Starting Off Right: Great Ideas for Preparing Classroom Incivility
Starting on the First Day of Class

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“Civility is not another piece to be added onto the plate of an educator, it ‘is’ the plate upon which all else is placed”

(Vincent, 2006)
The Ideal Classroom

• Focused Listing – 2’
• What kind of behaviors are found in the ideal, most civil classroom/course environment?
• What kind of behaviors are missing?
Setting a Civil Tone and Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Strategy #1

Set the Stage for talking about Civility
Charting the Course
A Strategic Vision for Boise State University

Academic Excellence
Academic Excellence denotes high-quality student-focused programs that integrate theory and practice, engage students in community-based learning, and are informed by meaningful assessment.

Public Engagement
Public Engagement links the University's academic mission with its community partners to address issues of mutual benefit.

Vibrant Culture
A Vibrant Culture embraces and fosters innovation, responsiveness, inclusiveness, accessibility, diversity, and effective stewardship.

Exceptional Research
Exceptional Research is defined by progressive scholarship and creative activity, and graduate programs that have groundbreaking applications locally, regionally, and globally.
Definition of Civility

The Boise State University community is dedicated to creating and maintaining a civil community that supports respectful discourse, openness to opposing points of view, and passionate argument.

As a member of this community, we will demonstrate mutual regard, a willingness to listen, compliance with norms of decorum and respectful communication.
Statement of Shared Values

Academic Excellence
Caring
Citizenship
Fairness
Respect
Responsibility
Trustworthiness

http://www.boisestate.edu/osrr
Nursing Leadership and Management Teaching Team

Vision
To develop ethical, principled nurses who possess leadership and management skills to effect meaningful change in a variety of health care settings and organizations.

Mission
To practice professionalism, inclusion, collaboration and civility through open dialog, civil discourse, engagement, and essential conversation to promote learning, professional growth and development.

Philosophy
We adhere to a student-centered teaching and learning philosophy. We believe that students are adult-learners and that each individual brings a unique set of life skills and lived experiences to the academic and practice environment. Faculty expect civility, professionalism, and active engagement from all students.
Dr. Clark’s Teaching Philosophy

I thoroughly enjoy teaching, interacting with students, and engaging students in the learning process. I believe that all students are experienced adult learners and capable of deep learning and achieving substantial personal and professional goals. This course is designed to prepare nursing students for leadership and management roles in a variety of health care environments. As such, I am intentional about practical application and relevance of the material to nursing practice and to real life.

As teachers and learners in higher education, we are charged with encouraging debate, challenging ideas, engaging students in intellectual inquiry, and fostering discovery. These stimulating and important discussions require all of us to bring civility to discourse and respect to our conversations and encounters. Therefore, co-creating classroom norms on the first day of class is an essential component to the leadership course. I am deeply committed to fostering a classroom environment conducive to student learning, meaningful engagement, and evocative dialog. As a professor of higher education and as a nurse leader, I take seriously the importance of professional role-modeling as well as the intentional socialization of students into the nursing profession.
Boise State University
Department of Nursing
Behavioral Norms

- Assume goodwill
- Check it out
- Send the mail to the right address
- Communicate respectfully
- Listen carefully
- Ask for what you need
- Circle back or close the loop
- Respect and celebrate diversity
Setting a Civil Tone and Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Strategy #2

Co-Create Norms
What do we [educators] stand for?

Students can’t read our minds. They can’t be expected to know what we stand for without an explicit and vigorous effort to communicate this. Laying bare our pedagogic beliefs helps students understand that our actions are not arbitrary or haphazard.

Students do not have to agree with these beliefs, but they need to know what they are and why we have them. Continuous full disclosure by teachers of their expectations helps students come to trust the teacher much more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

(Brookfield, 1995)
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This example of how norms can be co-created in a large enrollment class was generously shared by Dr. Mary Pritchard, Department of Psychology
Academic Excellence and Responsibility

• What you can expect from me. I will...
  – Be prepared for class
  – Keep up-to-date with relevant course information
  – Conduct my own research in my areas of expertise
  – Hold office hours to help you succeed in the course
  – Keep careful grade records on Blackboard
  – Return assignments quickly with detailed feedback
  – Validate excuses for nonattendance
  – Pursue the maximum punishment for plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity
Citizenship, Fairness, and Trustworthiness

• What you can expect from me. I will...
  – Conduct class in a professional manner
  – Follow Boise State codes of conduct, rules, and regulations
  – Conduct item analyses of each quiz and exam
  – Regrade any assignment you feel was graded unfairly
  – Hold each student to the same standards
  – Be honest with you
  – Maintain confidentiality concerning your performance
Respect and Caring

• What you can expect from me. I will...
  – Treat you with respect
  – Not discriminate
  – Listen to your concerns
  – Treat you as an individual
  – Provide professional support and help where appropriate
How will you contribute to these shared values and to the learning environment?
Dr. Clark’s Classroom Norms: Spring 2010

* Assume Goodwill
* Respect and Celebrate Differences
* Communicate Respectfully
* Computers OK in class as long as related to class
* Cell phones on vibrate in class, make efforts to minimize distractions and disruptions to class time (sitting near a door if expecting a call, only texting if necessary and short)
* Listen Carefully
* Have Some Fun!
* If an issue arises that is unresolved Dr. Clark is available to help.
* Do unto others as you would have done unto you
Setting a Civil Tone and Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Strategy #3

Use Behavioral Outcomes
Examples of Behavioral Outcomes

• Interactions reflect professionalism and civility as evidenced by academic excellence, caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness

• Demonstrates accountability for one’s own personal and professional conduct which reflect the standards, values and ethical behaviors of the profession [or discipline]

• Models the professional nursing role based on acceptable standards of practice and ethical principles, including being accountable for one’s personal and professional behaviors and development

Write a behavioral outcome that can be used in your course
Setting a Civil Tone and Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Strategy #4

Set the tone with your own behaviors
Setting the Tone Behaviors

Greet students at the door
Use Name Tents
Start and end class on time
Take attendance (sign-in sheet, clickers)
Be creative with faculty and student introductions
Cover substantial content the first day
Give a relevant assignment the first day
Have a Civil Semester!