

# DRAGGLES AND WOWZERS: A ROLE PLAYING EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING STUDENT CIVILITY

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## ABSTRACT

*Minimizing uncivil student behavior is fundamental to developing a positive learning climate in the classroom. Draggles and Wowzers is a 45-minute role playing exercise that helps students develop an understanding of uncivil behavior and its impact on learning. It is based on the fable presented in “The ABC’s of Uncivil Behavior in the Classroom,” a book that is built on the premise that stories are more effective than cognitive based strategies in inspiring constructive learning behaviors. In this enjoyable exercise, students role-play Draggles behaviors and attempt to intervene in helpful and unhelpful ways with varying degrees of success. By involving the entire class in debriefing the role-plays, students become more conscious of the need to avoid disrespectful behavior and intervene when it occurs.*

*A conversation between instructors:*

“My students had a food fight last week. I had to get my Associate Dean to intervene!”

“Hey that’s nothing. I had a student answer his cell phone, stand up, noisily pack his stuff and leave the classroom while I was in the middle of a lecture ... on civility!”

“Some students feel that my rules for good behavior just don’t apply to them. For example, some keep texting, despite my asking them to put away their cellphones. And then others take out their cellphones and start texting. Sometimes, it feels like I’m caught in a whack-a-mole game, and I’m spending more time managing behavior in class than teaching.”

## INTRODUCTION

Whether for mutual support or for intervention ideas, instructors commonly share stories about disruptive and disrespectful student behavior in their classrooms. Such behaviors have a negative effect on the motivation and enthusiasm of instructors who are often uncomfortable addressing them. Moreover, uncivil behaviors in the classroom

disrupt the learning environment as well as the extent of learning that takes place. Instructors may resort to lecturing the students about the need to avoid disruptive behavior and engage in civil behavior in the classroom, but direct rational appeals are typically disregarded.

Instructors have used various prescriptive and punitive strategies in response to these increasingly common behaviors. For example, some instructors have adopted a code of conduct for students in their classes, a guide for respectful behavior that is sometimes shared across the institution (Alkandari, 2011). Contracting good behavior through a code of conduct, however, can be challenging since it relies on the efforts of instructors to communicate, implement, and enforce appropriate behavior. Furthermore, some instructors present lists of helpful and inappropriate behavior to their students, while others offer points in exchange for constructive class contribution, an element of which is civility. Other instructors rely on classroom management techniques such as asking students to put away their cellphones, but these are not always effective in reducing or eliminating uncivil behaviors. Aside from not being entirely helpful, these methods risk alienating students because they (and instructors) may come across as rigid and restrictive, and students tend to resist external behavioral controls. Additionally, these cognitive based strategies are ineffective in getting students to appreciate and internalize the need for civil behavior in the classroom. Ultimately, some instructors simply try to ignore uncivil behaviors and, thus, avoid directly addressing the issue of civility in the classroom. They may tolerate such behaviors out of frustration and fear that to do otherwise would be detrimental to their teaching evaluations. However, by not explicitly managing uncivil behaviors, instructors are essentially giving tacit approval for such behaviors, which then propagate rapidly throughout a classroom.

In this article, we present an alternative approach to helping students learn about uncivil and civil behavior, one based on storytelling, humor, and role playing and grounded in research that suggests that stories reach hearts rather than simply filling minds (Green & Dill, 2013; Hogan, 2003; Simmons, 2015). Based on the book, *The ABCs of Uncivil Behavior in the Classroom: A Cautionary Tale of Draggles and Wowzers* (Grimard & Cossette, 2016), the proposed 45-minute role playing exercise helps students experience and challenge the uncivil behaviors exhibited by a set of characters. Students

become emotionally involved in the role-plays and build awareness and empathy as they put themselves in the role of classmates and instructors. In carrying out the exercise, students begin to feel the impact of uncivil behaviors on others, become sensitized to the need to behave civilly, and arrive at a consensus regarding how everyone – classmates, instructors, and themselves - should deal with uncivil behaviors. The result is improved levels of civility in the classroom and a more positive learning environment.

Given that it's a role-play exercise, *Draggles and Wowzers* features characteristics that make it especially stimulating. Using Rao and Stupans' (2012) typology of role-play exercises, we suggest that it engages all three principles in Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives: cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, & Pintrich, et al., 2001). In addition, the exercise applies several of Lauber's "principles to increase effectiveness" (Lauber, 2007) such as attaching the role-play to a learning objective, giving meaningful roles, and the opportunity for the observation of others. Role-play exercises have been employed to achieve a wide range of learning outcomes. For example, Van Hasselt, et al. (2005) used role-play exercises to develop students' skills in problem solving, empathy, and listening.

In the remainder of this article, we briefly review the general literature pertaining to uncivil behavior, and then we consider uncivil behavior in the context of the classroom. Next, we provide instructions for undertaking the *Draggles and Wowzers* classroom exercise including suitable participants, required materials, student preparation, and procedures for carrying out the exercise in the classroom including debriefing questions, as well as related student assignments. We conclude the paper by discussing our recent experience in using the exercise in two introductory organizational behavior classes.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **THE CONCEPT OF CIVILITY**

The notion of civility in society is frequently discussed, but we especially hear about it in the political sphere where politicians are implored to be respectful of each other; i.e., to not insult, make personal attacks or yell at their opponents during a disagreement (Shea & Steadman, 2010). If the manifestation of uncivil behavior in politics proves detrimental to civic involvement among young people (Levine, 2010; Shea & Steadman, 2010), paradoxically, it is often the same youth who attend university and lead instructors to complain about their behavior in the classroom (Connelly, 2009).

A construct that is grounded in mutual respect, civility "is a virtue in the sense of a learned capability, habit, disposition, or character trait based on the sincere belief in the value of living as part of diverse communities and the conviction that the goal of living successfully in each community calls us to serve the common good, not just function out of self-interest" (Connelly, 2009: p. 52). On the one hand, this definition suggests that civil behaviors may rest on the abilities and habits of individuals, and, as such, these behaviors are learned or, if they have not been learned, can be. On the other hand, this definition proposes that civil behaviors may be influenced by personality traits, which are partly innate and partly conditioned by the cultural context (McCrae, Costa, Ostendorf, Angleitner, Hřebíčková et al., 2000). Moreover, as suggested by Connelly (2009), civility stems from valuing the act of living in a community and serving the common good. In a society that seems to be increasingly

individualistic and focused on personal interests, it seems appropriate to consider teaching civility in the classroom as a means of contributing to the development of better citizens in our workplaces and beyond.

### **PREVALENCE AND EFFECTS OF INCIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

The manifestations of incivility in the classroom are manifold with varying degrees of severity. Uncivil behaviors in the classroom can range from more passive forms such as inattention in class, lateness, absenteeism, holding side conversations, reading or sleeping in class to openly destructive forms such as yelling profanity and verbally or physically attacking the instructor or other students (Alberts, Hazen, & Theobald, 2010). Some instructors attribute these behaviors to a self-focused millennial generation that has had a permissive upbringing and that has become accustomed to immediate gratification (Kirk, 2005; Twenge, 2006; Hogan, 2007). Although Alberts et al. (2010: p.440) point to the paucity of research in this regard, they suggest that, "...many instructors attest that short student attention spans make teaching challenging (Perlmutter, 2004). Some have also noted that in an era of increasing costs of college education—a considerable concern in the US and other countries—many students today view themselves as customers rather than scholars, making increasing demands of instructors and other college personnel (Hogan, 2007)."

Although it is not unusual for instructors to discuss instances of behavioral issues among their students, it is important to consider how frequent these uncivil behaviors are reported in research. Alberts et al. (2010) indicate that their frequency varies greatly depending on the severity of the incivility that is demonstrated. Their research suggests that the most common uncivil behavior is student inattention in class (93% of the respondents). Moreover, disrespectful behavior such as arriving late, interrupting the class, focusing on a cellphone, and other uncivil behaviors were reported by a total of 75.8% of their respondents (61.3%, occasional; 14.5%, frequent). Hostile behaviors, such as making antagonistic remarks, refusing to participate in classroom activities, aggressiveness, and other behaviors were reported by 21.3% of respondents (20.8%, occasional; 0.5%, frequent).

Uncivil behaviors in the classroom have negative consequences for learning. For example, research indicates that using technology for a purpose other than education impairs concentration (Baker, Lusk & Neuhauser, 2012); this impact is partly explained by students' habits in using technology (Aagaard, 2015). Several studies show that students who engage in multitasking in class, particularly by using their laptops, tend to disturb fellow students and learn less than students who concentrate on the class material (Hembrooke & Guay, 2003). In their study, Baker et al. (2012) found that a majority of students and almost all instructors reported that the use of laptops in the classroom disturbed their concentration. In short, despite the negative effects of uncivil behaviors reported by students and instructors, such behaviors are very present in today's classrooms, even those of experienced instructors (Baker, et al. 2012).

### **HOW TO ADDRESS INCIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Some instructors adopt a laissez-faire strategy in dealing with uncivil behavior in part because they are afraid that directly confronting such behaviors will result in a

confrontational situation and negatively influence their teaching evaluations (Hogan, 2007). Such avoidant behavior is especially present when instructors feel pressure from increasing expectations and requirements for obtaining tenure or earning promotions. However, simply ignoring uncivil behavior in the classroom is inappropriate for several reasons. First, such behavior has significant negative effects on instructors, their students, and, especially, the classroom climate (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). In addition, students expect instructors to intervene and control disruptive behavior, and they feel little respect for instructors who do not do so (Kuhlenschmidt, 1999; Young, 2003). Not confronting such behavior may engender more instances of such behavior, and a negative spiral may ensue. Students who are asked about the effectiveness of intervention strategies consider ‘doing nothing’ to be particularly ineffective, particularly in contrast to confronting such behaviors during or after class (Boysen, 2012).

To manage uncivil behavior, instructors may adopt a range of strategies such as establishing and communicating expectations about classroom behavior in writing and/or verbally, making classroom jokes about uncivil behaviors (“Hey, are you texting me? Just raise your hand, I’m right here!!”), making eye contact or standing next to a student, issuing friendly warnings and reminders about such behavior, talking privately with a student, involving one’s department head if the situation persists, demanding the departure of a student, and other measures (Alberts et al, 2010; Baker, Comer & Martinak, 2008). These responses to uncivil behavior exist on a continuum whose severity increases with the frequency and nature of the behavior. They tend to be prescriptive in nature (for example, stating expectations for behavior) or punitive (for example, confronting or penalizing a student). According to Bray and Del Favero (2004), an overly punitive approach can lead both instructors and students to develop a mentality of ‘them against us,’ which becomes counter-productive. It can be difficult for instructors, particularly if they are stressed and frustrated by the encountered behaviors, to walk the fine line of choosing a strategy that is effective in generating civil behavior. The classroom can quickly degenerate into a disciplinary nightmare as students begin to form a cohesive group against a common enemy: the instructor.

In contrast, the approach that we propose in this article combines humor with storytelling. Research suggests that stories have significant potential to influence individuals’ beliefs and attitudes. Stories help to create change by influencing individuals’ emotions and internal states (Green & Dill, 2013; Hogan, 2003; Simmons, 2015). At the core of the *Draggles and Wowzers* role playing exercise, the book, *The ABCs of Uncivil Behavior in the Classroom: A Cautionary Tale of Draggles and Wowzers* (Grimard & Cossette, 2016) presents uncivil behavior in a humorous, personal, concrete, and easily memorable form. In this fable, readers are transported to two fictional planets. The Wowzers are hoping to obtain access to valuable crystals that are uniquely available on planet Draggles. In order to develop a better understanding of the Draggles prior to the negotiation process, the Wowzers observe the future leaders of planet Draggles while they’re assembled in the classroom where they are learning how to lead their planet. The Wowzers are surprised by the menagerie of characters that they see: for each letter of the alphabet, there is a Draggles engaging in some type of uncivil behavior (see Table 1). Here are a few examples of these caricatures:

- Busy Bob who is too busy to do the work required for the class but who, nevertheless, wants tops marks,
- Chatty Carl who is constantly engaged in side conversations,
- Mooching Matt who engages in social loafing and doesn’t do his share of group projects,
- Rude Randy who is impolite, inattentive, demanding, and aggressive,
- Texting Tommy who is lap texting throughout class, and
- U Must Entertain Me Uma who adopts a passive role in class, waiting for the instructor to ‘wow’ her.

**TABLE 1**

Alex AWOL
Busy Bob
Chatty Carl
Debbie Downer
Eden Eater
Fashion Fannie
Germmy George and Medical Mira
Harry Hoggler and Harry Haggler
Ill-Mannered-And- Impolite Ida
Judging Judy
Karl Kerfuffle
Late and Leaving Larry
Mooching Matt
Needy Ned
Opinionated Olga
Plagiarizing Pat
Quizmaster Quentin
Rude Randy
Sidetracker Susan
Texting Tommy
U Must Entertain Me Uma
Vow of Silence Viviane
Woefully Unprepared William
X-Pert Xavier
Yelling Yolanda
Zzzz Zoë and Zzzz Zane

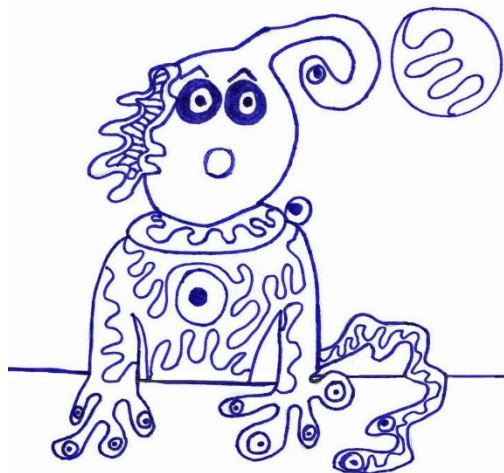


Wowzers, who are the opposites of Draggles (see Table 2) and who believe that civility is a necessary precondition for leadership, consider their next moves. The book offers a series of reflection questions as well as guides for reflecting on one’s own behaviors and eliminating Draggles behaviors from one’s repertoire. This easily readable tale brings home the point that

civility is a win-win proposition for everyone in a deceptively simple, direct and humorous manner.

**TABLE 2  
WOWZERS:  
THE MIRROR IMAGES OF DRAGGLES**

- Alex Always in Class and Alert
- Bob Busy but Well Organized and Accountable
- Considerate Cathy
- Debbie Ray of Sunshine
- Eden Eating and Visiting the Washroom Before Class
- Fannie Focused on Learning
- George Gets Well at Home
- Harry Happy to Share Talk Time and Honor Expectations
- Ida Illustratively Super Polite, Civil, and Respectful
- Judy Appreciative and Bright Side Thinker
- Calm and Accepting Karl
- Larry in Classroom for the Full Class
- Matt Hard Worker Who Does His Share (and More)
- Ned Independent but Interdependent in a Team Setting
- Olga Open to Other Perspectives
- Pat Pens her own Work
- Honest Quentin who Abhors Cheating
- Respectful Randy
- Stay on the Subject at Hand Susan
- Tuck Away Technology During Class Tommy
- Uma Self-Directed and Self-Motivated Learner
- Vocal and Participative Viviane
- Prepared for Class William
- Xavier Open to Other Viewpoints
- Courteous and Mature Yolanda
- Wide Awake and Ready to Learn Zoë and Zane



**DRAGGLES AND WOWZERS**

*Draggles and Wowzers* helps students project themselves into a situation where there are behavioral and attitudinal issues that hamper the learning environment. Students are invited to offer a diagnosis of a situation and to assess the more or less detrimental effects of behaviors on themselves and others. The exercise requires that students have the capacity for inductive reasoning and generalization as well as the ability to develop an action plan aimed at changing their behaviors.

**OBJECTIVES**

- By the end of this exercise, students will:
1. Develop an understanding of what uncivil behavior looks and feels like;
  2. Develop a collective sense of the undesirability of such behavior as well as its negative effects for everyone in the classroom;
  3. Arrive at a consensus, along with their instructor, on how to deal with such behavior if it occurs; and
  4. Develop a personal plan that describes how they will avoid engaging in such behaviors and how they will discourage their peers from doing so.

**PARTICIPANTS AND TIME REQUIREMENTS**

Although developed for undergraduate students, this role-playing exercise can be easily adapted by instructors wishing to promote civil behavior in their classrooms at any education level. As well, the exercise can be used for professional development purposes to help instructors consider strategies for minimizing uncivil behaviors in their classrooms. Typically, the exercise takes approximately 45 minutes to carry out and fully debrief, but it can be modified to fit a shorter period of time. *Draggles and Wowzers* can be undertaken in a variety of class sizes ranging from 10 to 100 students.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS AND STUDENT PREPARATION**

Students are required to read the book, *The ABC's of Uncivil Behavior in the Classroom: A Cautionary Tale of Draggles and Wowzers*, prior to the class in which the exercise will be undertaken. This book is listed as required reading in the course syllabi that we have used. In addition to reading the book, students are asked to formulate answers to the reflection questions that are posed in the book. Although we do not ask students to prepare written answers to these questions, some instructors may choose to do so. Here are a few examples of these questions:

- What alternative endings do you envision for this tale? If you were a Wowzer, what would you do?
- What other Draggles ways have you observed that are not included in this tale (for example, chewing gum, shaming or ostracizing another student)?
- How do Draggles ways harm the learning environment?
- Which Draggles would you least want to work with on a team?
- What can students do to discourage Draggles ways and encourage Wowzer behaviors?

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT THE EXERCISE**

Generally, we have briefly introduced the fable presented in the book prior to carrying out the role-play. We asked students to indicate what is happening in the book and how Wowzers should respond. However, depending on how much time is available for the exercise, instructors may engage the students in a more extended discussion of the fable by asking the following questions:

1. What is happening in this story? (Possible answer: Wowzers, who need access to crystals available on Planet

Draggle, are observing the uncivil behaviors of Draggles while they are learning how to lead their planet in a classroom setting.)

2. What is the main challenge for Wowzers? Why? (Possible answer: The main challenge for Wowzers is obtaining access to resources essential to their survival while respecting their values.)
3. What is the main challenge for the Draggles? Why? (Possible answer: The main challenge for Draggles appears to be the proper functioning of their society, something which may be enhanced by collaborating with Wowzers.)

**Creating Groups** - Depending on the size of the class and groups, we divide the class into groups of 5 to 7 students. We, then, assign a certain number of Draggles to each group of students so that all the Draggle characters have been assigned. For example, we have assigned two to three Draggles per group of students (A, B, and C Draggles to the first group; D, E, and F Draggles to the second group, for example.) organized in 10 groups in a class of 70 students.

**Preparing the Role Plays** – Next, we ask each group to choose a Draggle from those that they have been assigned and complete the exercise based on that Draggle. They should choose a Draggle that they consider to be particularly problematic and disruptive to their learning. This results in a discussion about disruptive behavior within each group and the need to reach a consensus. Each group must develop a brief (2 to 3 minute) role play in which one of them plays the role of a Draggle, and the others take on the role of classmates and demonstrate effective and ineffective ways of dealing with this behavior. We usually give students 10 minutes to do their group work. At this point, we also indicate that the class as a whole will vote on the most effective way of dealing with this behavior based on their role play. An additional option is to ask students to role play effective and ineffective instructor intervention and Wowzer behaviors.

**Presenting and Debriefing the Role Plays** – We then ask each group, one at a time, to come to the front of the classroom and present their role play. At the end of their role-play, while the students are still at the front of the classroom, we ask the remaining students to vote on the most effective way of dealing with the Draggle behavior that was demonstrated. While the

presenting students are returning to their seats, we lead the room in a round of applause. Typically, students are enthusiastic about doing the role-play; they and their classmates view it as a fun and humorous way of dealing with an important yet uncomfortable topic. We then lead a class discussion on this particular type of Draggle behavior and its equivalent Wowzer behavior.

**Debriefing the Exercise** - At the end of all the role-plays, we ask the students to reflect on what they learned about Draggle behavior and dealing with such behaviors. Typical themes include the following:

1. Even if some Draggles do not think that their behavior is affecting others, Draggle behaviors disrupt learning for all students. Such behaviors also negatively influence the learning climate, which begins a downward spiral as soon as such behaviors are permitted to continue in the classroom. A permissive climate leads to the contagion of negative behaviors, which reduces the potential for learning to take place. It is important to become conscious of one's own *favorite* Draggle behaviors and develop a plan for avoiding them.
2. Classmates must discourage students from engaging in any Draggle behaviors. They should intervene in a non-aggressive manner, quickly and quietly, and gently suggest that students adopt more positive behaviors in the classroom (indicating that it's good for their learning and that of others). Additionally, classmates should not engage in Draggle behaviors in response to others' behavior. Rude Randy will likely become more belligerent if he is dealt with rudely. Instead, Wowzer behaviors should be adopted.
3. The instructor should deal with all instances of Draggle behaviors as soon as they become evident. The instructor should not ignore the behaviors, thinking that they are minor or that they will go away on their own. This will cause the behavior to continue, and the instructor is likely to lose the respect of the other students in the class. Rather, the instructor should address the student directly and calmly, suggesting that the student, for example, put away his cell phone. If the student does not comply with the request, then the instructor can escalate the severity of the intervention (talk to the student after class, penalize him or her with an additional task, etc.).

### TABLE 3 CHOOSING CIVILITY REPORT - PART 1 (BEGINNING OF SEMESTER)

1. FIVE WAYS
  - a. Describe the five Draggle ways that especially disturb your learning and undermine the learning environment.
  - b. Describe how Draggle ways negatively affect your learning and learning environment.
2. ACTION PLAN
  - a. Describe what students should do to discourage Draggle ways and to encourage Wowzer behavior.
  - b. Describe what you personally will do to discourage Draggle ways and encourage Wowzer behavior among other students.
  - c. Describe what your instructor can do to discourage Draggle ways and encouraging Wowzer behavior.
3. PERSONAL ANALYSIS
  - a. Describe the Draggle ways that best represent you class.
  - b. Describe the Wowzer behaviors that best represent you class.
  - c. So that you can make a positive contribution in the classroom, describe what you commit to doing differently in order to:
    - i. Eliminate your Draggle ways.
    - ii. Engage in Wowzer behaviors.

Alternative Role Play Instructions – The instructor may ask for volunteers to play the role of a certain number of Draggles (for example, 10) and to play the role of the instructor. The remaining students can play the role of Wowzers who are observing the Draggles. The student who plays the role of the instructor offers a presentation on concept X and then asks students questions about the speech (this could be a prepared written speech and questions that the instructor provides to the student). During the presentation, students adopt the behaviors of Draggles. The Wowzers observe, take notes, and rate the performance of the Draggles. If desired, clickers can be used for this purpose. Finally, the instructor carries out a discussion with students acting as Wowzers. Possible discussion questions include:

- What did you observe?
- Do you feel that the students learned a great deal? Why/why not?
- How would you describe the climate for learning?
- What lessons can we draw from this experience?

### STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Student assignments help to solidify students' understanding of what they have learned during the exercise. Also, they provide an opportunity for students to reflect on Draggles and Wowzer behaviors and appropriate interventions and develop an action plan for managing their own behaviors in the classroom. The assignments consist of two reports prepared by individual students, each of which is worth 5 percent of a student's final grade. One report is submitted soon after the *Draggles and Wowzers* exercise (Part 1), and the second one is submitted at the end of the semester (Part 2). The assignments are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

### FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH DRAGGLES AND WOWZERS

During the fall semester of 2016, we examined the effectiveness of *Draggles and Wowzers* in improving student civility in the classroom. The role-playing exercise described in this article was undertaken during the first class of the semester. We wanted to start the semester with *Draggles and Wowzers* so that students developed an appreciation of the need for civil behavior from the beginning of the course. We sent emails to the students enrolled in two sections of introductory organizational behavior students (70 students each for a total of 140 students) that indicated that they were required to read the related book prior to the first class of the semester. Although enough students had read the book to enable the exercise to be undertaken, unfortunately, a number of students had not done so. A number of students informed us, quite candidly, that they attend the first class primarily to assess the workload involved in the class, and, thus, do not buy textbooks or do any work associated with the class until they have made their 'purchase decisions.' Many were essentially shopping for courses that offer the dual potential of requiring the least amount of work while obtaining the highest possible grades. In the future, we will undertake the *Draggles and Wowzers* exercise in the second class of the semester, so that students have more time to read the book and prepare their answers to the questions in the book.

In the classroom, we created 10 groups of approximately seven students, and we assigned two to three Draggles to each group. The groups were able to develop a suitable role-play within 10 minutes and, for the most part, appeared to be quite comfortable acting out the role play in front of the class. One individual approached the instructor after class to inquire if the entire course involved role playing, something with which he was uncomfortable. The students who were observing the role plays were able to correctly identify the behavior being demonstrated, and they agreed that 'quick and firm but polite' intervention was the best way to approach instances of such behavior.

### TABLE 4 CHOOSING CIVILITY REPORT - PART 2 (END OF SEMESTER)

At the beginning of the semester, you prepared a personal action plan for intervening in others' Draggles behaviors and encouraging Wowzer behaviors and eliminating your Draggles ways and engaging in Wowzer behaviors. This report will help you reflect on how well your plan worked and what you learned about incivility in the classroom.

1. How effective was your plan?
  - α. Describe what you did personally to discourage Draggles ways and encourage Wowzer behaviors in other students.
  - β. Describe the Draggles ways that you demonstrated in class, the impact of these behaviors, and the efforts you made to eliminate your Draggles ways and demonstrate Wowzers behaviors.
2. What does your classroom behavior say about your way of seeing life? For example, to what extent do you try to minimize your contribution and investment in something but hope for 'maximum' outcomes? To what extent do you shift blame and responsibility to others rather than considering what you can do to improve your situation? To what extent do you wait for others to act as leaders, but complain when nothing happens? To what extent do you focus on yourself and what you want in the immediate situation, potentially to the detriment of others?
3. The book offers a lot of advice as a way of helping readers move towards adopting civil behaviors. Describe the five tips that you find most relevant for your personal development, and explain what you are going to do to implement them.

Students identified the following Draggles behaviors as being the ones that disturbed them the most: Chatty Carl, Rude Randy, Opinionated Olga, Sidetracker Susan, and Ill-Mannered-And-Impolite Ida. Students argued that these behaviors distracted them from their learning or created a negative atmosphere in the class. No students in this sample considered Plagiarizing Pat or Quizmaster Quentin (who cheats during exams) to be particularly problematic. To support the learning that had taken place during the exercise, students prepared a 1500 word report (Part 1) describing their plan for encouraging civil behaviors in other students and themselves throughout the semester. This report was worth 5% of their overall grade and was due within two weeks of the beginning of the semester. A report of similar length (Part 2) was due at the end of the semester. It requires students to describe how well their plan worked and what they learned about themselves. Throughout the semester, references were made to the *Draggles and Wowzers* exercise when pertinent. Given that the exercise was undertaken in an organizational behavior course, numerous direct linkages between *Draggles and Wowzers* and the course material were possible (for example, contagion of emotions, attributions, justice, conflict, communication, teamwork, leadership, and stress). In future courses, we would consider performing a mid-semester recap of civility behaviors, as a means of reinforcing civil behaviors and reminding students to avoid uncivil behaviors.

During the semester, aside from *lap texting* and absences from class, we found that instances of uncivil behavior were essentially extinguished. This was particularly the case for acts of ‘flagrant’ incivility such as aggressiveness. In our introductory organizational behavior courses in previous years, we had observed increasing levels of uncivil behavior despite our attempts to address these behaviors directly through early detection and positive reinforcement. Participating in a classroom management workshop offered by teaching services within our university confirmed that our proactive approach to managing disruptive behavior in the classroom was consistent with recommended practice.

Students reported that they developed more insight into their own behaviors – both uncivil and civil - and their potential impact on the learning climate. For example, one student wrote:

For one class, I was like Woefully Unprepared William. I got too busy, and I just didn't do the readings needed for the class. I noticed that I wasn't able to contribute much during that class, and my grade in the quiz that day was very poor. I was embarrassed. So, for the following classes, I prepared like crazy, doing all my readings; I took on the role of Prepared for Class William. It felt good to be in class, to have something constructive to say, and to get a good grade in the quiz. We could add some behaviors of Needy Ned, having sent some emails to the professor and asked for some explanations at the end of the course, but I think it was very minimal as behavior. Also, I was really interested in the class, and I naturally wanted to confirm my understanding of the course material. In reflecting on the list of Wowzer behaviors, I realized that I was more of a Wowzer than I originally thought. Here are the Wowzer behaviors that I especially tried to show: Alex Always in Class and Alert; Ida Illustratively Super Polite, Civil, and Respectful; Larry in Classroom for the Full Class; and Respectful Randy. These Wowzers behaviors were easy for me because this is how I try to be in life in

general.

Moreover, despite their reluctance and discomfort in doing so, students reported being more willing to (politely) challenge uncivil behaviors by their fellow students. For example, one student wrote:

I had Texting Tommy sitting next to me. What I did was very simple: I just told him to put away his cell phone during the class, that he surely had time to devote to the class, that it disturbed the professor, but also that it distracted ME. It's funny, I didn't see this person for the rest of the course. He must have dropped out. We had a Vow of Silence Viviane in our discussion group, and I encouraged her to give her opinion during group work. I loved being able to ask others to express themselves on certain aspects of the course, and it is important that people can express themselves. Part of the problem was that we had a Harry Hogler in our group. When the professor started to create new teams for every class exercise, and Viviane was no longer in the same group as Harry, she became more open to my prompting, and in fact she became a Vocal and Participative Viviane. Finally, I had the luck or the bad luck to talk with a Chatty Carl after our class one day. I asked her why she was often talking with the person next to her during class and why she simply did not go outside the classroom to discuss because she disturbed the class, the professor and ME. She looked at me and simply said, “Well, that's YOUR problem, not mine.” I didn't think that I had gotten through to her, but she had fewer side conversations in the following classes (especially while the professor was talking). So, I'm glad I had the courage to speak up; what I did worked to a certain extent! I don't see it as my responsibility to get my classmates to behave civilly. That's the professor's job. But, as a student, I do think it helps to discourage negative behaviors rather than letting them go on. My learning is at stake, and we can each show a bit of leadership. We're all adults for Pete's sake.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Draggles and Wowzers* appears to have a positive influence on students' level of civility in the classroom. Students report that it sensitized them to the nature of uncivil behavior and helped them become more conscious of their own and others' behaviors. Also, it stimulated them to engage in positive behaviors in the classroom and to encourage others to do so as well. Through the processes of modeling and contagion (Gump & Kulik, 1997), students began to adopt behavior that supported the learning climate. Thus, *Draggles and Wowzers* accomplished its stated objective.

However, *Draggles and Wowzers* focuses solely on modifying the behaviors themselves; it does not address the causes of incivility in the classroom. The potential causes of incivility in the classroom are many. It is possible that incivility in the classroom is generated by elevated levels of narcissism which engenders aggression, a sense of entitlement, poor awareness and consideration for the impact of their behaviors on others, and increased focus on what students want at others' expense (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008). Or, it may be associated with an instrumental orientation towards one's education as is the case for degree purchasers who tend to

resist learning and experience negative affect (Brotheridge & Lee, 2005). More broadly, incivility in the classroom may be the result of increased levels of societal consumerism such that students perceive themselves as customers and education as a commodity (Ferris, 2002). Although a classroom intervention is not able to address these more fundamental origins of incivility in the classroom, at the very least, instructors can use *Draggles and Wowzers* as a tool to initiate a positive dialogue with students on this subject.

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