) expanded on Goffman’s concepts of face and facework by developing politeness theory. Their primary focus was not analyzing ways people correct facework mistakes but how to prevent these mistakes from occurring. Speech acts often affect the listener’s face as well as the speaker’s face (Gil, 2012). When people address others they automatically activate a combination of positive face concerns (i.e., what is the relationship they have with this person) and negative face concerns (i.e., they are now expected to respond)
(Holtgraves, 1992). Any act that presents a risk to another person’s face is called a *face threatening action* (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Clearly not all interactions activate the same level of face threat; the social context and weightiness of an act are both important (Holtgraves, 1992; Metts, 2000).

There are three main factors used when determining the severity or weightiness of a face threatening action: 1) the power distance between the two individuals, 2) the social distance between the two individuals, 3) and the level of imposition from the specific act (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Holtgraves, 1992). People are usually more polite when another person maintains a higher power position and can be less polite when the situation is reversed (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Generally speaking, individuals making larger requests are also more polite (Holtgraves, 1992). Social distance between individuals is not a very consistent predictor of politeness (Holtgraves, 1992). Some individuals are more or less polite with strangers and some individuals are more or less polite with those they know well, regardless relational distance does impact presentations of politeness (Holtgraves, 1992). In situations where one of the three main factors (i.e., power distance, the social distance, level of imposition) creates an especially strong motivation, the speaker will still be polite regardless of the other two variables (Holtgraves, 1992; Holtgraves & Joong-nam, 1990). Facework strategies are often combined and used together when multiple aspects of an individual’s face is threatened (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). Additionally, individuals infrequently deal with a single face threat at a time. Thus researchers suggest a need for further research on the conversational level, moving from looking at “single acts” or single statements/sentences to “act sequences” or conversations (Holtgraves & Joong-nam, 1990, p. 727).
Politeness and Requests

Evaluations of how polite someone should be in a given situation are relevant because it is difficult to entirely avoid imposing on others. Brown and Levinson (1978) specifically looked at how people manage and make requests. They propose requests are inherently face threatening because they require an imposition on another person’s positive and negative face. Brown and Levinson (1978) proposed five levels of politeness. These levels are called “superstrategies [that] can be ordered on a continuum of overall politeness or extent to which face concerns are encoded” (Holtgraves, 1992, p. 144). These superstrategies present five main ways people develop their politeness strategies and are ranked from least face threatening (and most polite) to most face threatening (and least polite).

The first and least face threatening strategy is to not perform the act, also called avoidance. However, avoiding making a face threatening act altogether also negates the possibility that potential target may agree to a request. The second level of politeness is an off record act. With this strategy the speaker usually engages in hinting, this is significant because the speaker still retains deniability, for example “This box is kind of heavy.” The third strategy is on record with negative politeness. This emphasizes the autonomy of the recipient with respect to their negative face needs, for example “Could you lift this box?” The fourth strategy, is on record with positive politeness. This strategy emphasizes the social connection between the speaker and listener, for example “Could you help us both by lifting this box?” The final, most face threatening, and least polite strategy is a bald on record act. This act completely disregards the hearers face concerns, for example “Lift this box.” People making requests or face threatening acts will weigh the three main factors of power distance, social distance and the level
of imposition when deciding the level of politeness they need to employ in order to increase the likelihood of success (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Holtgraves, 1992; Metts, 2000).

*Facework, Politeness and the Classroom Environment*

*Facework in the Classroom.*

Students respond positively to instructors who make respectful face-addressing comments about student’s contributions during class (Kerssen-Griep, 2001). In the classroom environment, “facework provides a means to respect others’ desired identities- and gain support for one’s own- while communicating face threatening messages” (Kerssen-Griep, Hess & Trees, 2003, p. 362). When students feel their instructors effectively manage facework strategies such as solidarity and tact they are more attentive in the classroom and this also positively motivates intrinsic learning by students (Kerssen-Griep, Hess & Trees, 2003). Effective use of facework has also predicted satisfaction within mentoring relationships (Kerssen-Griep, Trees & Hess, 2008).

*Facework During Feedback*

Trees, Kerssen-Griep and Hess (2009) found public speaking students, after giving their first speech, said feedback was more fair and more useful, were less defensive, and thought their instructors were more credible when those instructors used attentive facework during feedback. In a pair of studies later conducted, using a videotaped instructor giving feedback to students, the use of high face threat mitigation and high nonverbal immediacy led to higher student motivation and the instructor being rated as more credible (Kerssen-Griep & Witt, 2012; Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011). Face threat mitigation strategies that instructors can employ include more
explanations, being less formal, giving more compliments, and appropriately using humor and self-disclosure (Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011). These studies creation of video simulations of an instructor represented especially high ecological validity. This important step away from written scenarios to more lifelike visual stimuli has presented a direction for future research to use more realistic presentations of real world situations.

Later, Trad, Katt and Miller (2014) found that instructors using face threat mitigation strategies during feedback is so effective that, even without the possibility of nonverbal immediacy (in the case of written or online feedback), the instructor is still rated as more credible and students feel more motivation than those who did not receive feedback with face threat mitigation strategies. These studies all support the statement that, “competent instruction must include the ability to mitigate face threats and negotiate mutually acceptable identities during key instructional interactions” (Kerssen-Griep, Trees & Hess, 2008, p. 314). There is no way instructors can entirely avoid presenting potentially face threatening messages when they must present students with criticism in order to help them learn. The use of skilled facework is beneficial to students and instructors alike.

*Politeness in the Classroom*

Students have been shown to adapt their use of politeness strategies depending on their goals (Sabee & Wilson, 2005), and different politeness strategies may be more effective in some situations than others. Instructors who use high levels of politeness when making requests, prompt positive emotional responses from their students that in turn influence intentions to comply (Zhang, 2011). Creating a positive learning environment is important to most teachers and being polite to students contributes to that goal. Rudick and Martin (2011) studied students’
perceptions of instructor politeness in behavior alteration technique statements and they found that the strategy of appealing to a student’s responsibility to the class was the most threatening to positive face. The students wanted to feel solidarity with their classmates and when this cohesion was threatened they also felt threatened. This study provides further support for why instructors need to be careful about how they respond to one student in a class because the class as a whole can potentially be affected. Rees-Miller (2000) analyzed the use of facework about disagreements on university campuses and found that professors used more positive politeness strategies such as inclusive pronouns, positive comments and more humor when they disagreed with students. He noted that positive politeness strategies can “enhance the face of the addressees and thus encourages students to participate actively” (Rees-Miller, 2000, p. 1107), especially when they feel like a valued member of the class. Rees-Miller (2000) also found that negative politeness strategies were used equally by students and professors in disagreements (Rees-Miller, 2000). Negative politeness strategies “serve to lessen the force of the disagreement” (Rees-Miller, 2000, p. 1107). During disagreements, most individuals can benefit from downplaying just how much their opinions differ. In instructor student relationships this can be especially beneficial when the students want something from the instructor and the instructor wants to maintain positive relationships with students.

Politeness in Digital Classrooms

A growing body of research is examining politeness theory through online channels (Bolkan & Holmgren, 2012; McLaren, DeLeeuw & Mayer, 2011; Vinagre, 2006). University classes are now frequently delivered in entirely online environments where the instructor and student may never meet in person. This necessitates the study of how classrooms interactions
occur online. Student use of politeness strategies in e-mail increases instructor positive affect toward their students and in turn their motivation to work with and have more positive perceptions of those students (Bolkan & Holmgren, 2012). When students engage in collaborative learning in online classes and are e-mailing each other they have been found to depend on positive politeness strategies emphasizing cooperation, cohesion and solidarity (Vinagre, 2006). Even in web based tutoring, tutors who used politeness strategies helped low knowledge students perform better on a posttest than students who had more direct tutors (McLaren, DeLeeuw & Mayer, 2011).

Politeness Theory and Classroom Incivility

With the rise of classroom incivility, instructors must deal with uncivil behaviors in classrooms across the country. Instructors, especially new instructors, can often feel pressured when these incidents interrupt or occur during class time and they often have a split second to decide how to respond to these disruptions. More importantly, instructors want to know they are responding in ways that protect the solidarity of the classroom, through respect for students’ positive face needs, while at the same time respecting an individual student’s personal autonomy or negative face needs. How an instructor protects the face needs of his or her students is a reflection on the face of the instructor because damaging or protecting the face of another also damages or protects the face of the speaker (Holtgraves, 1992). Politeness theory provides a framework for informing how instructors should respond to classroom incivility behaviors. Brown and Levinson’s (1978) politeness strategies present different ways that instructors can react to students by using different levels of politeness in their responses.
Previous research has demonstrated that instructors are not seen as effective when they avoid responding to student incivility behaviors (Boice, 1996; Boysen, 2012). Bald on record politeness strategies can be highly face threatening to the receiver which in turn can make the speaker appear less competent. Based on these findings it may be likely that students view a mid-level politeness strategy as the most effective instructor response. Therefore the following hypotheses and research question are proposed:

**H1**: An avoidance strategy, as compared to a mid-level politeness strategy, will be seen as a) less effective, with b) lower perceptions of instructor credibility and c) lower perceptions of student motivation.

**RQ1**: How does a mid-level politeness strategy affect perceptions of a) instructor credibility, b) instructor effectiveness and c) student motivation?

**H2**: A bald on record strategy, as compared to a mid-level strategy will be seen as a) less effective, with b) lower perceptions of instructor credibility, and c) lower perceptions of student motivation.

Classroom incivility behaviors include a large span of behaviors from more subtle behaviors, such as texting while in class, to more intentionally rude behaviors such as making an inappropriate comment directly to an instructor (Berger, 2002; Boysen, 2012). The two main categories of incivility (i.e., passive, active) may require different levels of response on the part of the instructor (Berger, 2002). Actively rude behaviors may require more direct responses than passive behaviors that may only require a subtle response. Therefore the following hypotheses are advanced:
H3: In the active incivility condition, an avoidance strategy will be seen as a) the least effective response, with b) the lowest perceptions of instructor credibility, and c) lowest student motivation.

H4: In the passive incivility condition, a bold on record strategy will be seen as a) the least effective response, with b) the lowest perceptions of instructor credibility and c) lowest student motivation.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

An experimental design exposed participants to videos depicting a classroom based scenario in which type of student incivility and level of instructor response politeness were manipulated and student responses recorded.

Participants

Participants (N=421) were students at a large southeastern university recruited from several undergraduate communication courses. The self-reported race of the participants was reflective of the campus with 12.6% African American/Black, 5.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 57% Caucasian/White, 20% Hispanic/Latino and 2.4% mixed race participants (1.4% chose not to answer). Participants were 43.2% freshmen, 21.6% sophomores, 21.6% juniors, 12.4% seniors, and 1.2% 5th year or higher. The age of participants was 25.4% 18 years old, 33% 19 years old, 15.9% 20 years old, 11.2% 21 years old, 5.5% 22 years old, 4.3% 23 years old, and the remaining 4.7% were older. Males made up 38.5% of the sample and 61.5% of the participants were female. Some participants were offered course credit or extra credit in exchange for participating in the online survey, at the discretion of the instructor.

Procedure

A 2 (i.e., passive, active student incivility) x 3 (i.e., avoidance, mid-level, or bald on record instructor response) experimental design resulted in six conditions (see Table 1).
Table 1. Experimental Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Avoidance Instructor Response</th>
<th>Mid-Level Instructor Response</th>
<th>Bald on Record Instructor Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive Student Incivility</td>
<td>Passive Student, Instructor Avoidance</td>
<td>Passive Student, Mid-Level Instructor</td>
<td>Passive Student, Bald on Record Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Student Incivility</td>
<td>Active Student, Instructor Avoidance</td>
<td>Active Student, Mid-Level Instructor</td>
<td>Active Student, Bald on Record Instructor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The experiment took place online and students had a recruitment email containing a link to the study sent via their instructors. Participants were informed about the study structure and answered several demographic items before viewing a randomized video and answering questions about the presented scenario. The study was approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board.

*Stimulus Materials*

Six distinct videos were produced for this study, refer to Appendix A for screenshots, scripts and links to the full videos used in this study. They all depicted a brief excerpt of a college lecture including a student interruption and instructor response. All videos were approximately 60 seconds long and identical except for brief sections containing the experimental manipulations, see Table 2 for student interruptions and instructor responses.
### Table 2. Student Interruptions and Instructor Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive Student Incivility</th>
<th>Avoidance Instructor Response</th>
<th>Mid-Level Instructor Response</th>
<th>Bald on Record Instructor Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interruption:</strong></td>
<td>Says quietly to another student “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”</td>
<td>Says quietly to another student “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”</td>
<td>Says quietly to another student “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response:</strong></td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>“Let’s all just focus so that we can get through the rest of this lecture.”</td>
<td>“Hey Alexis...it is really inappropriate for you to interrupt lecture like this. If you have any comments to make about the lecture you need to find me in my office. Now is not the time.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Active Student Incivility**

| **Interruption:**         | Says out loud to the instructor “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.” | Says out loud to the instructor “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.” | Says out loud to the instructor “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.” |
| **Response:**             | No Response                   | “Let’s all just focus so that we can get through the rest of this lecture.” | “Hey Alexis...it is really inappropriate for you to interrupt lecture like this. If you have any comments to make about the lecture you need to find me in my office. Now is not the time.” |
Passive student incivility behavior was presented as one student saying to another, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.” Active student incivility behavior was presented by a student saying directly to the instructor, out loud, before the entire class, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.” The instructor responded to the student in one of three ways based on the levels of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The first condition was avoidance in which the instructor ignored the incivility being committed and said nothing. The second condition was mid-level politeness in which the instructor stated to the student and class as a whole “Let’s all just focus so that we can get through the rest of this lecture.” The third condition was bald on record and the instructor said, “Hey Alexis...it is really inappropriate for you to interrupt lecture like this. If you have any comments to make about the lecture you need to find me in my office. Now is not the time.” A brief pilot test was conducted to verify the types of student incivility and levels of instructor politeness were viewed by participants in the intended way.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, items were measured using seven-point semantic differential scales, refer to Appendix B to view all scale items.

Demographics

Participants indicated their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and year in school.

Instructor Effectiveness

Students were asked to rate instructor effectiveness on a seven-point semantic differential scale including options like very ineffective to very effective, as modeled after Boysen (2012).
The scale consisted of seven items developed for this study and demonstrated adequate reliability (i.e., $\alpha=.94$).

**Instructor Credibility**

Instructor credibility was measured using McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) 18-item scale that measured three dimensions of credibility (i.e., competence, caring, trustworthiness) with six items per subscale. Previous reliability coefficients for the three subscales have been reported as .83 for competence, .83 for character or trustworthiness, and .77 for caring (Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011). Reliability was adequate for each subscale and the overall scale: $\alpha=.91$ for competence, $\alpha=.85$ for caring, and $\alpha=.86$ for trustworthiness with an overall reliability rating of $\alpha=.94$ for the complete scale.

**Student Motivation**

Students’ state motivation was measured using Christophel’s (1990) motivation scale, a 12-item semantic differential scale that uses bipolar adjectives listed on a 7-point response format. The scale’s previous reliability was previously reported as .81 (Kerssen-Griep & Witt, 2012). The scale’s reliability was adequate in this study (i.e., $\alpha=.95$).

**Manipulation Check**

Participants were asked to assess the politeness of both student and instructor responses in the video to determine the fidelity of the intended manipulations. Both student and instructor responses were assessed using a five item scale with bipolar adjectives describing the student and instructor separately as polite to impolite or appropriate to inappropriate, etc. Reliability for the student ($\alpha=.91$) and instructor scales ($\alpha=.92$) were adequate.
Data Preparation

Survey responses with more than 20% of the information left incomplete were removed. Results in which the respondent did not voluntarily watch a full minute of the stimulus video were also removed as these participants would not have witnessed the full manipulation. A total of 44 responses were removed, leaving a remaining 421 valid responses. In the online survey, 19 items were reverse coded as determined by using the scales in their original formats. After data collection these items were recoded.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Manipulations checks are presented to ensure videos influenced participant perceptions of the student and instructor in intended ways. Hypothesis and research question testing follows.

Manipulation Checks

First, an independent samples t-test verified student politeness displayed in the video was perceived differently in the active and passive incivility conditions. There was a significant difference in perceived student politeness between the passive ($M=2.47, SD=1.09$) and active ($M=1.62, SD=0.88$) incivility conditions; $t(417)=-8.82, p < .001$. This suggests the student in the active incivility videos was seen as significantly less polite than in the passive videos. This was intended by the manipulation. An ANOVA also demonstrated levels of instructor politeness were perceived differently in the videos displaying avoidance ($M=4.72, SD=1.34$), mid-level ($M=4.86, SD=1.39$), and bald on record ($M=3.90, SD=1.82$) techniques, $[F(2, 417) = 16.05, p < .001]$. The bald on record technique was seen as significantly less polite than the avoidance or mid-level response, as intended. However, it is important to note that the mid-level response was actually perceived as more polite than complete avoidance.

Hypothesis and Research Question Testing

Means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for each condition and dependent variable can be found in Appendix C Table 8.
Hypothesis One: Mid-level Politeness Strategy vs. Avoidance Strategy

Table 3. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Avoidance and Mid-Level Conditions (Hypothesis 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>-.503</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis one predicted that compared to a mid-level politeness strategy, the avoidance strategy would result in lower perceptions of instructor effectiveness, instructor credibility, and student motivation, results can be found in Table 3. An independent samples t-test found no statistically significant differences in perceived effectiveness between the avoidance condition ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.42$) and the mid-level condition ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.54$), $t(272)=-.50$, $p=.62$, $d=-.061$. Additionally, no significant differences were found in perceived instructor credibility between the avoidance ($M=4.32$, $SD=1.02$) and the mid-level ($M=4.30$, $SD=1.04$) conditions, $t(266)=.18$, $p=.86$, $d=.022$. Finally, there were no statistically significant differences in student motivation found between the avoidance condition ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.22$) and the mid-level ($M=2.77$, $SD=1.25$) condition; $t(269)=1.08$, $p=.28$, $d=.132$. Thus, hypothesis one was not supported; there were no statistically significant differences between perceived instructor effectiveness, instructor credibility, or student motivation following exposure to videos where the instructor used an avoidance or mid-level politeness strategy.
Research Question One: Mid-level Politeness Strategy

Table 4. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Mid-level Instructor Response Condition (Research Question 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.79</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-11.49</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question one was focused on assessing how a mid-level politeness strategy affected perceptions of instructor effectiveness, instructor credibility, and student motivation, results can be found in Table 4. Three single sample t-tests were run to assess if levels of the dependent variables significantly differed from the scale midpoint (i.e., 4) in the mid-level politeness conditions, essentially examining if levels of the dependent variables varied significantly from the neutral midpoint on the scale. Perceptions of instructor effectiveness ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.55$) did not significantly differ from the scale midpoint in the mid-level politeness conditions; $t(140)=-1.79$, $p=.08$. Perceptions of credibility ($M=4.30$, $SD=1.04$) were significantly above the scale midpoint in the mid-level conditions; $t(135)=3.36$, $p<.001$. Finally, perceptions of motivation ($M=2.78$, $SD=1.25$) were significantly below the scale midpoint in the mid-level conditions; $t(137)=-11.49$, $p<.001$. That is, in the mid-level conditions, perceived instructor effectiveness was indistinguishable from the neutral scale midpoint, instructor credibility was above the midpoint, and student motivation was below the midpoint.
**Hypothesis Two: Mid-level Politeness Strategy vs. Bald on Record Strategy**

**Table 5. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in Mid-level and Bald on Record Conditions (Hypothesis 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>-2.15</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>-.746</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>-1.99</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis two predicted that compared to a mid-level politeness strategy, the bald of the record strategy would result in lower perceptions of instructor effectiveness, instructor credibility, and student motivation, results can be found in Table 5. An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in perceptions of instructor effectiveness between the bald on record ($M=4.18$, $SD=1.72$) and mid-level conditions ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.55$), $t(284)=-2.15$, $p < .05$, $d=-.255$. However, there were no statistically significant differences found in perceptions of instructor credibility between the bald on record strategy ($M=4.40$, $SD=1.11$) and the mid-level strategy ($M=4.30$, $SD=1.04$) conditions; $t(279)=-.75$, $p = .46$, $d=-.089$. Finally, contrary to the hypothesis two prediction, participants exposed to the bald on record strategy had a higher level of motivation ($M=3.09$, $SD=1.33$) than in the mid-level strategy ($M=2.78$, $SD=1.25$) condition; $t(277)=-1.99$, $p < .05$, $d=-.239$. Thus, hypothesis two was not supported as there were no significant differences in the instructor credibility, and significant differences in instructor effectiveness and student motivation were not in the predicted direction. That is, instructor
effectiveness and motivation were actually higher in the bald on record than in the mid-level conditions.

**Hypothesis Three: Active Incivility Condition**

### Table 6. Perceptions of Effectiveness, Credibility, and Motivation in the Active Incivility Conditions (Hypothesis 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>13.47</td>
<td>2, 207</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>2, 203</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis three predicted that an avoidance strategy in the active incivility condition would be seen as the least effective response with lowest perceptions of instructor credibility and student motivation, results can be found in Table 6. An ANOVA found a significant difference between the perceived effectiveness of instructor response in avoidance ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.45$), mid-level ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.62$), and bald on record ($M=4.85$, $SD=1.60$) conditions, $[F(2, 207)=13.47, p < .001, \eta^2=.115]$. However, means suggest avoidance was not found to be the least effective response and in fact the mid-level polite response was least effective. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences found in levels of instructor credibility between the avoidance ($M=4.36$, $SD=.94$), mid-level ($M=4.39$, $SD=1.13$), and bald on record ($M=4.63$, $SD=1.14$) conditions, $[F(2, 206)= 1.31, p=.27, \eta^2=.013]$. Finally, a statistically significant
difference in student motivation was found between avoidance ($M=2.76, SD=1.03$), mid-level ($M=2.66, SD=1.26$), and bald on record ($M=3.41, SD=1.33$) conditions, $[F(2, 203)=7.94, p < .001, \eta^2=.073]$. However, again the avoidance condition did not have the lowest level of student motivation but rather the mid-level response was lowest. Thus, hypothesis three was partially supported as the avoidance strategy was perceived as consistently less effective than bald on record, but differences between avoidance and mid-level politeness conditions were less consistent.

*Hypothesis Four: Passive Incivility Condition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>2, 206</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>2, 201</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2, 203</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Level</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis four predicted that a bald on record strategy in the passive incivility condition would be seen as the least effective response with lowest perceptions of instructor credibility and student motivation, results can be found in Table 7. An ANOVA found no significant differences in perceptions of instructor effectiveness in the avoidance ($M=3.68, SD=1.39$), mid-level ($M=3.86, SD=1.48$), and bald on record ($M=3.52, SD=1.59$) strategies in the passive condition,
$F(2, 206) = 92, p = .4, \eta^2 = .009$. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences found between perceptions of instructor credibility in the instructor response conditions of avoidance ($M=4.29, SD=1.10$), mid-level ($M=4.20, SD=0.94$), and bald on record ($M=4.16, SD=1.03$) strategies in the passive condition, $F(2, 201) = .24, p = .79, \eta^2 = .002$. Finally, there were no statistically significant differences found between student motivation in the avoidance ($M=3.12, SD=1.37$), mid-level ($M=2.90, SD=1.23$), and bald on record ($M=2.77, SD=1.26$) strategies in the passive condition, $F(2, 203) = 1.33, p = .27, \eta^2 = .013$. Thus, hypothesis four was not supported with statistical significance.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

The strength of the manipulations in this study were very strong. That is, the video presentation of both active and passive student incivility behaviors and also three levels of instructor politeness (i.e., avoidance, mid-level, bald on record) were largely perceived in intended ways by participants. It is important to note that instructors were perceived as most effective and credible when a student engaged in active classroom incivility and was met with a bald on record instructor response. Student motivation was also highest in this scenario. However, instructors using a bald on record response to passive student incivility were viewed as least effective and credible. So, while this bald on record approach may appear to be the most effective, it is also the riskiest. That is, if used in an inappropriate context (e.g., in response to a minor student violation) it can backfire and result in negative perceptions of the instructor.

Contrary to the findings of previous studies, the current research suggests avoiding responding to interrupting students does not lead to lower perceptions of instructor effectiveness, instructor credibility, or student motivation. Students may feel that not drawing further attention to unnecessary student interruptions prevents an even bigger distraction from usual class time. When analyzing the mid-level politeness response, students perceived this strategy to be significantly more credible and less motivating than the scale midpoint. That is, those values deviated from a neutral point in substantive ways. When an instructor responds politely they may be viewed more credibly but students do not appear to be particularly motivated by a polite
response. However, perceptions of effectiveness did not differ from a neutral point, so students may evaluate a polite response as standard and therefore not overly effective.

There were differences in how bald on record and mid-level instructor responses affected perceptions of motivation and effectiveness, but not in the direction predicted. Surprisingly, the least polite response (i.e., bald on record) was seen as more motivating and effective than the polite response. Students may feel an instructor is justified in a bold response when the class is actively interrupted. Or perhaps the surprise of having an instructor directly confront a rude student behavior is more noticeable to students so they pay closer attention. When comparing the bald on record and mid-level instructor responses on perceptions of instructor credibility there were no significant differences found. Thus, in some cases instructors may not need to be overly bold to be seen as effective.

Differences in perceptions of instructor effectiveness and student motivation were found among participants viewing the active student incivility videos, but the avoidance response was not evaluated as the worst outcomes for those variables. When a student is being especially disruptive it may change how other students in the class view the effectiveness of the instructor’s response and their future motivation in that class. Additionally, the three responses to active incivility did not significantly affect perceptions of instructor credibility.

When evaluating instructor responses to passive student incivility, the bald on record response was thought to be the least effective, credible and motivating. However, although the means trended toward the bald on record strategy being viewed as the least effective response to passive incivility with lower perceptions of instructor credibility and student motivation, the
results were not statistically significant. This suggests that being overly harsh in response to a small interruption is likely not the best choice for an instructor.

*Theoretical Implications*

Politeness theory assumes individuals attempt to minimize threats to face for self and others. In this case, the approval of a harsh response has shown the minimization of face threatening actions was perhaps a secondary concern in the minds of students. Politeness theory describes how the relationship between the parties, power distance, and magnitude of face imposition are factors an individual weighs (semi-consciously perhaps) in deciding on a level of directness for a specific interaction (Brown and Levinson, 1978). The difference between passive (i.e., mildly disruptive behavior) and active (i.e., highly disruptive behavior) incivility play a role in determining the level of face threat as an active incivility disruption would present a harsher threat to an instructors face and they are therefore justified in making a harsher response. The results of this study supported this conclusion, because the instructor was perceived as most effective when the student performed the rudest behavior (i.e., active incivility behavior) and the instructor responded with the harshest response (i.e., bald on record response). The instructor response seen as least effective was when the student performed the passive incivility behavior and the instructor responded with the harshest response (i.e., bald on record response), possibly because the student had not injured the instructors face enough to justify such a harsh response. More research is needed to determine exactly how disruptive a student needs to be in order for concerns of face and politeness to become secondary to concerns of classroom management. Students seem to respect a harsh response on the part of the instructor when a student is being
especially disruptive; in this case, politeness may be disregarded in favor of effective classroom management.

While politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978) suggests avoidance is likely the most polite instructor response because it avoids imposing on another’s face, more practice based classroom incivility literature suggests it is also the least effective (Berger, 2002; Boysen, 2012). An avoidance response may not be as harmful when the instructor is responding to less disruptive incivility behaviors as compared to more disruptive behaviors. As supported by politeness theory, instructors should consider how much of an imposition has been created by an uncivil student behavior when determining how to respond, as student perceptions can be greatly affected.

Regarding face, the literature suggests you cannot harm the face of another without also harming your own face (Metts, 2000). Thus, instructors need to be careful of harming the face of one student because they may also offend the rest of their class. In this study, this conclusion was not supported because most students approved of a harsh response to uncivil student behavior. However, because participants were watching a video scenario and not actually students in the physical classroom they may not have felt as protective of the chastised student as they may have in an actual classroom environment where students may know each other. Another possible explanation for the justification of a harsh response and face threat to one student could be that harming the face of one student that is disrupting an entire classroom saves face for the rest of the students in the room.

There is little debate in previous research on classroom incivility that faculty members can cause or contribute to classroom incivility behaviors (Alberts, Hazen & Thebald, 2010;
Boice, 1996; Bray & Favero, 2004; Clark, 2008; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001). If an instructor repeatedly allows one student to perform face threatening behaviors in a classroom (e.g., stating to the class “If you don’t know this already you shouldn’t be in college”) this not only affects class functioning but does not show that the instructor is willing to protect the face of the majority of their students. An instructor looking ineffective is a problem but not being an advocate for one’s own students may be even more detrimental to maintaining respect in a classroom. One of the ways instructors may contribute to incivility in the classroom is by ignoring the fact that continued uncivil behavior is a problem (Feldmann, 2001), and this can also make an instructor appear as if they do not care about the rest of the students in their class.

Some students may also feel that a college instructor has enough power to be less polite to students who disturb their class time. Brown and Levinson (1978) have reported that people in higher power positions are able to be less polite than lower power individuals. As an instructor holds a high power position in a classroom, students accepting and being most motivated by an instructor’s harsh response suggests that students do respect the instructor’s position and students do not seem to approve of instructors allowing students to get away with problematic behaviors. It is also important to note, politeness theory originally examined requests as opposed to responses. Although an instructor’s response to an uncivil student is partially a request for the student to stop, a request and a response do differ. A request may begin an interaction and a response may finish it. This change in sequence could also have contributed to results that differ slightly from the original predictions based on politeness theory.
Practical Implications

The current study was a theory guided investigation, but practical application of findings to classroom contexts is clear. Results indicate instructors should evaluate the type of student incivility when determining their response to an uncivil student. Students appear to notice and appreciate this consideration. Although more research is needed to determine the degree to which students consider certain behaviors to be disruptive, the current research provides empirical evidence suggesting students are influenced by how instructors respond to these behaviors.

Students were especially motivated by a harsh response to active student incivility and find the instructor to be especially effective in this context. Instructors should feel justified in delivering harsher responses when students are especially disruptive. It may be that a bald on record response may be strong enough to capture student’s attention in a generation where technology presents many distractions. While it may not be harmful to occasionally let these behaviors slide, it is not overly motivating or effective to avoid responding to classroom incivility. Results also suggest that it does not hurt for an instructor to respond politely to an interrupting student, as was the case with the mid-level politeness response. However, this is also not overly effective, possibly because it has become expected and may be easier to ignore.

Several studies make suggestions for dealing with classroom incivility behaviors without empirical research (e.g., Meyers, 2003) and print vignettes are sometimes used to depict classroom scenarios (Boysen, 2012). This study has expanded on these designs and recommendations by experimentally manipulating classroom behaviors and empirically testing several instructor responses. Thus, one important use of the current research is the theory guided professional quality classroom scenario videos produced. These videos could certainly be used in
future examinations of this area, and new videos developed to examine the effects of other classroom behaviors.

Knowing that responding harshly to especially disruptive students can actually be beneficial for a classroom could be extremely helpful. Being mindful of the disturbance in one’s own classroom so that the best possible decisions can be made about how to handle uncivil student behavior can be important, especially to new instructors who do not yet have much firsthand experience to build on. Boice (1996) has described that how instructors handle incivility behaviors in the first few days of the semester may have lasting consequences for classroom management for an entire semester. Thus, the instructor understanding options regarding how to handle them is relevant to inexperienced and experienced instructors alike.

Limitations

The current study is somewhat constrained by several factors related to the participants, stimulus materials, and context. First, participants were recruited from communication courses and the sample was primarily freshmen. These students enrolled in communication courses and closer to their high school years may perceive instructor responses in different ways. Regarding the stimulus materials, all videos used a white female student and white female instructor. While valuable from a consistency viewpoint, this also limits the applicability of findings. The videos also depicted a small classroom environment (N<20), and results may vary in a large lecture format. Additionally, the student participants were not actually enrolled in the mock course depicted in the video, so their identification with the student in the video was likely lowered and may have resulted in harsher evaluations of the student incivility and less harsh evaluation of instructor responses. That is, students actually in the mock classroom may have been more likely
to side with the interrupting student and provide harsher evaluations of the instructor response. It should also be noted, that the current study has used the McCroskey and Teven (1999) source credibility scale by analyzing all 18 scale items together to determine one overall mean for credibility. While the overall reliability rating of $\alpha=.94$ for the complete scale is high, McCroskey has noted that there may be an advantage to analyzing the three dimensions of credibility (i.e., competence, caring, trustworthiness) separately (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). While that data is contained within the dataset and can be further investigated, in this study intricacies between different dimensions were not hypothesized. Finally, decreased sample size for specific hypotheses may have affected the power to detect significant results.

**Future Research**

Future research in this area should first address the limitations outlined above by including more diverse participants (e.g., year in school, major) and actors in video scenarios (e.g., gender, race), as well as varying the context (e.g., larger lecture). Additionally, technological incivility is a timely and evolving topic of concern in the classroom. Video scenarios where a student engages in passive incivility through checking his or her phone quietly versus taking a phone call in class could provide a unique perspective. It could also be valuable to investigate the effect of repeated interactions and not just one single act of incivility. For example, providing participants with a course syllabus for context and a longer to get a better feel for the classroom climate could be beneficial.

The current study uses three levels of manipulated politeness, yet politeness theory posits five distinct levels (i.e., avoidance, off the record, on record with negative politeness, on record with positive politeness, bald on record). Future research could attempt to manipulate these five
levels to examine any additional intricacies in how they interact with student incivility behaviors to affect instructor perceptions. The current research provides a useful insight into how student perceptions of instructor responses to classroom incivility can be affected by politeness, but further examination is necessary to confirm the most effective strategies.

Although further research is needed to discern the most effective strategies for dealing with different levels of student incivility, this research presents an exciting step towards empirical review of classroom exchanges that occur every day. Most, if not all instructors, have had the experience of quickly responding to student incivility behaviors and then wondering if they should have handled the situation differently. By empirically testing and reviewing strategies for responding to uncivil students instructors may be better prepared to respond quickly to a student who is disrupting their class. When a student is especially disruptive an instructor can feel justified in making a direct response and when a student is only mildly disruptive an instructor should still respond but less directly. In accordance with politeness theory, instructors should consider the level of imposition created by uncivil student behavior when calibrating responses, as this study indicates that student perceptions can be greatly affected by that response.
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER
Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA0000351, IRB00001138

To: Natalie E. Yriasrry

Date: February 19, 2015

Dear Researcher:

On 02/19/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: The Effect of Instant Instructor Responses to Classroom Incivility Behaviors
Investigator: Natalie E. Yriasrry
IRB Number: SBE-13-11047
Funding Agency: N/A
Grant Title: N/A
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in IRB, so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Sophia Dziagiewicz, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Joanna Muratori

Signature applied by Joanna Muratori on 02/19/2013 04:40:39 PM EST

IRB Coordinator

Page 1 of 1
APPENDIX B: SCREENSHOTS, VIDEO LINKS, AND VIDEO SCRIPTS
Condition 1: Avoidance Passive

Hyperlink- https://youtu.be/ph60RuL5VB0

Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Students- Talking to each other saying, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- (Ignores the behavior and continues lecturing) “During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
Condition 2: Avoidance Active

Hyperlink- https://youtu.be/8YsToj91nfw

Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Student- Student says directly to the instructor, out loud, before the entire class, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- (Ignores the behavior and continues lecturing) “During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Students- Talking to each other saying, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- “Alright everyone why don't we all quiet down a bit. Let’s just focus now so we can get through the rest of the lecture.” (Turns back to the board and returns to the lecture) “During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
Condition 4: Mid-Level Active

Hyperlink- https://youtu.be/qH-C75b4dn4

Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Student- Student says directly to the instructor, out loud, before the entire class, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- “Alright everyone why don’t we all quiet down a bit. Let’s just focus now so we can get through the rest of the lecture.” (Turns back to the board and returns to the lecture) “During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Students- Talking to each other saying, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- The instructor will state, “Hey NAME...it is really inappropriate for you to interrupt lecture like this. If you have any comments to make about the lecture you need to find me in my office. Now is not the time.” (Turns back to the board and returns to the lecture) “During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
Condition 6: Bald on Record Active

Hyperlink- https://youtu.be/PbUHFPiMCKE

Instructor- “Hello everyone, today we will be learning about the American Revolutionary war. Although it is often only the 13 original colonies that are mentioned, there were actually two dozen different American colonies under the control of Great Britain. Those colonies outside of the famous 13 remained loyal to Great Britain during the war although several were sympathetic to the rebellion’s cause. In the 1700s, Great Britain followed a policy of Mercantilism where the colonies were expected to function to help Britain, which included paying heavy taxes to the British Parliament; however, the colonies did not have direct representation in the parliament so therefore they did not feel that they were fairly represented. This led to the historic slogan of ‘taxation without representation.’”

Student- Student says directly to the instructor, out loud, before the entire class, “This is so boring. I don’t know why these lectures take so long.”

Instructor- The instructor will state, “Hey NAME...it is really inappropriate for you to interrupt lecture like this. If you have any comments to make about the lecture you need to find me in my office. Now is not the time.” (Turns back to the board and returns to the lecture) During the 1773 ‘Boston Tea Party’ a group of protesting colonists known as the Sons of Liberty boarded ships, dressed as Native Americans and destroyed an entire shipment of tea by throwing entire chests into the water. The British government retaliated by closing the Boston harbor. After this point, the conflict between the colonies escalated into the full blown American Revolutionary War but it wasn’t until 1776 that the colonists actually declared independence as the new United States of America.”
APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVED SURVEY
**Demographic Questions**

*Instructions: Please answer the following questions about yourself:*

Gender (circle one): Male   Female   Other

Age:

Class Standing:
- Freshmen
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- 5th year or higher

Race/Ethnicity:
- African American/Black
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American
- Mixed Race
- Other
- Prefer Not to Answer

*[VIDEO SHOWN HERE]*

*Instructions: As you complete this questionnaire, please think about the classroom interaction you just viewed. Put yourself in the position of a student in the class. Consider your opinions of the instructor’s response to the student's comment as you answer the questions below. There are no right or wrong answers.*

Please indicate your impressions of the instructor, based on the response to the student's comment, by selecting the appropriate bubble between the pairs of adjectives below. The closer the number is to an adjective, the more certain you are of your evaluation.

**Credibility Scale**

I think the instructor is:

Intelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unintelligent
Untrained 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Trained
Cares about me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Doesn't care about me
Honest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Dishonest
Has my interests at heart 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Doesn't have my interests at heart
Untrustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Trustworthy
Inexpert 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Expert  
Self-centered 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not self-centered  
Concerned with me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not concerned with me  
Honorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Dishonorable  
Informed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Uninformed  
Moral 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Immoral  
Incompetent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Competent  
Unethical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ethical  
Insensitive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Sensitive  
Bright 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Stupid  
Phony 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Genuine  
Not understanding 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Understanding  

**Effectiveness Scale- Part 1**

Please indicate your impressions of the instructor's response to the student's comment by selecting the appropriate bubble between the pairs of adjectives below. The closer the number is to an adjective, the more certain you are of your evaluation.  

The instructor's response to the student comment made her seem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Able</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Inappropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Incapable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now imagine that you were a student sitting in this class.  

**State Motivation Scale**

The instructor’s response to the student's comment would make you feel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivated</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unmotivated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Uninterested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Uninvolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stimulated</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Stimulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to study</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Want to study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Uninspired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchallenged</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninvigorated</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Invigorated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unenthused</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Enthused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Not Excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Fascinated</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Fascinated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Effectiveness Scale- Part 2**

How effectively do you think the instructor in the video handled the student comment?

- Very Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Effective

Given just what you saw in the video, how would you grade the instructor’s performance?

- A; B; C; D; F

I think the instructor in this video is:

- Very Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Effective

How would you rate the instructor’s response to the student in this video?

- Very Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Effective

What is your evaluation of how the instructor handled the student comment?

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Please describe your overall evaluation of the instructor:

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Manipulation Check**

In the video the student’s comment was:

- Polite 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Impolite
- Not Disruptive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disruptive
- Not Rude 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rude
- Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Inappropriate
- Orderly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disorderly

In the video the instructor’s response to the student’s comment was:

- Polite 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Impolite
- Not Disruptive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disruptive
- Not Rude 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rude
- Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Inappropriate
- Orderly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disorderly

Who is the student in the video talking to?

- a) The instructor
- b) Another Student

How did the instructor in the video respond to the interrupting student?

- a) The instructor ignored the student
- b) The instructor was polite to the student
- c) The instructor was harsh with the student
APPENDIX D: TABLE 8 MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS
Table 8: Mean and Standard Deviations for all Experimental Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Avoidance Response</th>
<th>Mid-Level Response</th>
<th>Bald on Record Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Incivility</td>
<td>M=3.68</td>
<td>M=4.29</td>
<td>M=3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=1.39</td>
<td>SD=1.10</td>
<td>SD=1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=66</td>
<td>N=65</td>
<td>N=66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Incivility</td>
<td>M=3.68</td>
<td>M=4.36</td>
<td>M=2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=1.45</td>
<td>SD=0.94</td>
<td>SD=1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=67</td>
<td>N=67</td>
<td>N=67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Bolkan, S., & Holmgren, J. (2012). "You are such a great teacher and I hate to bother you but...": Instructors' perceptions of students and their use of email messages with varying politeness strategies. Communication Education, 61(3), 253-270.


