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Perceptions of School Civility: A Survey of School of Education Alumni

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PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CIVILITY: A SURVEY OF

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ALUMNI

By

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CIVILITY: A SURVEY OF

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Very little empirical data exists on the topic of civility in schools, although much theory and philosophy are proffered in the literature. Literature on moral education and character education also informs the study of civility. Many of the philosophical theories mention education as a way of increasing civility in society. Some schools have attempted to implement various civility interventions and research supports the use of similar interventions to teach social skills; however, none have systematically collected data for these interventions to evaluate their effectiveness for teaching civility. The present research systematically gathered data on perceptions of civility and incivility in schools by surveying the alumni of a school of education using a web-based questionnaire. Results revealed that participants perceived that students' civil behaviors occurred more frequently than uncivil behaviors. However, participants also indicated a need to increase civility and decrease incivility in schools. They gave

suggestions to accomplish this goal including direct instruction, school professionals modeling civil behavior, incorporating the ideology of positive behavior support, and setting rules and expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Civility, defined as polite behaviors that maintain social harmony or demonstrate respect for the humanity of an individual, is important for the maintenance of a society. However, many aspects of the rapidly changing world, including media, technology, weakening families, focus on the individual, and the glorification of violence, contribute to incivility. Much anecdotal evidence exists suggesting that civility is fading both as a virtue and a behavior (Berman, 1998; Boyd, 2006; Burns, 2003; Feldman, 2001; Hinckley, 2000; Kauffman & Burbach, 1997; Leo, 1996; Marks, 1996; Peck, 2002; Schaefer, 1995; Stover, 1999). The increased focus of public education on academics has minimized the teaching of civil behavior which was once prevalent in American schools (Peck). The concern for safe schools combined with this anecdotal evidence has led many researchers, professionals, and laypersons to mourn the loss of civility and look for some way to revive this peace-making virtue.

Because children and adolescents spend significant amounts of time in classrooms, are accustomed to learning and practicing new behaviors in this setting, and are surrounded by a variety of peers and adults with whom they must learn to interact, the school appears to be an ideal place to teach civil behaviors (Berman, 1998; Burns, 2003; Peck, 2002). Much of the theoretical writing regarding children and civility is centered in the school environment; however, sparse data exist in this context. Most of the literature concerning civility contains only theory regarding the definition of civility, the general decline of civility, and what might be done to increase civil behavior in the schools and society (see Boyd, 2006; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Mourad, 2001). Theoretical articles

propose numerous ideas to increase civility and these suggestions are likely very useful. However, few of these suggestions had data to measure their effectiveness, and most were merely suggestions from one or two individuals. Without a more systematic collection of data, school professionals wishing to increase civility cannot be sure what interventions are most likely to be effective. While many of the interventions suggested for increasing civility were not empirically tested to evaluate their efficacy, many similar interventions have been shown to improve the social skills of children (Merrell & Gimpel, 1998).

Data collected from the present study helped evaluate the current level of civility in schools, though there were no previous data with which to compare the findings. The literature reveals that while several schools have suggested or attempted civility interventions (see e.g., Burns, 2003; Nilsen, 2008; Stover, 1999; Wessler, 2008) no data were collected either to measure the effectiveness of the interventions or to determine the level of students' civility. This lack of previous data makes drawing any conclusions about the decline or improvement of civility in schools difficult. This study was not intended to debate changes in the frequency of civility's occurrence but to help determine the current level of civility in schools and provide a foundation of systematically gathered intervention suggestions from which to create an intervention to improve civility. Examining the perspectives of school professionals is a beginning in the collection of this much needed data.

The purpose of this thesis was to identify the perceptions of school professionals regarding the level of civility in schools with some degree of objectivity and to begin to systematically gather data on the topic of civility in schools. It was hoped that these data

would help educators and researchers to more easily evaluate the specific behaviors in

need of improvement and generate ideas for relevant civility interventions. The

information produced by this research was intended to serve as groundwork for creating

an evidence-based intervention to increase civility in schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections explore the various definitions of civility as well as the reasons that civility is vital in any community. They examine the need for increased civility in modern society, looking at public schools in particular, with an outline of civility instruction historically and contemporarily. The literature review also explores the relationship of civility education to character, moral, and civic education, and outlines the goals and strategies for civility interventions that have been previously suggested.

Aspects of Civility

Several different definitions of civility exist, varying according to the context in which they are used. Also, a definition of civility is incomplete without also understanding its opposite: incivility.

Historical definition of civility. To fully understand the complex definition of civility it is useful to view the term in an archaic or historical context. Civility may be defined as the ability to work as a citizen (Shulman & Carey, 1984). Considering the Latin roots *civis* (citizen) and *civitas* (city), one sees the connection of civility to maintaining a functioning society and may conclude that civilized people are those who are fit both to enjoy the benefits and carry the responsibilities of citizenship: in a word, citizens (Peck, 2002). Boyd (2006) agreed that civility is related to civilization and "denotes a sense of standing or membership in the political community with its attendant rights and responsibility" (p. 864). Functionally, the object of civil behavior, as it relates to civic capacity, is an ordered, harmonious community (Schaefer, 1995).

The maintenance of a civilization obligates its members to be polite in everyday interactions with fellow citizens (Boyd, 2006). Hinckley (2000) noted that "civility requires us to restrain and control ourselves, and at the same time to act with respect toward others" (p. 53). Thus, civility, as a code of mutually agreed upon social behaviors, functions to create order and work toward the common good of all citizens. Civility is closely related to social skills, which are important for fostering interpersonal relationships (Merrell & Gimpel, 1998). People benefit from civility because they are able to interact with people upon whom they are dependent. Research has also shown that people's health and immune systems benefit from the social ties facilitated by civility (Forni, 2002).

Civility may be viewed in two distinct ways, proximate and diffuse (Fyfe, Banister, & Kearns, 2006). Proximate civility is characterized as politeness or the absence of rude interactions with others: it includes words and gestures used with or around others. Diffuse civility is defined as regard for the effects of one's actions on others and the spaces shared with them, whether or not one is present at the same time as others in those spaces. Civility requires respect for others in their presence and the maintenance of shared spaces in consideration of others using them (Forni, 2002).

Modern definition of civility. The current use of the term civility might include courtesy, politeness, consideration, gentility, respect, caring, looking beyond selfishness, or seeking ways to help those in need (Hinckley, 2000). Civility has also been defined simply as decency (Peck, 2002) or as the consideration of others within interpersonal relationships (Ferriss, 2002). Perhaps the best definition of civility might be found in the lack thereof: Although one may not be able to quickly identify a civil behavior, one is

very aware of instances of incivility (Boyd, 2006). Keyes (2002) defined civility as "the quality with which individuals comport themselves in each other's company, reflecting the degree to which each individual is polite and courteous" (p. 393). Civility, however, goes beyond this, consisting of the way people think about and behave toward their community and society (Boyd).

For the purposes of this study, civility was defined as polite behaviors that show respect toward a person in order to maintain social harmony or recognize the humanity of that person. Because this was exploratory research, civility was defined broadly to ensure that no important civil behavior was overlooked for a possible intervention. To truly understand civility it is important to also consider the concept of incivility.

Contributing factors of civility. Considering the modern definition of civility as courtesy or politeness, one must also consider the reason for affording these courtesies: the common good discussed previously. Civility is something more than tolerance and peacefulness, which require only leaving other people alone; civility requires activity and affirmative actions in which individuals purposefully interact with others to lift and to help (Boyd, 2006). What factors give rise to civil behavior? An awareness of self and the environment is the beginning (Forni, 2002). Self-control as a fundamental element of civil behavior is supported by one of the few empirical studies of civility (Ferriss, 2002; see also Hinckley, 2000; Kuhlenschmidt, 1999). Empathy is also a critical factor (Berman, 1998; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Schaefer, 1995). Some (Boyd; Hinckley; Marks, 1996; Stover, 1999; Youniss & Yates, 1999) also emphasized respect, which is regard for and acknowledgement of the property, rights, and humanity of others; perhaps the underlying quality of civil behavior. One author regarded respect as the content of

civility and manners as its form (Marks). Programs and interventions targeting particular social skills or behaviors are available and have been used effectively to increase prosocial behaviors of students (see Merrell & Gimpel, 1998 for a more complete discussion of social skills programs). No research exists to link these programs and prosocial behaviors directly to civility in schools, but similar interventions may be effective for teaching civility.

Definition of incivility. Naturally, incivility is the opposite of civility in that it is behavior that disrupts social harmony or disregards the humanity of a person (Hinckley, 2000). Uncivil behavior is that which is indifferent to the good of a community in favor of individual interests and pleasure (Feldmann, 2001): It is not necessarily an attitude against the common good, but places personal preference before what is good for all. Incivility was also defined broadly for the purposes of this research so as not to neglect any uncivil behavior which might be the target of a possible intervention.

The Modern Need for Civility

Certainly the increased exposure given to uncivil behavior via the media, as well as anecdotal instances of incivility, may cause this problem to appear more pervasive than ever before (Ferriss, 2002). Perhaps issues of incivility are nothing new, as such concerns have been noted throughout history (Fyfe, Bannister, & Kearns, 2006). Many anecdotal opinions suggest that civility in the schools, and among society in general, has declined in recent years (see e.g., Feldman, 2001; Forni, 2002; Leo, 1996; Peck, 2002), but there is little empirical evidence examining the actual levels or changes in specific civil behaviors. However, data measuring incivility, such as antisocial behavior, violence,

and crime, are available and there are other factors pointing to the necessity of interventions to increase civility.

Antisocial behavior, violence, and crime in school. Walker, Ramsey, and Gresham (2004) provided a comprehensive overview of antisocial behavior, defining it as hostility and aggression toward others and society, which may be considered the extreme of uncivil behavior. These misbehaviors are not necessarily criminal but are aversive to others and can lead to more serious misbehaviors. Walker and associates noted that, without intervention, an antisocial behavior pattern identified in the school years (e.g. conduct disorder) may continue into adulthood as an antisocial personality disorder. They also contended that antisocial behaviors are an individual problem as well as a societal problem and can cause a great deal of trouble in the schools. Walker and associates further contended that while most antisocial behaviors stem from personal and familial dysfunction, many antisocial behaviors may be perpetuated and exacerbated by a negative school environment. Antisocial behaviors may also lead to school violence and crime.

Crime can be largely attributed to human greed, uncontrolled passions, and disregard for others (Hinckley, 2000). Regarding violence and crimes committed in schools, in 2005 about 10% of males and 6% of females in secondary schools reported having been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (Mayer, 2008). As noted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (2007), during the 2005–06 school year 86% of public schools reported that at least one theft, violent crime, or other crime occurred in a school setting, amounting to an estimated 2.2 million crimes. The Center also reported that 4% of students ages 12–18 reported being victimized at school during

the previous 6 months, 3% reported theft, and 1% reported violent victimization in 2005. Data showed that 1.5 million secondary school students experienced a crime at school in 2005 (Mayer).

Incivility in media and technology. Contemporary society is rapidly transforming and with this new outlook, many people's beliefs, attitudes, and actions are affected. Society has taken a sharp turn away from focusing on people and relationships to focusing on the self and technology (Peck, 2002). With an ever increasing amount of technological equipment in which individuals can immerse themselves, relationships tend to become less important and common courtesies or manners tend to seem outdated. Leo (1996) noted that large corporations are cashing in on incivility in advertisements in order to get attention and sell their products while the media is becoming crasser to gain ratings. He suggested that advertisements, television shows and other media are urging people to become precisely the type of person no one would enjoy as an employee, boss, friend, or family member.

The shift towards self-absorption. According to Schaefer (1995) there is a lack of civic responsibility assumed by individuals, especially adolescents. Many young adults have difficulty thinking in terms of the whole community, of what is good for everyone, and instead focus just on what is good for themselves as young adults. Modern American culture (particularly the culture of youth) is obsessively self-centered, shallow, and irreverent (Schaefer). Furthermore, modern society seems to encourage people to let go of all restraints and express themselves in public in any way they feel fit (Sherman, 2005). From this position, youth are faced with a sneering attitude toward conformity and

urged to have all that they want and to have it now. Such attributes and attitudes may lead to uncivil behavior.

     The intrinsic value of civility. Above the necessity for civil behavior to maintain peace and order in a society and satisfy one's needs, there is an obligation to behave civilly because other human beings deserve to be treated with respect as all are of equal worth (Boyd, 2006; Forni, 2002; Hinckley, 2000; Youniss & Yates, 1999). People treat others with the respect of civility for two reasons: each person is dependent upon others for survival (functional), and respectful treatment is the equal right of equal persons (intrinsic). As citizens, it is not necessary that we hold a likeness or fondness for those we treat civilly (Peck, 2002); rather we display decency toward one another simply because we are fellow citizens. Personal satisfaction gained from the ability to serve is another benefit of behaving civilly; a desire for meaningfulness and knowledge that an individual has somehow made a difference in the world can be met through civil behavior (Hinckley).

     In summary, although some may argue that problems with civility are nothing new, it seems apparent that regardless of any increase or decrease in civility, the modern world needs a shift toward more respectful behaviors. High crime rates in schools, increasingly crude media, and the perceived general lack of respect and responsibility assumed by individuals are in need of improvement. American society is unquestionably far from perfect (Mourad, 2001), and although civil behaviors cannot offer an instantly perfected society, these behaviors can improve society. Teaching people to behave more civilly is a step toward a more harmonious and positive society; teaching civility in the schools offers a reasonable way to obtain this goal.

Civility in Education

In understanding the basic components of civility (awareness, self-control, empathy, and respect) one can begin to recognize the importance of civil behavior and conceptualize ways to instill civility in youth. Children of the rising generation are the leading citizens of tomorrow those, for whom hope for renewed civility is placed. Teaching values of civility in school may encourage a more civil society.

Mourad (2001) stated that organized education is a key component of the civil state and is linked to concepts of the common good. He observed that the goals of modern public education are to prepare children for employment, create national strength, create socioeconomic mobility, and teach children to obey laws. He argued, however, that public education can be more: It can accept the social responsibility for the well-being of individuals and be an institution to convey basic human values. Montessori (1948) affirmed, "Education should not limit itself to seeking new methods for a mostly arid transmission of knowledge: its aim must be to give the necessary aid to human development" (p. 126). The current trend to focus primarily on academic mastery may undermine this potential.

Historical purpose: production. The purpose and nature of formal education in the United States has changed immensely. The original purpose was to prepare and shape children to be good citizens who were fit to be part of society, who would comply with the law, and demonstrate enhanced self-control (Peck, 2002). Preparation for citizenship was the *primary* goal of public schooling for most of the history of the United States (Schaps & Lewis, 1998); education focused on producing well-rounded citizens. Training in civility and manners carried equal value with academic material because of the

potential impact on both the student and society (Berman, 1998). At its inception, the purpose of public education was to nurture a civil society: the main function was to prepare students to serve and better society. In the present day it has come to be regarded by many as simply an academic institution teaching purely intellectual material (Berman).

The use of the McGuffey Readers beginning in the 1830's is an example of this intended enculturation (Peck, 2002; Field, 1997). These Readers, used in both primary and secondary schools, were instruments of a dual purpose: they helped children learn to read while exposing them to culture and civility. The Readers were a permanent fixture in classrooms of the United States for decades, being used through the 1920's (Field). They emphasized character, moral integrity, individual responsibility, and ethical conduct, teaching the standards of social life and providing a frame of reference for acceptable social demeanor. Topics discussed in the Readers included work ethic, politeness, diligence, honesty, fairness, negotiation, consideration and respect for others, morality, and patience. The Readers had a huge impact on society in the United States and were read by children and adults alike. They and the Bible served as the sole sources of enlightenment in many households, indoctrinating American citizens with good manners and civil responsibility (Peck).

The school is a multipurpose institution that cannot concentrate solely on academic goals (Noddings, 1992). While it may not be reasonable to revert to the original approach taken in formal education, an incorporation of some of these initial ideals into contemporary education is possible. The emphasis on academics is essential for children to gain the preparation necessary to survive as functional and employable adults in

modern society. Indeed, it would be foolish to attempt to teach students only to be kind, loyal, and respectful; but what is to be said of not teaching such things at all? The current curriculum combined with some of the ideals central to early American public education seems a more likely way of strengthening children and improving society. Such an enhanced curriculum might also be a way to address school violence.

Modern purpose: prevention. In one of the few empirical studies regarding civility, Hatch (1998) maintained that civility can be a tool to alleviate the negativity found in schools:

> Civility is a form of politeness, and if the art of civility is taught, then the skills used in resolving differences are more easily implemented. A polite atmosphere is an excellent setting in which to solve future problems and conflicts as they arise. (p. 36) If students leave school with the positive forces of their high school experience to guide them, they will most likely take those forces into society. The art of civility is a quality needing to be integrated into society, and secondary education is the means. By teaching secondary students the skills necessary to get along with others and the quality of civility, we can initiate the introduction of positive attitudes into a society. Any skills we can teach to teenagers which will have a positive impact on their lives are worthwhile, not only to the students, but also to society. (p. 56)

This brings to light the role that civility can play in reducing school violence, a subject gaining increased attention as disturbing acts of aggression are widely publicized by the media. Many authors (Feldmann, 2001; Forni as quoted in O'Mara, 2007; Hatch, 1998; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Kauffman & Burbach, 1997; Mayer, in press; Peck,

2002) held the opinion that civility may be an answer to controlling and reducing acts of violence. Kahn and Lawhorne suggested that school safety is linked to a culture of civility. Physical precautions are not sufficient to create a safe school (Mayer, 2008); rather a culture of civility and mutual respect is necessary to ensure the safety of students (Kahn & Lawhorne). By fostering an attitude of civility in schools, interpersonal conflicts, the kindling that may ignite into an explosion of violence, can be reduced. Forni noted the role of civility in reducing violence:

> Acts of violence are often the result of an exchange of acts of rudeness that spiral out of control. Disrespect can lead to bloodshed. By keeping the levels of incivility down, we keep the levels of violence down....if we teach youngsters of all walks of life how to manage conflict with civility-based relational skills, we will have a less uncivil society, a less violent one. (as quoted in O'Mara, 2007, p. 20)

Others agreed that incivility may lead to violence (Boxer, Edwards-Leeper, Goldstein, Musher-Eizenman, & Dubow, 2003; Mayer, in press; Skiba et al., 2004). Mayer performed a comprehensive analysis of the 1995–2005 School Crime Supplement datasets to investigate the relationships among various student perceptions of school safety, violence, and student fear and between anxiety and avoidant behaviors. He concluded that experiencing uncivil behaviors such as intimidation, bullying, hate language, and social rejection explain students' fear, anxiety, and avoidant behaviors better than do being the victim of theft and attack. He pointed out that students' anxiety about being safe at school can be harmful to their school performance and suggested that educational stakeholders retarget their priorities to address low-level incivility. Incivility may be more relevant to intervention efforts than high-level aggression and violence

because it is a major factor shaping students' perceptions of school safety (Mayer; Skiba et al.).

An empirical study on the associations between exposure to low-level aggression and measures of well-being suggested that low-level aggression seemed to have a similar effect on psychosocial functioning as more severe forms of aggression (Boxer et al., 2003). This study included examination of both experiencing and witnessing low-level aggression and determined that both have a negative impact on measures of well-being such as future expectations and perceived safety. This is an important finding given that low-level aggression is much more prevalent in schools than blatantly aggressive acts, and because it is not as severe, may easily be ignored and not corrected.

Feldman (2001) and Benton (2007) suggested that schools would do well to deal with smaller-level acts of incivility to prevent escalation into more serious acts. These small acts include refusing to appropriately address school faculty, making borderline insulting remarks in class, neglecting to bring the proper supplies to class, or not showing up to an appointment (Benton). Arriving late or leaving early from class, cell phone use, doing other activities in class, wearing inappropriate attire, monopolizing classroom discussion, being vocally intolerant of others' opinions, or holding private discussions with others have also been noted as common uncivil behaviors in schools (Feldman). An empirical study regarding civility suggested that cursing at a teacher or peer is a common uncivil behavior seen in schools (Plank, McDill, McPartland, & Jordan, 2001). By ignoring these small acts, instructors are essentially condoning the practice, encouraging students to test the increasing degree of incivility that will be tolerated (Feldman; Benton).

In the opinion of Kauffman and Burbach (1997), creating a climate of civility in the classroom is one of the most effective actions a teacher can undertake to prevent youth violence. A decline in civility is a major threat to the well-being of both teachers and students since a small social blunder might easily explode to a violent confrontation. Although a system of conflict resolution may help resolve this violence, a code of civility might prevent it altogether (Kauffman & Burbach).

Teaching civility in the schools can thus have a twofold purpose. First, as in the early days of education, teaching civility can serve to shape future citizens. Schools can better society now and in the future by teaching children to act with respect toward others and to take responsibility for their environment and society. Second, civility can be a major buffer against school violence. Peace and safety will likely become more prevalent in schools as civil behaviors increase. Educators must work for the remediation of civil behaviors in the same way they would work for the remediation of academic skills (Benton, 2007). Kennedy (1997) summed up the value of teaching civility in schools:

> It is true that citizenship education, or education of any kind, cannot solve all the problems which people face in their daily lives. Yet it can ensure that people are able to live their lives based on principles of peace, harmony, respect and tolerance and that they will know when these principles are being violated. They will also be aware of their responsibilities and how they can exercise them. (p. 5)

Moral, character, and civic education. Having discussed the historical and current roles of civility education in schools, it is now appropriate to explore its various sister disciplines: moral education, character education, and civic education. Each of these areas is tied to the others and to civility education, so much so that it is nearly impossible

to categorize a particular school program into just one area. There are, however, distinct differences among them.

Moral education has been defined as the attempt to foster the development of moral reasoning in children and adolescents; it is largely based in theory and tends to come from a liberal background (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). *Character* education has been defined as the attempt to influence the development of desirable qualities or traits in an individual (Hoge, 2002); it is conservative in its background and typically not based in theory (Althof & Berkowitz). *Civic* education (sometimes called citizenship education) has been defined as the attempt to influence the development of students' knowledge of government, law, and politics, historically and presently (Hoge). This area is the most pervasive in secondary schools in the United States, although far fewer civics classes make up the curriculum today than did before the 1960's (Althof & Berkowitz). Clearly, the goals of each of these areas are desirable, and each informs the study of civility; however, they are not synonymous with civility education.

Civility education is a less clearly defined domain that encompasses parts of each of the three areas, but also excludes others. For example, moral development certainly contributes to the expression of civility and is desirable in its teaching, but is not necessarily vital to it. A person may behave civilly without any moral motivation, but morality would certainly be helpful in increasing civility; indeed, the intrinsic value of civility, as discussed above, is moralistic.

Smith (2000) believed that children need the capacities of moral judgment and reflection in order to function civilly. She contended that future citizens need to seriously consider the meaning of justice and what it might look like in particular situations; they

need to consider what constitutes a basic liberty and how those liberties tie into the democratic process. With the ability to think complexly regarding moral and civic issues in a world with fuzzy lines between what is right and wrong, youth are armed with the aptitude to make a conscious effort to behave civilly. While a certain cognitive maturity is necessary for children to reason on such a level, schools may accelerate moral development by posing questions and situations that require children to consider civil and moral matters (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006).

Similarly, the development of desirable character traits makes civil behavior more likely but ignores the reason civility is necessary: the common good. Character education has been constantly evolving (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006); thus, much of what was taught in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in order to create good citizens might now be referred to as character education. This type of education was indoctrinating and focused little on the reasoning behind actions or the moral development of students. It was, however, effective in creating citizens who contributed to their society in prosocial ways (Peck, 2002), as is the modern form of character education. Civility education differs from character education in that there is a focus on others, rather than just on the betterment of self. The goals of civil behavior are to both show respect for and help others. While character development could certainly have a similar outcome, the motivation might be mainly the improvement of self.

Referring again to the historical definition and necessity of civility, there is an apparent link between civility education and civic education: civility is about community and working cooperatively with others in society. Students need knowledge of government and politics to do so effectively; however, the actual skills needed to get

along with others in day to day situations are not addressed in civics courses. Thus,

civility instruction can be viewed as an amalgam of the disciplines related to it; it

contains pieces of moral, character, and civic education but goes about implementing

prosocial behaviors in a different way, focusing on strengthening society as a whole

rather than individuals.

Components of a Civility Intervention

As mentioned earlier, self-control, awareness, empathy and respect are the basic

elements of civility around which to create an intervention. There is a need to develop

materials and activities that promote civility (Schaefer, 1995). Although civility is

addressed to some degree in the schools in the form of general rules or guidelines for

social behavior, the rationale, benefits, and full scope of civil behavior is largely

unattended to. Schaefer noted that a great change in students' behaviors would come

about if students could be taught four basic principles. First, friendship opens people up

to each other and helps them understand relationships. Second, it is the duty of everyone

to speak out against hurtful behavior, meaning individuals must learn to listen. Third,

cooperation has greater rewards than competition. Fourth, tolerance is essential to living

with others.

Population for intervention. Schaefer (1995) believed that adolescents are a good

population with whom to work because creating social ties and building community is

one of the main developmental needs of this age group; adolescents are in the midst of

identity formation and can benefit from the opportunity to serve their community

(Youniss & Yates, 1999). On the verge of full formal citizenship, adolescents have a need

to be informed about their community; they also have the cognitive ability to reason more

effectively with this information (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Adolescents feel a need to realize their potential, assume their place in society, and become a contributing force for good (Ludick, 2002). Ludick (2001) believed that educators can affirm their faith in youth by expecting more from them and treating them as if they are better than they actually show. Schaefer quoted several adolescents who seemed to be very aware of the need for good manners and recognized them as social laws that are essential to any society. He contended that adolescents are capable of thinking in terms of the greater good; therefore, school faculty should not expect any less of them.

Murray (2006) suggested that uncivil attitudes and behaviors can be changed by fostering civility in secondary schools. Survey research with a large school district in Texas (Hatch, 1998) investigated the need to teach secondary school students the "art" of civility and skills for resolving differences. This study found that adolescents believed skills to resolve problems with peers and family members were valuable and they were willing to learn these skills. Because belonging is a basic human need, it can be a strong motivator for students to seek ways to resolve negative issues that may be blocking them from having positive social interactions with others (Hatch).

Goals. It is the opinion of Berman (1998) and Boyd (2006) that creating social consciousness, unity, and a sense of responsibility are main factors leading to greater civility. The lack of a sense of community in adolescents can create apathy which may lead to incivility and a lack of confidence that they can make a difference to other individuals and their community as a whole. Berman and Youniss and Yates (1999) suggested that by reconnecting youth with their community, helping them understand and

appreciate others, and showing them that they can make a difference, adolescents can move toward greater civility. Youniss and Yates argue this case eloquently:

> Seeing that they can actually help…people, and then possibly projecting themselves as having skills and responsibility for addressing social ills, youth have taken a large step toward incorporating morality into their identities. It is from such moral identities that spontaneous morality flows in adults. (p.372)

In order to generate this social consciousness, empathy is needed (Berman, 1998; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Schaefer, 1995) because it has a very important influence on a culture of safety in schools (Kahn & Lawhorne). Kahn and Lawhorne further stated that the development of empathy involves emotion, cognition, and operant behavior all working together dynamically. Empathy is an innate, neurologically based part of the emotional arousal system of humans, but the environment also has a profound influence on its development. Because of this, they argued that empathy can be deliberately learned and thus deliberately taught. They also contended that as children come to experience appropriate empathy, more civilized behaviors will occur while uncivilized behaviors will diminish. This is because mature empathy generates prosocial behaviors such as sharing, sacrifice, and observing norms (Kahn & Lawhorne). Part of becoming civil includes developing a consciousness of self and awareness of others, which helps us establish a bond with them and sensitivity to their needs and wants (Peck, 2002).

Berman (1998) held the opinion that children are capable of thinking in profound empathic and moralistic ways, but their behavior does not always reflect this ability because they do not possess the skills to act in these ways. Schools can teach empathy to students by training them in perspective-taking or assuming the role of another, which is

the highest level of empathy (Berman; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003). With the ability to see from another's point of view, an individual becomes more understanding of other people, is less likely to take offense, and more likely to demonstrate civil behaviors in consideration of other's needs, wants, and human dignity.

Strategies. Fostering social consciousness, creating a sense of community, and teaching empathy, however, are very broad aims. The promotion of civility calls for more specific steps. An informal experiment in a small classroom of boys with behavioral problems gave several suggestions for implementing basic manners in schools (Burns, 2003). First, expectations must be made clear and those expectations should be upheld with consistency. The instructor should discuss with students the rationale behind using these new behaviors and inform them of the reaction they can expect from others, after which the teacher can request that students use the new behaviors. Students must also be provided with opportunities to use the new behaviors so they can see their positive effects. Instructors should remind students to use the new behaviors as they are entering a situation in which their use would be appropriate. Students may also be encouraged in their civil behaviors by sharing their experiences through group discussions, completing checklists or keeping journals. Finally, teachers need to evaluate the behavior to ensure that the desired goal is being met; if not, teachers need to change what they are doing as far as consistency and reinforcement, or perhaps they need to clarify appropriate use of the new behaviors (Burns).

Schools have used various programs to create a climate of politeness, including training in problem solving, social skills, conflict resolution, self-esteem, drug use prevention, community service, anger management, and interpersonal relations (Stover,

1999). Some programs included field trips to the local library, police station, and soup kitchen in order to involve students directly with their community (Stover; Youniss & Yates, 1999). Fostering civility may be as easy as making students aware of the actual attitudes and beliefs of their peers, letting them know that most do not appreciate violence or any other form of incivility, contrary to popular perception (Stiles & Tyson, 2008). Many adolescents feel a need to conform to their peers and will behave uncivilly because they perceive this as the acceptable behavior (Benton, 2007; Stiles & Tyson).

Another strategy used by some schools to improve student behavior was simply building rapport between students and administrators: talking to students in the halls, questioning them about disputes, and providing emotional support (Stover, 1999). Mutual respect is the important component that makes this strategy effective; creating genuine respect among students, teachers, and administrators results in a positive school atmosphere (Stover). Respectful and civil behaviors in those who lead children are important as they must be an example to those they wish to influence (Ludick, 2001). Indeed those who guide and teach children must themselves be on a higher plane, practicing civility and demonstrating respect. It is unreasonable to expect students to act in ways that they do not see exemplified by adults (Burns, 2003).

Conclusion and Research Purpose

All of the civility interventions proposed above had good rationales based in theory and observations from practice. What is missing, however, is data to support the use of these interventions. Educators have suggested many ideas to increase civility without supporting these suggestions with empirical evidence. In particular, research identifying which civil and uncivil behaviors are most prevalent and which should be

targeted for intervention is missing from the literature. The present exploratory research was intended to address this gap by collecting survey data from school of education alumni regarding the current levels of civil and uncivil behaviors in school.

The following specific research questions were investigated.

1. What are the participants' perceptions regarding the current level of students' civil and uncivil behaviors in schools?

2. What difference, if any, exists in the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants currently working in elementary schools and those currently working in secondary schools?

3. What difference, if any, exists in the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants currently working in rural schools and those working in suburban schools or urban schools?

4. What difference, if any, exists in the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors as reported by male and female participants?

5. What difference, if any, exists in the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants currently employed in a school and those no longer working in a school?

6. What correlation, if any, exists between the reported percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors and participants' years of work experience in a school?

7. What are the participants' perceptions regarding interventions that would be useful in increasing civil behaviors and decreasing uncivil behaviors in school?

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

The sections included in this chapter discuss the study design used in the research, provide information on the participants included in the study, describe the development and administration of the questionnaire, and discuss how the data were analyzed.

Study Design

This study used a survey methodology involving the construction of a civility questionnaire. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) identified eight steps in constructing and administering a research questionnaire: defining research objectives, selecting a sample, designing the questionnaire, pilot-testing the questionnaire, precontacting the sample, writing a cover-letter, following up with non-respondents, and analyzing questionnaire data. The first step was defining research objectives. This research was exploratory and aimed to determine the perceptions of individuals trained for professional roles in elementary and secondary schools regarding the occurrence of civil and uncivil behaviors in schools and determining their perceptions regarding possible civility interventions.

Participants

The participants for this study were a sample of individuals belonging to the alumni association of the David O. McKay School of Education at Brigham Young University (BYU). These individuals each held a degree in education (bachelors, masters, or doctorate) and were either currently working in schools, or had previously done so. They also worked in schools from various states in the United States and in countries outside the U.S.

A database of information on these alumni containing over 40,000 names with an email address was accessed and 2,000 names randomly selected. The 2,000 people chosen were emailed the survey and made up the sample population. This method of sample selection was chosen because of the ability to access the database containing alumni information and because the participants would likely complete and return the survey, as it was associated with a credible source. This method of sample selection also allowed for a more diverse sample than one including only the teachers from one state or region. Permission from the BYU David O. McKay School of Education was granted by the Dean of Education as well as the director of Alumni Relations at the school.

Although some participants may not have worked in a school after graduating from BYU, they all had experience in a school because of the student teaching or internship required in order to graduate with a degree in education. As an incentive, participants were offered the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for BYU memorabilia. They were provided with a web link at the end of the questionnaire redirecting them to a separate webpage asking only for their email address. Because of this, there was no way to determine which participant's email address corresponded with which responses and participant confidentiality was maintained.

Online surveys generally have much lower response rates than surveys administered on paper (Nulty, 2008). Due to outdated email addresses, 362 emails were undeliverable, resulting in 1,638 of the 2,000 people in the sample receiving the survey. The one month data collection period yielded a return of 251 fully completed surveys, or a return rate of 15.32%, which is slightly above a typical return rate for online research (Tourangeau, Couper, & Conrad, 2004).

For the purposes of this research, those who fully completed and submitted the questionnaire are referred to as participants, while the group of 1,638 people who were included in the sample and received the survey via email are referred to as the sample. Overall, there were no systematic differences found between the respondents and those who did not respond (see Table 1). For example, the gender of the sample was 20.78% males and 79.22% females; while the gender of the participants was 21.10% males and 78.90% females. The mean age of the entire sample was 37.42 years old; while the mean age of the respondents was 38.18 years old. The entire sample was approximately 95.13% White; 94.40% of the participants were White. The majority of the participants (63.76%) were from Utah; however, a total of 29 states from the United States were represented. There were also 2 participants from Canada, 1 from Korea, and 1 from Hong Kong.

Measures and Procedures

Because the questionnaire was specifically designed for this study, procedures included both developing and administering the questionnaire.

Questionnaire development. Gall and colleagues (2003) identified designing the questionnaire as the third step in the research process. The items for the questionnaire (see Appendix A) regarded general and specific information about civility and were drawn from suggestions in the literature regarding what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior (Benton, 2007; Burns, 2003; Cahill, 1987; Feldman, 2001; Forni, 2002; Fyfe, Bannister, & Kearns, 2006; Plank, McDill, McPartland, & Jordan, 2001). Because very diverse definitions and examples of civility and incivility were found in the literature review, a broad range of behaviors was included in the survey. Since civil behaviors are

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Entire Sample Compared to Participants

Demographic Information	Sample	Participants
Gender		
Female	79.22%	78.90%
Male	20.78%	21.10%
Age (Mean)	37.42	38.18
Ethnicity		
White	95.13%	94.40%
Other	4.87%	5.60%
School Location	No Data	
Rural		17.10%
Suburban		67.30%
Urban		15.50%
Professional Role	No Data	
Elementary teacher		48.20%
Secondary teacher		5.60%
Administrator		8.40%
Speech pathologist		4.80%
School psychologist		4.00%
School counselor		1.20%
Sp. Ed. teacher (mild/mod.)		8.40%
Sp. Ed. teacher (severe)		2.00%
Other		17.50%

similar and somewhat overlapping with social skills, the *School Social Behavior Scales, 2nd Edition* (Merrell, 2002) was also used to generate ideas for questions.

The questionnaire began with a demographics section to examine any demographic factors that might have influenced participants' responses. The demographic information included the professional position in which the participants were currently employed, gender, age, ethnicity, state in which participants were employed, geographic location (rural, suburban, and urban), current status of employment, the type of school at which they were employed, grade level(s) with which they had the most interaction, and years of work experience in schools. Following the demographics section, instructions about how to complete items were provided along with a definition of civility which participants were asked to use in responding to items.

The questionnaire (see appendix A) consisted of items measuring both civil and uncivil behaviors that participants had observed in students, as well as participants' general opinions about civility in schools. A total of 32 items made up the questionnaire. The first 5 inquired about general opinions regarding student civility and the next 24 inquired about the percentage of students in the past two weeks who had engaged in particular behaviors (12 civil and 12 uncivil). Afterward, two items allowed participants to list any civil or uncivil behaviors not included in the previous items and report the percentage of students who had engaged in each behavior in the past two weeks. A sliding scale was provided after each item to allow participants to indicate the percentage of students who had engaged in that behavior in the past two weeks. The final item was open-ended and asked participants to identify any ideas to increase civil behavior in the schools. The same set of survey questions was asked of all participants. Those currently

working in a school were instructed to answer questions according to their last two weeks of experience while those not currently employed at a school were instructed to consider a typical two-week period from their working experience.

Questionnaire development included administering the items in pencil and paper format to several individuals involved in education in order to estimate the time needed to complete the questionnaire and obtain feedback regarding the structure and content of items. Several changes were made to the wording and arrangement of items in response to this feedback. It was estimated that it would take participants 5 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Step four of Gall and colleagues' (2003) model involved pilot-testing the questionnaire to refine it before sending it out to the research sample. For the present study, the electronic version of the questionnaire was e-mailed to 10 individuals who were either currently employed or formerly employed in schools in the surrounding area with a request to complete the survey. This group consisted of five males and five females; six regular education teachers, one special education teacher, one school psychologist, one principal, and one researcher; three who currently worked in a school and seven who formerly worked in a school; nine White and one Native American; all between 25 and 60 years of age. The email was sent immediately before the primary investigator was able to meet with the individual. The primary investigator explained to the individuals that their responses would not be used in the final data, but they should fill out the survey as if they were actually taking it and give any feedback on content, format, or other issues. The results of this pilot test were reviewed and changes were made to the questionnaire accordingly.

Questionnaire administration. As mentioned previously, the questionnaire was delivered electronically through email. Gall and colleagues (2003) suggested precontacting the sample as the fifth step. The precontact for this study was accomplished in an email sent one week before the questionnaire was sent. This initial email (see Appendix B) included the basis and rationale for the study and informed participants of the imminent arrival of the questionnaire.

Step six for constructing and administering a research questionnaire involved writing a cover letter. This letter (see Appendix C) was included in the email containing the web link to the survey and explained why the participants were being contacted, the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of responses, the possible benefits from participation in the study, a date by which to respond, the possibility of being selected to receive a token of appreciation through a drawing, rights as a research participant, and contact information for the primary researchers and IRB chair. The letter also explained that by completing the survey, individuals were agreeing to participate and allowing the use of their responses.

Because this questionnaire was administered electronically, participants went through six screens in its completion. The first screen included the demographic information. Each set of items was displayed on the following five screens. The web-version of the questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics Survey software. A link to the questionnaire was sent via email to participants through the Qualtrics website. Participants completed the questionnaire online and submitted it back to the Qualtrics server where raw data was kept in a secure database. The goal was to receive enough completed surveys to be representative of the population being sampled.

Step seven was following up with nonrespondents. Because Qualtrics was able to track which participants had or had not taken the questionnaire, a follow up email(see Appendix D) was sent only to those participants who had not yet filled out the questionnaire. This email included a slightly modified cover letter emphasizing the importance of the research and the value of the individual's responses. The intent of the follow up email was to obtain as many participant responses as possible.

Data Analyses

The final step suggested by Gall and colleagues (2003) involved analyzing the questionnaire data. The first 29 items, which were quantitative, were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 15) to determine the mean and standard deviation score for each item. For all t-tests, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*. Because this research was exploratory, and the purpose was not specifically survey development, no psychometric analysis was run on the survey itself. Because inner-item reliability was unknown, no attempt was made to create an average civility or incivility score.

Differences among participants' responses on each survey item were analyzed. Independent sample t-tests were used to explore possible differences among percentages reported for each civil and uncivil behavior by participants working in elementary schools and those working in secondary schools. Possible differences were also explored among percentages reported for civil and uncivil behaviors by participants working in urban schools, those working in suburban schools, and those working in rural schools. For this, an ANOVA was used to compare individual items measuring civil and uncivil behaviors. Independent sample t-tests were used to explore possible differences among

percentages reported for civil and uncivil behaviors according to gender. Independent sample t-tests were also used to compare possible differences among percentages reported for civil and uncivil behaviors by participants currently working in schools and those not currently in schools. Possible differences were also explored among percentages reported for civil and uncivil behaviors according to the number of years participants had worked in schools. To accomplish this, correlations were run to examine the relationship between participants' years of work experience and their perceptions of civil and uncivil behaviors in schools.

Behaviors reported by participants on the two survey items which allowed participants to list behaviors not included in the main questionnaire were examined and grouped into categories. The average percentage of students engaged in each behavior in the last two weeks was not reported due to the large variety of behaviors reported. Some behaviors were reported by multiple participants but not enough to justify creating an average of these percentages.

The final three questions, which were qualitative, were analyzed and coded by hand by the primary researcher and independently by another researcher to ensure inter-rater agreement. The researchers met after an initial review of the data and agreed on categories based on participant responses, then each coded the responses into those categories, after which they met together again to compare. The researchers agreed on category placement over 90% of the time. They also noted where their opinions differed, discussing these differences until they reached consensus, sometimes referred to as check coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After some discussion, they were able to agree on category assignment for 100% of the responses

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

There were seven specific research questions examined in this study. The

following sections summarize the survey results for each of these questions. They also

examine the quantitative results, followed by the qualitative results.

Quantitative Results

The first research question examined participants' perceptions regarding the

current level of students' civil and uncivil behaviors in schools. Tables 2, 3, and 4

provide the average responses for each of the quantitative questions from the

questionnaire.

Students' civil attitudes. The first five items of the questionnaire (see Table 2)

asked participants about the civil attitudes of students, rather than their actual behaviors.

Participants reported that a slightly larger percentage of students understood the

importance of civil behavior than valued civil behavior. They also reported that a slightly

higher percentage of students were aware of the needs of others than responded

appropriately to those needs. They reported that only about half of students have the

skills needed to successfully manage conflict with others.

Students' civil behaviors. Participants' responses to the items regarding students'

civil behaviors in schools (see Table 3) indicated that the majority of students arrived to

class on time, dressed and groomed themselves in ways appropriate for school,

appropriately greeted the participant, sincerely listened to their teachers, used polite

expressions and greetings with others, left public areas in the school neat and clean,

responded respectfully to the opinions of others, and were responsive to situations in

which they might help others. According to participants' perceptions, fewer than half of the students considered how their behavior might affect others, sincerely complimented others, went out of their way to include others in their activities, and held the door open for the participant at school.

Table 2

Participant Responses to Questionnaire Items Regarding the Percentage of Students Who Held Civil Attitudes

Percentage of Students Who:	*M*	*SD*
Understand the importance of civil behavior	69.24%	22.30
Value civil behavior	67.14%	22.56
Are aware of the needs of others	60.27%	22.21
Respond appropriately to the needs of others	57.10%	21.62
Have the skills to successfully manage conflict with others	51.20%	22.54

Students' uncivil behaviors. Participants' responses to the items regarding students uncivil behaviors in schools (see Table 4) indicated that almost half of the students shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions, argued or quarreled with others, and complained about common school experiences. Participants indicated that about a third of the students responded inappropriately when they did not get what they wanted, made sarcastic remarks to others, expected teachers to grant them special favors, were inconsiderate of others in their use of classroom supplies, and littered in hallways, classrooms, or on school grounds. Participants reported that about one fourth of

Table 3

Participant Responses to Questionnaire Items Regarding the Percentage of Students Who

Engaged in Civil Behaviors in the Past Two Weeks

Percentage of students in past two weeks who:	*M*	*SD*
Arrived to class on time	83.28%	15.99
Dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school	78.83%	21.65
Appropriately greeted me at school	74.13%	23.59
Sincerely listened to their teachers	64.48%	21.63
Used polite expressions and greetings with others	62.54%	22.75
Left public areas in the school neat and clean	60.71%	23.17
Responded respectfully to the opinions of others	59.49%	22.25
Were responsive to situations in which they might help others	58.17%	22.58
Considered how their behavior might affect others	45.02%	22.69
Sincerely complimented others	41.12%	23.98
Went out of their way to include others in their activities	36.94%	21.60
Held the door open for me at school	31.63%	26.93

Table 4

Participant Responses to Questionnaire Items Regarding the Percentage of Students Who

Engaged in Uncivil Behavior in the Past Two Weeks

Percentage of students in the past two weeks who:	*M*	*SD*
Shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions	45.27%	25.88
Argued or quarreled with others	44.54%	25.26
Complained about common school experiences (grades, schedules, homework, tests, etc.)	44.05%	30.36
Responded inappropriately when the did not get what they wanted	37.68%	26.35
Made sarcastic remarks to others	36.93%	28.40
Expected teachers to grant them special favors	36.20%	29.06
Were inconsiderate of others in their use of classroom supplies	33.04%	24.99
Littered in hallways, classrooms, or on school grounds	31.97%	22.48
Called others offensive names	25.35%	21.12
Used offensive language on school grounds	24.38%	23.11
Inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class	12.46%	22.49
Vandalized property of the school or others	10.70%	13.79

students called others offensive names and used offensive language on school grounds. A relatively smaller percentage of students inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class and vandalized the property of the school or others.

Elementary and secondary schools. The second research question examined what difference, if any, existed between the percentages of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants currently working in elementary schools and those currently working in secondary schools. When asked with which grade levels(s) they currently interact, participants were allowed to check as many grade levels as applied. Participants who indicated having interaction with both elementary (grades pre-k to 6) and secondary (grades 7 to 12) students were excluded from this portion of the analysis. Participants who indicated interacting only with elementary grade level(s) (n=178) were compared to participants who indicated interacting only with secondary grade level(s) (n=40). An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in reported percentages for seven questionnaire items (see Table 5). Results indicated that participants reported a higher percentage of elementary than secondary students who valued civil behavior, held the door open for the participant at school, dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school, argued and quarreled with others, and shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions. However, all of these items had a small effect size, except the item regarding dressing and grooming which had a moderate effect size. Results also indicated that participants reported a higher percentage of secondary than elementary students who inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class and used offensive language on school grounds. Both of these effect sizes were large.

Table 5

Differences in Mean Percentage of Students Engaged in Civil and Uncivil Behaviors

Reported by Participants Involved in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Questionnaire Item	Elementary		Secondary			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Value civil behavior	69.04%	21.61	63.68%	26.27	1.36*	0.22
Held the door open for me at school	32.51%	27.95	29.33%	23.68	0.67*	0.12
Dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school	81.84%	19.92	67.85%	27.24	3.73***	0.56
Argued or quarreled with others	44.69%	25.87	38.73%	21.93	1.35*	0.25
Shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions	44.85%	26.46	40.38%	21.75	0.99*	0.18
Inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class	6.50%	16.62	31.15%	29.90	-7.15***	-1.02
Used offensive language on school grounds	18.75%	19.73	36.03%	26.13	-4.69**	-0.75

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

Rural, suburban, and urban schools. The third question examined what difference, if any, existed between the percentages of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors as reported by participants currently working in rural, suburban, and urban schools. A one-way ANOVA did not reveal any significant difference among the percentages reported by the three groups. Because there were not significant differences, no effect sizes were calculated.

Male and female participants. The fourth research question examined what difference, if any, existed between the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors as reported by male and female participants. An independent samples t-test revealed a significant difference in reported percentages for seven questionnaire items (see Table 6). Compared to males, females reported that a higher percentage of students dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school, appropriately greeted the participant at school, arrived to class on time, argued or quarreled with others, and were inconsiderate of others in their use of classroom supplies. However, all of the effect sizes for these t-tests were small. Compared to females, males reported that a higher percentage of students inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class (moderate effect size) and complained about common school experiences (minimal effect size).

Current and past experience in schools. The fifth research question examined what difference, if any, existed between the percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants currently working in schools versus those no longer in schools. In the demographics section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate the last year they worked in a school; if they were currently in a school

Table 6

Differences in Mean Percentage of Students Engaged in Civil and Uncivil Behavior

Reported by Male and Female Participants

Questionnaire Item	Males		Females			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school	72.21%	26.22	80.61%	19.96	-2.53*	-0.36
Appropriately greeted me at school	65.92%	26.79	76.32%	22.21	-2.89*	-0.42
Arrived to class on time	79.17%	17.62	84.38%	15.39	-2.12*	-0.31
Argued or quarreled with others	36.70%	21.50	46.64%	25.82	-2.57*	-0.42
Were inconsiderate of others in their use of classroom supplies	29.62%	20.25	33.95%	26.08	-1.12*	-0.19
Inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class	21.98%	25.75	9.90%	20.87	3.54**	0.52
Complained about common school experiences	44.87%	24.45	43.83%	31.80	.220**	0.04

* *p* < .05   ** *p* < .01

they were instructed to report the year 2008. Respondents were separated into two groups with 2008 (N=189) in one group, and 2007 or before (N=62) in another group. The 2008 group was compared to the 2007 or before group using an independent samples t-test, which revealed a significant difference in reported percentages for 5 questionnaire items (see Table 7). Participants who had formerly worked in schools reported a higher percentage of students who held the door open for them at school and littered in classrooms, hallways, or on school grounds. Participants who were currently in schools reported a higher percentage of students who appropriately greeted them at school, sincerely complimented others, and were responsive to situations in which they might help others. All effect sizes were small.

Years of participant experience. The sixth research question examined what correlation, if any, existed between the reported percentage of students engaged in uncivil behaviors and participants' years of work experience in a school. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationship between years a participant worked at a school and each of the questionnaire items. A negative correlation was found [$r(254)= -.15$, $p<0.05$] indicating some relationship between increasing years in a school and a decreased reported percentage of students who shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions; however, the correlation was not a strong one. A positive correlation was found [$r(254)=.12$, $p<.05$] indicating some relationship between years in a school and the reported percentage of students who littered in classrooms, hallways, or on school grounds; however, this correlation was also not strong. No significant correlations were found for any of the other questionnaire items.

Table 7

Differences in Mean Percentage of Students Engaged in Civil and Uncivil Behaviors

Reported by Participants Currently Working in Schools and Those Not Currently

Working in Schools

Questionnaire Item	2008		2007 or before			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Held the door open for me at school	29.61%	22.44	32.29%	28.26	-.67*	-0.11
Littered in classrooms, hallways, or on school grounds	29.13%	18.68	32.90%	23.56	-1.14*	-0.18
Appropriately greeted me at school	80.47%	18.81	72.05%	24.64	2.46***	0.39
Sincerely complimented others	43.27%	21.35	40.41%	24.79	.81*	0.12
Were responsive to situations in which they might help others	59.95%	19.50	57.59%	23.51	.71*	0.11

* p<0.05   ***p<0.001

Qualitative Results

The final research question and the last three items on the questionnaire addressed what other civil and uncivil behaviors participants experienced in schools and also what ideas they had for addressing these. Unfortunately, just 85 (33.86%) of the participants answered these final questions. Participants reported 73 civil behaviors and 104 uncivil behaviors. The responses were separated into categories and analyzed. Thirteen civil and fourteen uncivil behavior categories were created. Several of the responses fit into two categories, given that the categories were not mutually exclusive. Thus, the percentages of comments included in each category did not add up to 100%. The categories and examples are displayed in Tables 8 and 9. Appendix F contains a list of the categories and all behaviors included in each.

For the items allowing participants to report civil and uncivil behaviors they experienced other than those already mentioned in the questionnaire, many of the responses were similar to behaviors mentioned in the main questionnaire, but were more specific. Civil behaviors reported most often included respect toward adults, helping peers, and acting civilly during academic time. While other civil behaviors were mentioned less frequently, the large variety of civil behaviors reported by participants evidences the many ways that students can demonstrate civility at school. Likewise, the large variety of uncivil behaviors reported by participants indicates that there are many ways students can be uncivil at school. Participants reported most often that students are physically disrespectful of others, work poorly with peers, and are non-compliant at school.

Table 8

Civil Behaviors Reported by Participants and Percentage of Comments Included in Each

Category

Category	Behavioral examples	Percentage
Respecting adults	offering to help teacher, thanking a sub or volunteering greeting adults other than their own teacher with respect	17.81%
Helping peers	assisting other students with class work cleaned up after each other	16.44%
Using civility during academic time	taking notes participating in discussion	16.44%
Using polite verbal expressions	saying please and thank you saying you're welcome	15.07%
Complying to explicit rules	following directions following all school and classroom rules	13.70%
Encouraging or complimenting peers	complimenting on others' sports/school accomplishments encouraging others to accomplish task	10.96%
Caring for objects	taking care of others' belongings helping pick up an accidental spill	6.85%
Working well with peers	letting someone else do something they themselves wanted to do—sacrificing for others rallying others to group work	6.85%
Being friendly	waving to others in the hallway always being positive—not complaining	5.48%
Respecting community	expressing desire to participate in outside service opportunity showing patriotism	4.11%

Taking turns	waiting for turn waiting a turn to speak	2.74%
Using social skills	being aware of personal space looking at others directly	2.74%
Miscellaneous	using appropriate conduct on buses bringing check out slips, release forms, etc.	

Eight distinct categories emerged from the analysis of ideas for ways to increase civility and decrease incivility: direct instruction; home and societal influences; modeling by school professionals; school-wide positive behavior support; rules, expectations, and classroom structure; character education; zero-tolerance policies; and non-categorical ideas. Many participant responses included several ideas and some were labeled under two and sometimes three categories, given that the categories were not mutually exclusive and overlapped in many ways. Nevertheless, the ideas were determined to be different enough to justify separate categories. Because of this, percentages for how many participants mentioned an idea did not add up to 100% (see Table 10). Appendix F contains a list of the categories and all ideas included in each. A discussion and examples of each category follows.

Direct instruction. This category had as a central theme the idea that if children are to learn civil behaviors they must be taught directly, instead of expecting students to learn proper behavior on their own. Of the total responses, 62.53% included this idea. Some responses were as simple as "explicit instruction on civility." Others were more specific, such as, "help young children understand how their actions affect others....help them think about the feelings of others and how they would like to be treated," or

Table 9

Uncivil Behaviors Reported by Participants and Percentage of Comments Included in

Each Category

Category	Examples	Percentage
Being physically disrespectful of others	not keeping hands to themselves (hitting, kicking, biting) touching other people or their things	22.12%
Working poorly with peers	teasing, name-calling ignoring others	15.38%
Not complying	constantly challenge teachers' decisions and policies refusing to follow instructions	13.46%
Back-talking school faculty	aggressively back-talking teachers refusing to complete a task asked to perform by a teacher or adult	10.58%
Interrupting	interrupting or taking out when the teacher is talking visiting with others while instruction is being given	8.65%
Sexually harassing others	engaging in sexual harassment telling inappropriate jokes	5.77%
Having poor motivation in academics	cheating on tests seeking easier ways to earn good grades	5.77%
Using inappropriate noise level	talking too loudly in the hallways screaming	4.81%
Stealing	stealing things off the hall walls grabbing from others	3.85%
Bullying	bullying cyberbullying/texting	2.88%

Using weapons/drugs	bringing weapon to school using tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs	2.88%
Cutting in line	trying to cut or get ahead in line cutting in line	1.92%
Lying	lying to teachers lying	1.92%
Miscellaneous	flushing toilet repeatedly for fun taking too much food and not eating it	

Table 10

Intervention Ideas Reported by Participants and Percentage of Comments Included in

Each Category

Category	Percentage	N
Direct instruction	62.53%	53
Home and societal influences	43.53%	37
Modeling by school professionals	36.47%	31
School-wide positive behavior support	31.76%	27
Rules, expectations, and classroom structure	29.41%	25
Character Education	7.06%	6
Zero-tolerance policies	5.88%	5

"helping my students talk through little issues and how they would feel and connecting that the other person would feel the same way." The majority of the responses in this category were aimed at direct instruction for students, but a few mentioned instructing educators or parents on how to teach these behaviors to their students.

Home and societal influences. The main idea of this category was that children learn both civil and uncivil behaviors in the home or from what they see in society. Of the total responses, 43.53% included this idea, which is related to the modeling by school professionals category discussed below, since home and society provide role-models. The two categories were differentiated during coding in that the modeling by school professionals category contained only specific comments or suggestions about school faculty providing civil role models to students and the home and societal influences category contained only statements about the strong impact that family and society have on children's behaviors. Many of the responses in this category blamed parents and home for bad student behavior or had a hopeless tone, in that teachers reported being unable to do fully what the home should. Examples of these responses included, "the current philosophy of raising children is training them to be completely selfish," or "students need to be taught values in the home," or "I feel that parents need to have a higher degree of accountability," or "work on increasing civil behavior in the homes and other areas of society. School, alas, is a reflection of what children see and observe at home and in the media." Some, however, mentioned correspondence from the school to home such as, "involve parents by letting them know what the classroom rules are."

Modeling by school professionals. The central theme of this category was that children learn from models and imitate what they see adults in their lives doing;

therefore, in order to increase student civility, school professional must also increase their levels of civility. This idea was mentioned in 36.47% of the total responses. Most of the responses in this category encouraged school faculty members to display civil behaviors, such as, "Children learn the best from having an example they respect to follow....I found that by giving my students the same courtesies I expected I saw a great amount of civility. Also, by providing an example I was able to teach many of the behaviors that do not always come naturally for children," "as teachers/administrators we need to take note of our own civility inside and outside of class and create a civil environment by exemplifying such behavior," and "encourage role models (parents, older students, teachers, etc) to be more civil and set the example." Some of the examples blamed adult role models for the uncivil behaviors seen in students, such as, "Many adults (educators and parents) do not practice civil behaviors, so it seems moot to expect civil behavior from students."

School-wide positive behavior support. This category had as a central theme the idea of school-wide positive behavioral support (PBS), which is directly tied to using praise and actions on the part of school administrators. While all of the responses in this category did not mention all of the above aspects, they were grouped together because they all relate to PBS in some way. Of the total responses, 31.76% fit into this category, many of which mentioned praise and school-wide PBS directly, such as "consistently praising and recognizing those whose actions promote civility," or "have positive behavior supports school-wide," "rewarding with positive recognition those displaying appropriate behaviors....openly praise them and encourage the class to do so as well." Many of the responses in this category mentioned the role of administrators, some

blaming the administration and others praising administration. Examples include, "(our principal) points out the good he sees, and when there is a problem, he talks to everyone about it," "the principal and vice-principal set an extraordinary example to those they are in contact with every day—which includes the students themselves," "administrators are now taught to be mediators between parents and teachers. This does not work. They do not hold students to a code of conduct and level of educational expectation."

Rules, expectations, and classroom structure. The main theme of this category was that by providing structure and rules with expectations for students to behave civilly, we can help them increase their civility. This idea was included in 29.41% of the total responses. Examples included, "making expectations explicit helps students to know what is expected with civility," "each classroom should be required to have a list of civil rules to follow," and "set the bar and let them know what is expected and then encourage them to do the right thing."

Character education. The theme of this category was the use of character education in the schools. Character education (as discussed in the literature review) is similar to civility, in that it fosters prosocial behaviors and characteristics. Of the total responses, 7.06% fit into this category. Examples included, "implement behavior and/or character curriculum as part of the state and national curriculum" and "character education at the kindergarten level."

Zero-tolerance policies. The central idea of this category was that school faculty should not tolerate incivility in any form. Only 5.88% of the total responses contained this idea. Examples included, "I didn't tolerate unkindness to others," "schools can foster

civility by not tolerating…uncivil behavior," and "our school has an aggressive no-tolerance approach to bullying, foul language, or otherwise blatant uncivil behavior."

Non-categorical ideas. There were a variety of other responses which did not clearly fit any of the above categories, but were not numerous enough to justify additional categories. Examples of these responses included "weekly meetings to discuss class issues, needs, and behavior," "keep a compliment bowl in the room," "case studies and role-play," and "civics needs to be taught throughout the grades."

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The sections included in this chapter provide a discussion of the major finding of both the quantitative and qualitative data. They also discuss limitations and future research as well implications for this research.

Major Quantitative Findings

Some of the findings of the qualitative analysis were expected, while others were somewhat surprising. These findings, their relation to previous literature, and suggestions for their application in schools are discussed below.

Perceptions of students' civil and uncivil behaviors. The first research question for this study attempted to discover the general perception of school of education alumni regarding civility and incivility in schools. Examination of the results revealed that respondents generally reported a higher percentage of students engaging in civil behaviors than uncivil behaviors. This data may seem contradictory to anecdotal reports of increasing rates of incivility and decreasing rates of civility (see e.g., Boyd, 2006; Hinckley, 2000; Marks, 1996; Peck, 2002). Due to a lack of previous research, there is no data with which to compare these findings and thus it is difficult to determine the actual increase or decrease in rates of civility or incivility in schools. However, the data gathered in this research provides some evidence that civil behaviors are occurring in schools to a higher degree than uncivil behaviors. Perhaps the reason anecdotal reports indicate a loss of civility is that incivility is more noticeable and civility is the expected norm; and rightly so, since it is an essential part of creating a positive and effective learning environment (Boxer et al., 2003; Feldmann, 2001; Mayer, in press; Skiba et al.,

2004; Stiles & Tyson, 2008). It may appear from anecdotal reports that incivility exists to a greater degree than it actually does because it is so disrupting and harmful to the school environment. While the current study suggested that civil behaviors are more common in schools than uncivil behaviors, it should also be noted that the school environment would improve if civil behaviors occurred more frequently and uncivil behaviors occurred rarely, if at all.

For example, participants reported that a relatively small percentage of students complimented others or went out of their way to include others in activities. While these behaviors are not directly addressed by typical school rules, and failing to perform them is not necessarily mean or rude, the school could be a more positive and nurturing environment if such behaviors occurred more frequently. Participants also indicated that a relatively high percentage of students shifted responsibility or blamed others, argued or quarreled with others, and complained about common school experiences. Such behavior in the school is damaging to a positive environment. Also, although vandalizing property was reported as occurring at a relatively low rate, this could be a very damaging and severe behavior when it occurs at all.

For all of the questionnaire items, there was a large standard deviation associated with the calculated means, indicating a great deal of variance among participants' responses. Several participants indicated in the open-ended portion of the questionnaire that they worked in alternative settings and probably associated with students who showed a much higher level of uncivil behavior. This surely contributed to the variability; however, even participants working in typical education settings had diverse perceptions of civility and incivility, which made it difficult to determine which behaviors are best to

target in a general school-wide intervention. Because students engaged in a wide variety of behaviors and to varying degrees, identifying specific civil behaviors was challenging. Perhaps the best approach would be to assess the individual needs of each school and target interventions based on those needs (Marchant et al., 2009).

Elementary and secondary schools. Regarding elementary versus secondary schools differences, results revealed that participants working in elementary schools reported a higher percentage of students who held the door open and dressed and groomed themselves appropriately, possibly because elementary students may be more likely to comply with adults and wish to help them than are secondary students. Results also revealed that participants working in elementary schools reported a higher percentage of students who argued and quarreled with others and shifted responsibility or blamed others than did participants working in secondary schools. This higher reported percentage of uncivil behaviors was somewhat surprising, but might have been due to the fact that elementary school faculty typically supervise students for longer periods of time and thus may have a greater opportunity to observe uncivil behaviors. Results also indicated that participants working in secondary schools reported a higher percentage of students who inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device and used offensive language than did participants working in elementary schools. It was also noteworthy that participants working in secondary schools did not perceive any civil behaviors as occurring more frequently in their students as compared to participants working in elementary schools. These results supported assertions that civility interventions might be particularly important to implement with adolescent age students (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Hatch 1998; Ludick, 2002; Schaefer, 1995).

Rural, suburban, and urban schools. Another question examined in this research concerned the differences in the percentage of students engaging in civil and uncivil behaviors reported by participants working in rural, suburban, or urban schools. No significant differences were found for any questionnaire items regarding this school demographic. This suggested that the perceptions of civility and incivility were not associated with the geographical location of the participants' schools and that civility interventions could be appropriate for a school regardless of the areal context of the school.

Male and female participants. Some gender differences were evident in the results indicating that female participants reported a higher percentage of students who argue or quarrel, are inconsiderate of others, greet school faculty, dress and groom themselves appropriately, and arrive to class on time. Results indicated that male participants reported a higher percentage of students who inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class and complained about school. Studies have shown that student behaviors can vary according to teacher gender (Beller & Gafni, 1996; Licht, Stader, & Swenson, 1989), which may have played a role in these findings. However, the gender effects were not consistent (e.g., female participant noted higher levels of both civil and uncivil behaviors) and there were far fewer male than female respondents, making conclusions regarding this issue uncertain. For example, although the gender of participants was similar at the secondary school level (males: n=30, females: n=24), there were far more female participants (n=206) than male participants (n=26) at the elementary level. Thus, rather than being a difference in perceptions related to participant

gender, these results may have been related to the age of the students with whom the participants had experience.

Current and past experience in schools. Regarding participants' work status, results revealed that those who formerly worked in schools reported a higher percentage of students who littered on school grounds and held the door open for them than did participants who were currently working in schools. Participants who were currently working in a school reported a higher percentage of students who greeted school faculty, complimented others and were responsive to situations in which they might help others than did those who were not currently working in schools. It was also noteworthy that participants currently working in schools did not perceive any of the uncivil behaviors as occurring more frequently in their students as compared to participants who had formerly worked in schools. These results suggested that students may be more civil than those working outside of schools perceive them to be.

Years of participant experience. The results of the analysis examining the correlation between the reported percentage of students engaged in civil and uncivil behaviors and participants' years of work experience in a school was somewhat negligible. A slight negative correlation was found for the item regarding students shifting responsibility and blaming others, suggesting that as faculty gained more work experience, they perceived that students engaged in this uncivil behavior less often. A slight positive correlation was also found for the item regarding the percentage of students who littered on school grounds, suggesting that as school faculty gained more work experience, they perceived students to litter more often. However, given the lack of any other significant correlations, it appears that participant perceptions of students' civil

and uncivil behaviors were not related to their years of work experience in a school. This could be a helpful finding and, if confirmed by other research, would imply that support for civility interventions in a school would not be related to the number of years staff worked in the school.

Major Qualitative Findings

Participants provided a broad range of both other behaviors they noted in schools and suggestions for what schools can do to increase civility. These behaviors and suggestions are discussed below along with their relation to previous literature and possible applications in schools.

Other civil and uncivil behaviors. Regarding the additional civil and uncivil student behaviors listed by participants, it should be noted that the percentage for each category of civil or uncivil behavior indicates what percentage of the total responses were included in that category rather than the percentage of students that participants perceived to engage in the behaviors. Thus, rather than indicating participants' perceptions of occurrence, these results may indicate how important participants felt the mentioned behaviors were. It appears that since participants frequently mentioned respect for peers and adults in both civil and uncivil behaviors, they consider these behaviors to be important indicators of student civility.

Home and societal influences. Regarding suggestions for improving civil behaviors in students, many participants noted that civility needs to be addressed in the home first and indicated that students lack civility because it is not taught at home. From the literature reviewed for this study, only two authors (Burns, 2003; Evans, 1998) mentioned family specifically as a reason that students may fail to act civilly; instead,

many authors (Berman, 1998; Boyd, 2006; Fyfe, Banister, & Kearns, 2006; Hatch, 1998; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Kauffman & Burbach, 2003; Leo, 1996; Marks, 1996; Mourad, 2001; Nilsen, 2008; Schaefer, 1993) mentioned society or media as a main cause for incivility. Burns states that school faculty cannot be sure of what students learn at home and what they need to learn at school, implying that although parents should be teaching civil behaviors, the school is now expected to assume the responsibility. This is congruent to the opinion voiced in many of the responses to the final questionnaire item. A relatively large portion of responses (43.58%) mentioned home or parents, possibly an effect of the participant sample likely being predominantly members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS church), as this religious organization sponsors BYU. Because family and parental responsibility for raising children are main focuses of the LDS church (The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995), participants may have been more inclined to either blame parents for incivility or look to them as a way to foster civility in children than participants not of the LDS faith would have.

Direct instruction. Despite the fact that many participant responses indicated that civility must be addressed in the home, many also reported that civility can be taught at school in a variety of ways. Many participants indicated that they believed direct instruction would be a very effective way of teaching and encouraging civil behavior in school. Several authors (Berman, 1998; Burns, 2003; Evans, 1998; Kauffman & Burbach, 2003; Nilsen, 2008) also mentioned direct instruction as an effective method for instilling civility in students. The ideology of positive behavior support contends that social behaviors should be implicitly taught, just as any academic skill would be (Horner &

Sugai, 2000). Direct instruction was also supported by the data gathered from several of the first items on the questionnaire indicating that while about 70% of students understand the importance of civil behavior and value civil behavior, only about 50% have the skills necessary to manage conflict with others. The difference between those who value civil behavior and those who have skills to work with others might be addressed through the direct teaching of civil behaviors.

Modeling by school professionals. Participant responses also suggested that modeling and positive adult examples are important components of teaching students' civil behaviors. Several authors (Burns, 2003; Evans, 1998; Feldmann, 2001; Hatch, 1998; Nilsen, 2008; Stover, 1999) also believed that the civil behaviors of school faculty influence student behaviors. An important factor in the instruction of any material is providing examples of what a skill or behavior looks like. Directly teaching civil behaviors could be strongly reinforced by also displaying these behaviors for students to see. Similarly, if adult role models (teachers, principals, other school personnel) avoid using uncivil behaviors with each other or with students, children will have fewer opportunities to observe and mimic these negative behaviors.

School-wide positive behavior support. Results also revealed that participants viewed school-wide positive behavior support (PBS) to be effective in encouraging civil behaviors. The definition of PBS as "an applied science that uses educational methods to expand an individual's behavior repertoire and systems change methods to redesign an individual's living environment to ...enhance the individual's quality of life" (Carr et al., 2002, p. 4) lends itself very well to the teaching and use of civil behaviors in schools. PBS is meant to increase the likelihood of success and personal satisfaction (Carr et al.),

a goal that can be accomplished partly through civility, especially if civility is taught and reinforced at a school-wide level. A program to teach civil behaviors is more likely to succeed if all school personnel are aware and involved in its implementation (Hatch, 1998). Several participants indicated that their school employed PBS principles and specifically mentioned the effectiveness of praising students who demonstrated civil behaviors. The principles behind PBS contribute to the positive school environment toward which civility is striving; integrating civility instruction into a PBS framework could potentially make both more effective.

Rules, expectations, and classroom structure. Another major finding was that participants reported that setting rules and expectations would be an important way to encourage civil behaviors. Students cannot be expected to behave in ways adults want them to unless they are given rules and expectations. By providing rules, faculty can help to create a positive school environment where students can be confident of what they are expected to do (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Taylor-Greene et al. (1997) suggested that when giving specific rules, it is also important to discuss what each rule looks like in various school locations. This was accomplished in their study by faculty explaining to students how each expectation translated into specific behaviors in each targeted school area. For example, "be respectful" meant listening to others without interrupting in the classroom, sharing equipment in the gym, and waiting in line and speaking in a quiet voice in the cafeteria. Such examples made expectations and rules very clear, ensuring that students were aware of what behaviors faculty expected.

Character education. Results revealed that several participants indicated that character education would be an effective way of increasing civility in schools. As

mentioned previously, the McGuffey Readers used in early American education (Field, 1997; Peck, 2002) could be considered character education. This type of education would likely be effective in teaching students prosocial characteristics, but focuses on the improvement of self rather than the betterment of society and helping others. Prosocial characteristics learned from character education, however, would likely lead to students helping others.

Zero-tolerance policies. A relatively small percentage of respondents indicated that zero-tolerance policies were an important way of maintaining civility in schools. As noted earlier, research has shown that zero-tolerance programs (e.g., metal detectors, physical precautions, school policies of expulsion) are not very effective in preventing or reducing school violence (Mayer, 2008). In the current study, most responses falling under the zero-tolerance category referred to not allowing an uncivil act to occur without correction, rather than a strict policy resulting in expulsion. A few responses did, however, refer to a school having a specific policy, the consequences of which were unstated. It is possible that school faculty sometimes use methods shown to be ineffective by research. Zero-tolerance policies against incivility may or may not be one of them; future research would be necessary to know.

Possible applications in schools. As indicated previously, the large range in participants' reports for each civil and uncivil behavior made it difficult to identify specific behaviors to be targeted in a universal intervention. Instead, teachers and other school faculty might consider using direct instruction and modeling to target specific civil or uncivil behaviors of concern for a particular classroom or school. Several of the participants indicated that they tried to incorporate instruction about civil behaviors into

their daily curriculum. Specific strategies mentioned by participants were reading and discussing books that address civil behaviors, highlighting historical figures that demonstrated civil behaviors, and teaching and discussing the importance of civics and how they are related to citizens' behavior. Participants also mentioned role-playing and empathy training as other ideas that might help mediate civility in the classroom.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study systematically gathered data regarding civility and incivility in schools. However, because this was survey research, the perceptions of participants were measured, rather than actual instances of how often each behavior occurred in schools. Participant perceptions may have differed from the actual occurrence of behaviors. Current research (Ashford, Queen, Algozzine, & Mitchell, 2008) showed that teachers' perceptions of school discipline problems were very similar to actual occurrences of these problem behaviors as measured by administrators' documentation of discipline referrals. Similarly, participant perceptions of civil and uncivil behaviors may have been parallel to the actual behaviors, but this is only an assumption. Future research in the area of civility would be improved if actual counts of civil and uncivil behaviors were collected through direct observations rather than through school faculty report alone.

As noted previously, the majority of participants for the current study were white females from the western United States; also, all participants had graduated from Brigham Young University, which may have introduced bias into responses. While the results of this study were biased toward a particular demographic group, they were still informative and provided a first step toward systematically collecting data regarding civility in the school setting. A more diverse sample of participants may have yielded

different results. Future research should focus on a more diverse sample in order to generalize the results to a larger population.

Although this study gathered demographic information regarding the primary roles that participants played in their schools (i.e. administrator, elementary teacher, school psychologist, etc.), it did not examine the various perceptions school professionals may have had in relation to their roles. The majority of the participants were teachers (64.20%), while other school roles, such as school counselors, school psychologists, and speech pathologists were represented to a lesser degree. Because of this large difference in representation of professional school roles, comparisons among the various groups might have been biased. Future research examining the perceptions of school professionals in relation to their professional roles would be helpful to the study of civility and civility interventions in schools.

Another limitation is that the questionnaire used to gather data for the current research was created solely for this purpose and was not analyzed for reliability or validity. As noted earlier, all questionnaire items were included based on a review of the literature; however, without psychometric analysis, the reliability and validity of the instrument is unknown. Differently worded items or a different method of response may have altered the results.

Finally, intervention ideas gathered in this research are helpful in promoting the teaching of civility in schools, but they were anecdotal—reported by participants to be useful in creating more civility in classrooms. While many of these suggestions have been shown to be effective for improving social skills (Merrell & Gimpel, 1998), future

research should be directed toward discovering the effectiveness of these interventions for improving civility.

Conclusion and Implications

In this study, participants reported civil behaviors as occurring more frequently in schools than uncivil behaviors, despite anecdotal reports of declining civility. However, participants also indicated a need to increase civility and decrease incivility in schools. Without previous data, there is no way to compare current reports of civility with past reports.

Those who are currently working in schools or others who have extensive contact with youth are encouraged to take opportunities to model and directly teach civil behaviors. As noted in the literature, perceptions of school safety and measures of well-being are affected by incivility (Boxer et al., 2003; Mayer, in press; Skiba et al., 2004). Students whose well-being and perceptions of safety suffer in the school environment will likely struggle academically. Also, incidences of incivility at school may detract from academic time by distracting students, requiring the teacher or administration to address a problem, or making the environment uncomfortable. School effectiveness and safety will likely be improved by increasing civility via direct instruction, modeling, providing specific expectations, using positive behavior support techniques, or a combination of these approaches.

Although this research did not reveal any definitive answers for what specific behaviors need to be addressed universally in schools, it provided an in-depth examination of the perceptions of school faculty regarding student civility and incivility as well as ideas for what might be done in schools to increase civility and decrease

incivility. Some of these ideas were school-wide initiatives that would require much time and effort, but others were simple interventions that would require little time. Surely, any exposure students could have to learning proper civil behavior would be valuable, a point appreciated in the early history of schools in the United States, when training in civility and manners carried equal value with academic material because of the potential impact on both the student and society (Berman, 1998).

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APPENDIX A: ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

BYU

BRIGHAM YOUNG

UNIVERSITY

Please provide the following information about yourself.

Please choose one:

○ Male

○ Female

Please choose as many as apply:

☐ White

☐ Black

☐ Hispanic

☐ Asian

☐ Native American

☐ Pacific Islander

☐ Other (please specify)

Please identify your age:

Please identify the last year that you worked or volunteered in a school (if you are currently in a school please enter 2008)

Please identify the number of years you have worked or volunteered in a school:

Please identify the state in which your school is located (if not currently in a school, answer according to the state in which you have the most experience):

Please identify your primary involvement in schools:

○ Currently working in a school

○ Currently volunteering in a school

○ Not currently working or volunteering in a school, but worked or volunteered in a school after graduation from BYU

○ Never worked or volunteered in a school after graduation from BYU

Please identify the geographic location of the school in which you currently work or volunteer (if not currently in a school, answer according to the geographic location with which you have the most experience):

○ Rural

○ Suburban

○ Urban

Please identify your primary professional role (if not currently in a school, answer according to the role in which you have the most experience):

○ Elementary Teacher

○ Secondary Teacher

○ Administrator

○ Speech Pathologist

○ School Psychologist

○ School Counselor

○ Special Education Teacher (mild/moderate)

○ Special Education Teacher (severe)

○ Other (please specify)

Please identify the grade level(s) with which you currently interact (if not currently in a school, please answer according to the grade level(s) with which you have the most expereince) (*check all that apply*):

Pre-K	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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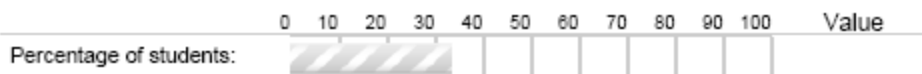Please click the forward button to continue

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BYU

BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Instructions: We have defined civility as polite behaviors that show respect toward a person in order to maintain social harmony and recognize the humanity of that person. Please use this definition in rating any items asking about civility.

Considering only the students with which you indicated having the most interaction, use your mouse to drag the bars to indicate the percentage of students who have the following characteristics.

Understand the importance of civil behavior
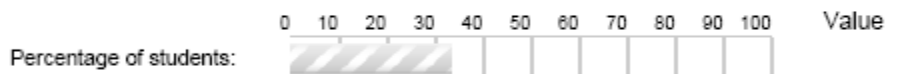
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Value civil behavior

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Are aware of the needs of others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Respond appropriately to the needs of others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Have the skills to successfully manage conflict with others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

BYU

BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Considering only the students with whom you indicated having the most interaction, use your mouse to drag the bars to indicate the percentage of students who have participated in the following behaviors in the past two weeks.
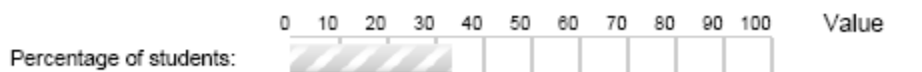
If you are not currently employed at a school, please consider a typical two-week period of your work experience when reporting percentages.

Responded inappropriately when they did not get what they wanted

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Held the door open for me at school

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Argued or quarreled with others

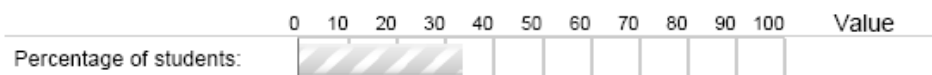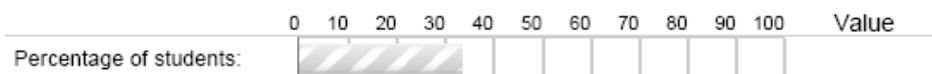|	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Dressed and groomed themselves in ways that were appropriate for school

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Appropriately greeted me at school

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Inappropriately used a cell phone or other electronic device in class

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Left public areas in the school neat and clean

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Called others offensive names

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

BYU
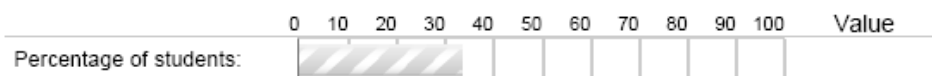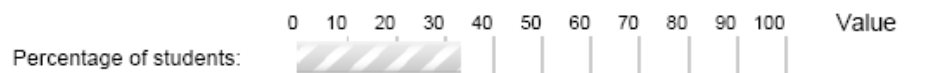
BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Considering only the students with whom you indicated having the most experience, use your mouse to drag the bars to indicate the percentage of students who have participated in the following behaviors in the past two weeks.

If you are not currently employed at a school, please consider a typical two-week period of your work experience when reporting percentages.
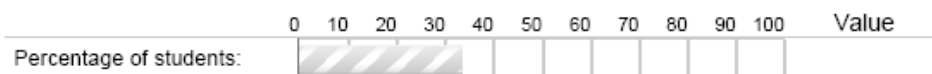
Sincerely complimented others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Shifted responsibility and blamed others for their actions

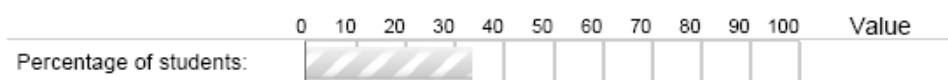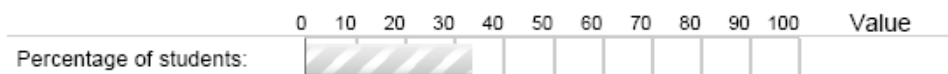|	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Littered in hallways, classrooms, or on school grounds

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Used polite expressions and greetings with others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												
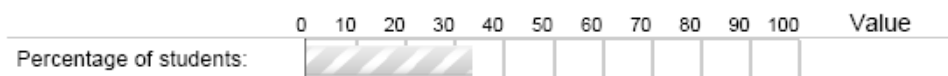
Complained about common school experiences (grades, schedule, homework, tests, etc.)

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
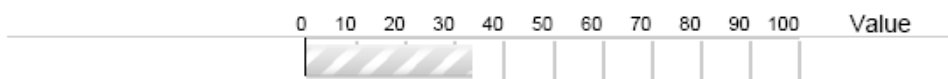
Percentage of students:

Were responsive to situations in which they might help others
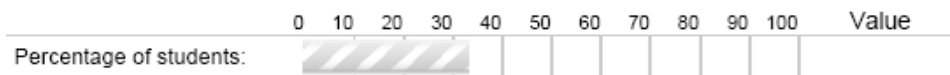
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Expected teachers to grant them special favors

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Made sarcastic remarks to others
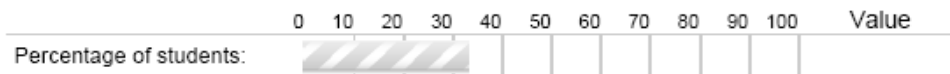
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												
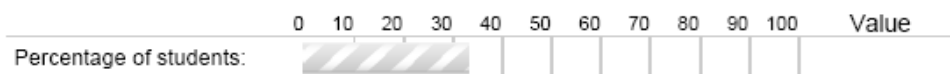
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BYU

BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Considering only the students with whom you indicated having the most interaction, use your mouse to drag the bars to indicate the percentage of students who have participated in the following behaviors in the past two weeks.

If you are not currently employed at a school, please consider a typical two-week period of your work experience when reporting percentages.
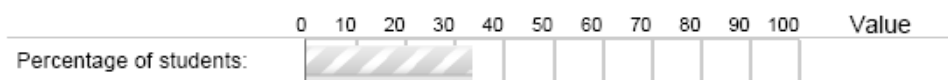
Used offensive language on school grounds

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Responded respectfully to the opinions of others

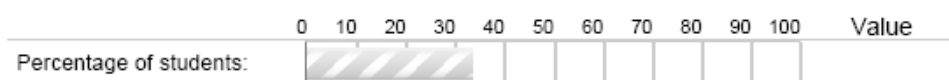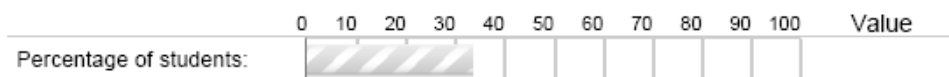|	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Sincerely listened to their teachers

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Considered how their behavior might affect others

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Arrived to class on time

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Went out of their way to include others in their activities

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

Were inconsiderate of others in their use of classroom supplies

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Percentage of students:												

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BYU
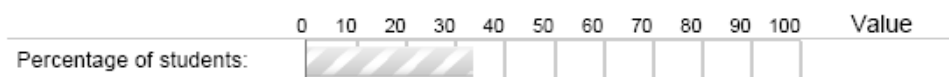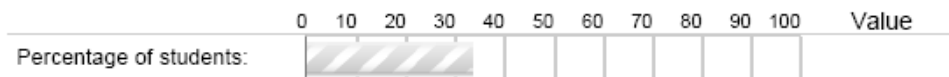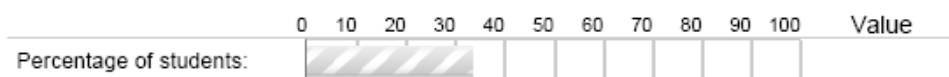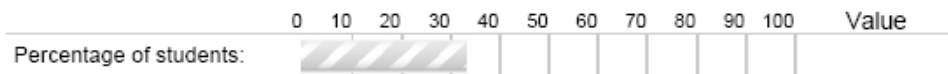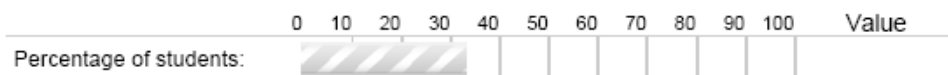
BRIGHAM YOUNG
UNIVERSITY

Please indicate any other <u>civil</u> behaviors not addressed in this survey which you have seen in the school setting and indicate the percentage of students who have engaged in these behaviors in the past two weeks:

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Behavior 1:												
Behavior 2:												

Please indicate any other <u>uncivil</u> behaviors not addressed in this survey which you have seen in the school setting and indicate the percentage of students who have engaged in these behaviors in the past two weeks:

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	Value
Behavior 1:												
Behavior 2:												
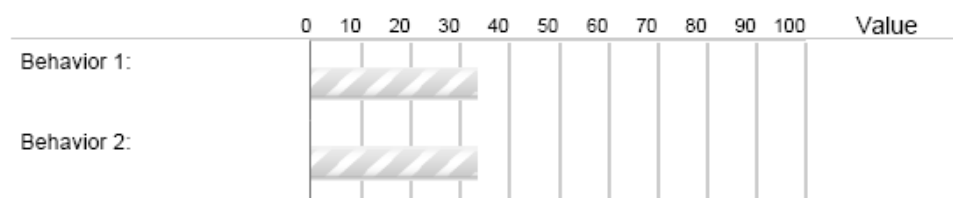
Please list any ideas you may have for increasing civil behavior and decreasing uncivil behavior in schools:

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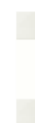
APPENDIX B : PRECONTACT EMAIL FOR ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear David O. McKay School of Education Alumnus,

You are being asked to provide valuable information on student behavior because of your training at the McKay School of Education. The BYU Positive Behavioral Support Initiative (PBSI) in cooperation with the McKay School of Education is conducting a research project regarding civility in schools. This project is being conducted as part of a thesis of a McKay School graduate student. It is founded on President Gordon B. Hinckley's chapter on civility in his book, *Standing for Something*, in which he advocated for a more civil society. The ultimate goal of this research is to create an intervention to improve students' use of civil behavior, but first information is needed regarding the current status of civility in schools.

In about one week, you will receive another email with further information about this study and an internet link to a survey which will take about 10–15 minutes of your time. We look forward to your participation.

Thank you,

Keely Swanson, B.S.   Paul Caldarella, Ph.D.
School Psychology Masters Student   Director
BYU-PBSI   BYU-PBSI
David O. McKay School of Education   David O. McKay School of Education

APPENDIX C : COVER LETTER EMAIL FOR ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

About one week ago, you received an email informing you about a study on civility.

We ask that you take 5–10 minutes to answer some questions regarding your perceptions of civility in schools. We would appreciate receiving your response by November 4, 2008, as this study cannot proceed until this data is received.

There are no significant risks anticipated from participating in this research. Benefits include that the knowledge gained from this project is intended for use in an intervention to increase civility in schools. Also, as a token of our appreciation, those who participate in this study have the option to be entered into a drawing for BYU memorabilia (hats, t-shirts, etc.). You will be notified via email if you are selected to receive something.

All responses will be kept confidential and only reported in aggregate. Only those directly involved with the research will have access to data.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to receive a copy of the results upon completion of the study, you may contact the primary researchers via email or phone. Keely Swanson (keelyswanson@gmail.com) or Dr. Paul Caldarella (paul_caldarella@byu.edu), 801–377–0560.

 Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without consequence.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Christopher Dromey, Ph.D., IRB chair, 801–422–6461, 133 TLRB, christopher_dromey@byu.edu.

Mozilla 3 is the recommended internet browser for survey software. If possible, please use this browser. If you do not have it, you may download it for free by clicking on the following link.

www.getfirefox.com

By completing the following questionnaire you are consenting to the use of your responses in this research project. Please follow the link below to begin the questionnaire.

http://new.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_bHrW3DfatP43k0I&SVID=Prod

If you would like to be entered in the drawing for memorabilia, please follow the link below to provide us with your email address.

http://new.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_0ijX9AZqqwFCC4k&SVID=Prod

Thank you,

Keely Swanson, B.S.	Paul Caldarella, Ph.D.
School Psychology Masters Student	Director
BYU-PBSI	BYU-PBSI
David O. McKay School of Education	David O. McKay School of Education

APPENDIX D: FOLLOW-UP EMAIL FOR ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

The BYU Positive Behavioral Support Initiative (PBSI) in cooperation with the McKay School of Education is conducting a research project regarding civility in schools. This project is being conducted as part of a thesis of a McKay School graduate student. It is founded on President Gordon B. Hinckley's chapter on civility in his book, *Standing for Something*, in which he advocated for a more civil society.

Two weeks ago, you should have received an email with a link to a survey on school civility. Your training and experience as a professional in the school setting give you valuable information regarding the current level of civility in schools. Your answers are important to this research study, as we would like to create an intervention to increase civility in the school, but need data on its current status first.

If you have not already done so, we ask that you take 5–10 minutes to answer some questions regarding your perceptions on civility in schools. We would appreciate receiving your response by November 18, 2008, as this study cannot proceed until this data is received. If you experienced any difficulty following the link to the survey, and would like to complete it, please contact one of the primary researchers using the contact information listed below and we would be happy to provide you with the survey in a different format.

There are no significant risks or benefits anticipated from participating in this research, although the knowledge gained from this project is intended for use in an intervention to increase civility in schools. As a token of our appreciation, those who participate in this study have the option to be entered into a drawing for BYU memorabilia (hats, t-shirts, etc.). You will be notified via email if you are selected to receive something.

All responses will be kept confidential and only reported in aggregate. Only those directly involved with the research will have access to data. Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely without consequence.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to receive a copy of the results upon completion of the study, you may contact the primary researchers via email or phone. Keely Swanson (keelyswanson@gmail.com) or Dr. Paul Caldarella (paul_caldarella@byu.edu), 801–377–0560. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Christopher Dromey, Ph.D., IRB chair, 801–22–6461, 133 TLRB, christopher_dromey@byu.edu.

Mozilla 3 is the recommended internet browser for survey software. If possible, please use this browser. If you do not have it, you may download it for free by clicking on the following link www.getfirefox.com

By completing the following questionnaire you are consenting to the use of your responses in this research project. Please follow the link below to begin the questionnaire.

http://new.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_bHrW3DfatP43k0I&SVID=Prod

Thank you,

Keely Swanson, B.S.   Paul Caldarella, Ph.D.
School Psychology Masters Student   Director
BYU-PBSI   BYU-PBSI
David O. McKay School of Education   David O. McKay School of Education

APPENDIX E: RESPONSES TO FINAL OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS OF THE

QUESTIONNAIRE BY CATEGORY

Questionnaire Item: Please indicate any other <u>civil</u> behaviors not addressed in this survey which you have seen in the school setting...

<u>Respect toward adults</u>
- Being helpful to a sub or volunteer
- Respect toward adults
- Offering to help teacher
- Listened to other teachers
- Carrying supplies
- Respect for parents
- Volunteering to help me
- Thanking a sub or volunteer
- Hugging the teacher
- Listened to teacher
- Verbal expression of appreciation for teacher's lessons
- Thanks teacher
- Greet adults besides their own teacher with respect

<u>Helping peers</u>
- Assisted other students with class work
- Standing up for other students
- Assisting another student with an assignment
- Comforting a sick classmate
- Assisted special needs students
- Helped pick up an accidental spill
- Comforted hurt student
- Helped handicapped student(s)
- Peer support for at-risk students
- Assisting hurt students
- Helped clean other's mess
- Cleaned up after each other

<u>Civility during academic time</u>
- Quality of work
- Having materials at desk
- Following directions the first time
- Trying to do their personal best work
- Following directions
- Diligence in work
- Participating in discussion
- Being trustworthy on assignments
- Engage in classroom discussions
- Participation
- Listening to teacher
- Taking notes

<u>Polite verbal expressions</u>
- Saying please and thank you

- Apology for inappropriate behavior
- Saying thank you
- Saying thank you
- Saying please, thank you
- Thanking a sub or volunteer
- Saying please/thank you
- Verbal expressions of appreciation for teacher's lessons
- Saying you're welcome
- Thanks teacher
- Greet adults besides their own teacher with respect

Compliance to explicit rules
- Playing games by the rules
- Waiting for turn
- Following directions the first time
- Compliance
- Following directions
- Use inside voices in classroom
- Following directions from teacher
- Following explicit school rules
- Following all school and classroom rules
- Waiting a turn to speak

Encourage or compliment peers
- Encouraging others in team activities
- Complimenting on others' sports/school accomplishments
- Compliments to fellow students
- Peer support for at risk students
- Encouraged others to accomplish a task
- Sensitive to feelings/needs of others
- Rallied others to group work
- Supplied strong leadership to peers

Care for objects
- Carrying supplies
- Helped pick up an accidental spill
- Taking care of others' belongings
- Helped clean other's mess
- Cleaned up after each other

Work well with peers
- Let someone else do something they themselves wanted to do. Sacrificed for others
- Sensitive to needs/feelings of others
- Working well in a group setting
- Supplied strong leadership to peers
- Rallied others to group work

Being friendly
- Standing up for other students
- Smiling
- Waving to others in the hallway
- Always being positive—not complaining

Respect for community
- Respect toward city and country
- Showed patriotism
- Expressed desire to participate in outside service opportunity

Taking turns
- Waiting for turn
- Waiting a turn to speak

Social skills
- Looks at others directly
- Awareness of personal space

Miscellaneous
- Appropriate conduct on buses
- Bringing check out slips, release forms, etc.
- Ignoring others' poor choices

Questionnaire Item: Please indicate any other uncivil behavior not addressed in this survey which you have seen in the school setting . . .

Physically disrespectful of others
- Do not keep hands to themselves (hitting, kicking, biting, spitting)
- Hitting
- Self harm (verbal or physical)
- Fighting (physical)
- Physical violence
- Hit/kick a child
- Throw books
- Touching other people or their things
- Fights
- Hit another person
- Purposefully hurting others in the class (physically)
- Pushing past others in the doorway
- Physical aggression
- Physical aggression
- Fights
- Running in halls
- Inflict harm on others
- Being physically inappropriate (pulling hair, tackling, scratching, etc.)
- Intentional physical harm to other student
- Threats or physical violence
- Running in halls
- Kicking and acting out
- Fighting

Working poorly with peers
- Teasing
- Conspiring against another student
- Teasing, name-calling
- Touching/bothering others people or their things
- Not nice to others

- Making fun of students who dress differently
- Frequent put-downs
- Discussing offensive topics with other students
- Laughing at others
- Grabbing from others
- Exclusion of other students ("you can't be in our group")
- Unkind language toward others (i.e. shut-up)
- Using unkind facial expressions to others in class
- Frequent put-downs of others
- Ignoring others
- Gossip

Non-compliance
- Defiance
- Refused to complete a task asked to perform by a teacher or adults
- Constantly challenge teachers' decisions and policies
- Arguing with teacher/refusal to cooperate
- Going into hidden areas of the school to play (i.e. the stage)
- Not following directions
- Defiance
- Disobey classroom rules on purpose
- Kicking and acting out
- Non-compliance
- Refused to follow instructions
- Says no to requests
- Does whatever student wants
- Keep rest of class waiting for them

Back-talking school faculty
- Talk back to authority
- Aggressive back-talk to teachers
- Arguing with teacher/refusal to cooperate
- Rude response to authority
- Refused to complete a task asked to perform by a teacher or adult
- Constantly challenging teachers' decisions and policies
- Don't have to do it that way because parents told me my way was okay
- Says no to requests
- Disrespect to adults
- Defiance
- Back-talking

Interrupting
- Disruptive behavior
- Interrupting
- Talking without raising hands
- Interrupting or talking out when the teacher is talking
- Interrupted someone else who was talking
- Interrupting others
- Visit with others while instruction is being given
- Stepped in front of someone who was talking
- Interrupting

Sexual harassment
- Inappropriate jokes
- Boys being disrespectful to girls
- Sexual harassment
- Discussing offensive topics with other students
- Inappropriate affection
- Inappropriate behavior between boy/girl relationships

Poor motivation in academics
- Cheating on tests
- Lack of motivation
- Complaining about anything
- Clear intent to change topic to distract teacher from planned lesson
- Sleeping
- Seek alternative (and easier) ways to earn good grades

Inappropriate noise level
- Talking too loudly in the hallways
- Screaming
- Noisy in lines
- Inappropriate noise level
- Noise levels

Stealing
- Stealing
- Stealing things off the walls
- Grabbing from others
- Stealing

Bullying
- Cyberbullying/texting
- Bullying
- Bullying the weak

Weapons/drugs
- Bring a weapon to school
- Drugs
- Tobacco, alcohol, and/or drug use

Cutting in line
- Trying to cut or get ahead in line
- Cutting gin line

Lying
- Lying to teachers
- Lying

Miscellaneous
- Gothic and gang clothing
- Sluffed school
- Frequent put-downs of themselves
- Broken pencils/crayons
- Leaning back in chair
- Clowning around

- Flushing toilets repeatedly for fun
- Only follow the rules if someone in authority is watching
- Taking too much food and not eating it

Questionnaire Item: Please list any ideas you may have for increasing civil behavior and decreasing uncivil behavior in schools.
(Note: only the portion of each comment that pertained to a category is included)

Direct instruction:
- Explicit instruction on civility
- I am working hard to teach my students here in Denver how to treat others and find peace in the classroom and within themselves
- Educate these people (family members)
- Explicit instruction for the general school-age population
- More teacher training in how to teach/manage students in a way that will help them learn appropriate behaviors
- Help young children understand how their actions affect others...help them think about the feelings of others and how they would like to be treated . . .civil behavior will increase as we teach our children to be respectful and honest. We need to help instill in them a correct sense of right and wrong and encourage their natural desire to be good and do right.
- We often talked about inappropriate behaviors—why they were inappropriate and how the child could make a better choice next time.
- Social skills instruction
- Explicitly teach expected behaviors.
- Helping my students talk through little issues and how they would feel and connecting that the other person would feel the same way also helped to increase civil behavior.
- Teach many of these behaviors
- Social skills
- Schools can foster civility by ...educating
- It needs to be talked about frequently in the classroom
- I used to use a program called Second Step that was a violent prevention program
- Address skills such as having empathy, problem solving, impulse control, and recognizing emotions
- No one wants to teach them to think of others and that they need to do their own work
- Regular lessons and discussions in the classroom setting regarding civil behaviors. Identify it, define it, give examples of civil and uncivil behaviors.
- Explicitly talk to students about situations and how to react
- The program called "Tribes" contains many ideas for helping students learn appropriate behavior
- The only problem is teachers do not have extra time in the day to talk about these things because of the push on reading and math
- Implement behavior and/or character curriculum as part of the state and national curriculum. If I don't teach it in school, they won't learn.
- Becoming aware of the needs of others, and how they can help. Understanding the importance of including everyone. Understand that laying aside differences and idiosyncrasies in others is important.
- Students need to be taught manners, such as opening doors, proper greetings, saying "excuse me" etc.
- Teach behavior in every class on a regular basis
- Character education at the Kindergarten level has helped in my class tremendously. If we educated children in character building strategies at a young enough age, the outcome is phenomenal and hopefully will stick with them forever as a character trait.
- Implement a time weekly or monthly to discuss as a class uncivil and civil acts they've witnessed in that time. Discuss and share ideas to decrease uncivil behavior and increase civil behavior.
- Have specific lessons or instruction time designated (at least weekly) to teaching civil behaviors.

- Teach proper social skills
- I'd consider teaching it as part of my regular curriculum. As a Language Arts teacher I'd have my students read it and discuss it, rather than have a specific civility curriculum scripted for us.
- Talking more about it would be ideal.
- Teach social skills
- There must be time set aside to address these concepts in school.
- Teach respect, good manners, sharing, etc...Guidance counseling lessons can be provided to those students who need additional help.
- Have school counselor, social worker teach skills in classes.
- Class discussions, read literature dealing with the issues, do problem solving
- It takes a lot of my time to teach them and train them to respect each other and to treat each other as they, themselves want to be treated.
- I believe that any behavior is a skill, and needs to be practiced in order to be competent at performing that skill ...give them opportunities to practice the specific behavior.
- Most children would be more civil if taught the behavior
- I openly discussed civil behavior with all my students
- Teach correct behaviors
- Good instruction
- Class meetings once a week to promote civil behavior and ...learn about how to be more civil to others in the classroom.
- Specific teaching of the behaviors may also be necessary.
- Teaching them social skills
- Helping students to learn appropriate behavior
- Review civil behaviors often
- Civics needs to be taught throughout the grades
- I read aloud children's books about appropriate behavior and we discuss them and practice them during the week.
- Help teachers be reminded about what to teach about respectful behavior and how to follow through in their classrooms.
- Parent/family training
- Explicit teaching
- First it is important to explain what behavior was uncivil and why so that the child knows the reasons for not doing it.

Home and societal influences:
- Students need to be taught values in the home
- Expecting a lot from parents is one way to increase civil behavior
- Not enough is expected from the school of parents these days. Parents and teachers should demand certain behaviors and actions from parents to link that experience from school to the home.
- Students learn uncivil behaviors from family members. Educating these people may have a positive impact on their behavior as they understand the implications that using these types of behaviors may have on the lives of their children and their children's futures
- Students often mirror their parents in these behaviors.
- Involve parents by letting them know what the classroom rules and what behaviors are being observed in general so they can talk to their children about them at home.
- Students who display civil behaviors have been taught at home.
- I think it starts at home. If children are raised in an environment when uncivil behavior is the norm, they learn it is the way of life.
- Enlist parent support
- Every year student civil behavior degrades to an even lower level. Adults and rules are a big joke. If a task is not easy and/or fun, students shouldn't have to do it. This idea comes the students and the parents of the students alike. All responsibility lies with teachers . . .If parents are not willing to raise and educate their children, and teachers are expected to, then some type of authority needs to be given.

- The current philosophy of raising children is training them to be completely selfish
- Enough students are raised in an environment that some would find offensive
- I feel that parents need to have a higher degree of accountability and that it needs to start earlier...uncivil behavior starts at home.
- This is something that should be taught at home
- My students, not typical of those in public schools, come mostly from homes where civility is predominant...I notice the same peculiarity in Amish students in this area. . .The Amish are a refreshingly civil population, and the locus of that civility is the teachings and behavior in the home.
- Education at home on proper behaviors and etiquette for various settings
- Parents should be more involved, and they may be partly responsible for this potential "crisis". This generation has been given rewards for little of no effort on their part. There is a sense of entitlement that they feel. This is the generation where everyone wins and gets a trophy, no matter how little effort they put out. Life is not like that!
- Send home parenting tips on how to eliminate anti-social behavior and provide parent/teacher discussion groups for local problems.
- So much of it comes from what they've learned from their parents.
- Parent more involved
- Parent teachings have the most powerful effect
- I believe that manners, respect, civility, and character education should be taught at home
- Parents need to be involved with their child's academic and behavior concerns
- Involve parents
- Children are not taught values at home in the way that I was when I was a child
- True increase of civil behavior needs to begin in the home
- Most children would be more civil if taught the behavior at home
- Model and teach correct behaviors and share this as part of the curriculum with the parents
- It is very hard to compete with home environments...so teaching parents what is right, is where we need to start.
- Work on increasing civil behaviors in the homes and other areas of society. School, alas, is a reflection of what children see and observe at home and in the media.
- Even though they may act a certain way at home it is not acceptable at school
- Parental involvement in schools—volunteering
- They had not been taught in their homes what we would call civil behavior. . .the general decline in civil behavior as a whole in our culture cannot help but affect them
- Parent/family counseling or training
- Getting parents involved as role models to their children
- It begins at home
- Uncivil behavior is extolled in cartoons, made-for-youth television and movies. Many adults (educators and parents) do not practice civil behavior, so it seems moot to expect civil behavior from students.

Modeling by school professionals:
- We need to show our children that we respect them and treat them as such...setting a good example...If we don't truly respect them they will not see the example set.
- We all have uncivil influences that can affect us. As teachers/administrators, we need to take note of our own civility inside and outside of class and create a civil environment by exemplifying such behavior
- The teacher's example also plays a big role in the civil behavior of students. Acting as we want the students to act will make a difference.
- I believe that increasing civil behavior and decreasing civil behavior in schools is best achieved through the tone I set as the teacher.
- Modeling goes a long way and is a tactic I used often in my classroom.
- The greatest tool I found as a teacher was modeling. Children learn best from having an example they respect to follow. So I found that by giving my students the same courtesies I expected I saw

a great amount of civility. Also, by providing an example, I was able to teach many of these behaviors that do not always come naturally for children.

- Ultimately the child learns civility at a young age from examples around them
- Role models
- If students feel appreciated, loved, and respected—if they feel that they are valued, they tend to look for the good in others and treat them better.
- Be civil as adults
- Be an example with your peers
- Encourage role models (parents, older students, teachers, etc.) to be more civil and set the example
- Model behavior for others
- It should be modeled by the teacher
- I love saying please and thanks in class
- Use modeling techniques
- I can teach them through example
- Modeling by the adults and older students around them
- Educators need to model and teach respect, good manners, sharing, etc
- We need to model
- Most children would be more civil if they saw more examples of it in adults...The need more examples; too few adults show civil behaviors themselves.
- Have children practice modeling civil behaviors as part of learning time.
- Model and teach correct behaviors
- Treating the students the way I would them to treat others and me is helpful
- Good examples set by the teachers would help
- Everybody needs to believe and try to practice the ideal...Many adults (educators and parents) do not practice civil behaviors, so it seems moot to expect civil behavior from students.
- Example to students
- Review civil behaviors often and model them
- All leadership ...set an extraordinary example to those they are in contact with every day—which includes the students themselves
- Role models to children
- It is important to teach by example

School-wide positive behavior support:
- There is little or no support from the administration
- Principals and teachers should demand certain behaviors
- "Cool Kid" tickets
- Administrators need to take note of our own civility
- Rewards for positive behavior
- Utah Behavior Initiative
- The UBI works miracles. I'm a believer.
- I think that the key to most interventions aimed at decreasing negative behaviors is don't "reward" them with attention.
- Praise goes a long way
- Students have no consequences for uncivil behavior...Administrators want to maintain good public relations with parents, so do not want to criticize a student's behavior.
- Administrators are now taught to be mediators between parents and teachers. This does not work.
- School-wide positive behavior support plan, consistency in interacting with students
- Our school gives rewards for kids who are "caught being kind"
- Consistently praising and recognizing those whose actions promote civility
- Have positive behavior support school-wide
- Our school has a pledge that the whole school repeats every day. In it we promise to treat others as we want to be treated by choosing words and actions that are helpful not hurtful
- Reinforce appropriate behavior

- Increase positive reinforcement for students who are acting appropriately
- Increasing positive praise and rewards for this behavior
- Kind and civil behavior should be celebrated
- School-wide rewards and consequences
- Having the whole school working on the same social skill each month...praise
- Increased positive attention in small groups would help
- Our principal often includes messages about "being nice", "responsible", "respectful" during morning announcements. He points out the good he sees, and when there is a problem, he talks to everyone about it
- Entire school staff follows the same policy...especially the principal and vice-principal
- Rewarding students for civil behavior seen in halls or classroom
- Rewarding with positive recognition those displaying appropriate behaviors.... reinforcing each student in appropriate behavior.... openly praise them and encourage the class to do so as well.

Rules, expectations, and classroom structure:
- Class norms, rules, procedures facilitate civil behavior
- Making expectations explicit helps students to know what is expected with civility
- Class meetings on a regular basis, setting high standards
- I believe that increasing civil behavior and decreasing uncivil behavior in schools is best achieved through the environment of the classroom
- In the end it all came down to my expectations for them. Setting high expectations for civility allowed my students to rise to those expectations.
- Appropriate adult supervision and structured hands on activities
- Schools do not hold students to a code of conduct and level of educational expectation
- Expect the positive behavior in students and let them now, in an appropriate manner, when they have stepped over the line. Students need to know what adults expect of them in a social setting
- Rules
- High regard for and high expectations for students
- Clear expectations and consequences
- Each classroom should be required to have a list of civil rules to follow
- Put same restraints as in private or charter school on behavior
- One of our classroom rules is to be kind to others.
- Provide and follow through on well-known rules along with appropriate consequences
- Schools need to maintain order and provide an environment that is conducive to learning
- I discussed civil behaviors and what was expected of them and how they should act. You set the bar and let them know what is expected and then encourage them to do the right thing.
- One of my objectives is to have the students be respectful and kind to each other.
- High expectations
- Emphasis on good and kind behavior where everyone is expected to step up and improve could help
- Expectation for civil behaviors...many of the students don't know exactly what is expected of them
- Don't teach until uncivil behaviors are addressed and met
- Teachers should be reminded about what to teach about respectful behavior and to follow through in their classroom
- Discipline steps are made very clear to all staff and students and action is prompt and consistent
- A teacher that is positive helps the atmosphere

Character Education
- Implement behavior and/or character curriculum as part of the state and national curriculum
- Character education at the kindergarten level
- Character development and manners
- Teach manners, respect, civility, and character education

- Increase the use of the Character Counts program
- Character education taught in the K–8 grades

Zero-tolerance policies
- Don't tolerate inappropriate behavior
- I didn't tolerate unkindness to others
- Schools can foster civility by not tolerating uncivil behaviors
- Our principal has and defines zero-tolerance for "bullying"
- Our school has an aggressive no-tolerance approach to bullying, foul language, or otherwise blatant uncivil behavior
-

Other ideas
- Children need to be fostered and cared for, even at school
- Class meetings on a regular basis
- Ron Clark books
- I simply remind them to watch their language without drawing too much attention to the behavior
- Allow students a measure of choice in terms of activities...weekly meetings to discuss class issues, needs and behaviors
- Taking what they have to offer, not fighting with them.... encourage kids.
- Role-playing...Ron Clark's Essential 55
- Becoming aware of the needs of others and how they can help...role-playing
- Only through constant reminders will behavior improve
- Implement a set time weekly or monthly to have a few students share about themselves.... Keep a compliment bowl in the room
- As a class, choose one civil act to do each week or month. It can be as a whole class, or each individual doing the same thing to someone else.
- More media coverage for exceptional social skills
- Encourage them to do the right thing
- We have a class meeting once a week to promote civil behavior and discuss complaints on the complaint board...we end with a compliment circle where they all have the option of complimenting one another to end our meeting
- The majority of the time it is a few students who instigate and provide the uncivil behavior. A pull out time for special help for them might help.
- Civics needs to be taught through out the grades. It can start early with pre-schoolers working together in group problem solving and increase to older grades with participation in local civic matters in the community and participation in government.
- It is important to use specific vocabulary when teaching civil vs. uncivil behavior