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Article abstract

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Classroom Incivility Going Viral on Social Media: One Professor's Encounters

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ABSTRACT

The advent of social media expands the domain of the standard classroom. The outcome is that incidents of conflict, also known as classroom incivility, exist not only within the conventional classroom. They can take place on social media platforms. In this paper, the author draws on his experience with a complaint about an assignment in one of his classes that surfaced on X (formerly Twitter), feedback on the assignment that took the shape of a story on Instagram, and his response to the activity in the two venues. He draws on the concept of classroom incivility and reflects on how this term, named to describe conflict in in-person classrooms, is relevant on social media platforms.

Introduction

I am not a researcher of digital technology and education—I am a historian of education with a focus on Indigenous peoples' education. However, the topic of social media interests me for two reasons, which are as follows: (1) Experiences in teaching that led to my identification of classroom incivility through reading about it in the scholarly work; and (2) An experience on two social media platforms from Winter 2021 with two different undergraduate students in the Bachelor of

Education program where I teach. I am a faculty member who does not use social media platforms in a professional capacity (i.e., to communicate his research or to teach his courses), and my professional encounters with social media result from student users' feedback on a course assignment from 2021. My paper provides a reflection on the incident involving two students. One of these students alleged to be taking my course while the other was not a student in my course but a student with interest in the assignment under discussion online.[1] I investigate classroom incivility to comprehend its relevance to the discussion of foundations and social media. I conclude with questions to guide the research of foundations scholars with interest in teaching and the 21st century university.

In this story, the tweet and Instagram post launch a discussion about teaching and the university. The one who posted the tweet used a pseudonym—I don't know the individual's identity, nor do I know if the person was a student in the section of my course. Although the author of the post on Instagram was a student in the program where the course was, I don't have this individual's permission to share the content of the post. And the objective of this paper is to discuss conflict on social media venues and how they intersect in the university sanctioned and formal classroom spaces. I want to keep the focus on instruction and the impacts for faculty in universities.

I contend that regardless of our sentiments as instructors in post-secondary institutions about social media, and our inclinations about using (or not) these applications, we need to accept that social media applications impact our teaching and students' learning. With regard to students' learning, Greenhow, Akmedova, Sutcliffe, Fisher, and Sung show in their article in this issue how TikTok assists teacher candidates in their lesson planning. And I reflect on two incidents in my teaching, but the purpose of this paper is to consider the impact of these incidents

[1] I say "alleged" because the author of the post on X that is the impetus for my article used a pseudonym. There is no way to prove that the individual was a student in the class under discussion in this paper.

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on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram on teaching. The details of the posts are of less interest to me in my writing of this article.

Social media's presence requires us to rethink how we understand the concept of the classroom. As a professor, I have been marinated in a belief system that holds that the classroom jar has physical and temporal confinements. Physically, there are clear boundaries, usually marked by walls, whiteboards, desks, and tables. Temporally, the instructor controls the pace and rhythm of each class—there is an expectation that the professor controls the flow of lectures, ideas, and discussions. The interactions that occur outside the class are limited, amounting to hallway chatter, email, phone calls, and office hours meetings. The professor can restore order with ease should there be a disruption. It is the last matter—disruption, disturbance, or discomfort—that is significant to the standard understanding of a classroom and university instruction as directed mainly by professors. Boice (1996, 2000) summed up incidences of disruption, disturbance, and discomfort or the breaks and ruptures that plague lectures and seminars as incidents of classroom incivility. Boice coins the concept to describe conflict between students and faculty in the four walls of the classroom. He does not refer to conflict in online venues whether they are in the institution or outside the institution. Although email existed in the 1990s and 2000s, when Boice researched and published his findings, the use of the Internet for coursework was not yet a predominant way of teaching. Similarly, although chatrooms existed, they were not used for instructional purposes nor was there any expectation on the part of the universities that instructors consider use of such spaces for teaching.

I read Boice (2000) in 2017, after having taught university classes for 15 years. I agreed with his definition of classroom incivility because I inferred the classroom to be the physical structure where instruction occurs. Although I was reading Boice in an era of ubiquitous social media and faced challenges holding students' attention during my class meetings, I never deviated from the understanding that the classroom structure was the only meaningful space where teaching occurred. I did not consider out of class interactions, such as those by email, telephone, or in person in the hallway or my office, to contribute to or disrupt students' learning. There was no relationship between social media applications and the in-person and

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online venues where I taught. I did not use social media to communicate my research, to reflect on my teaching, to teach, or to comment on my service responsibilities—my use of social media was solely for personal reasons.

However, my separation of my social media activity from my teaching changed in the winter term of 2021. The next part of the paper is a story of how I, as a professor, became involved in social media in my professorial life. My concern is with my impressions and how they impact my teaching. I name the encounter that I experienced, drawing on this pedagogical concept that predates social media: classroom incivility. I describe the theory and its origin. I close with considerations that I want faculty readers to consider as they look at how social media impacts their interactions with their students.[2]

Prior to 2021, I, as a faculty member, ignored the social media tools that existed online as tools that can impact our teaching of students. I did not think that tweets, posts, feeds, and reels counted as interactions between faculty and students, even though they may be reports by students of their perceptions and experiences with course material. In the past, these accounts may have been limited in their reception to small groups of fellow students, to a few faculty, to the course evaluation, or print and electronic student media on websites. Now, as Greenhow and her coauthors argue in their contribution to this special issue, "social media has become an important communication platform for student learning, a trend that has developed both apart from and in response to student social media use" (p. 96): I agree with their proposition, as a result of my experience in the winter term of 2021.

[2] I focus on faculty who teach mainly in colleges, polytechnics, technical institutes and schools, and universities. However, educators in elementary and secondary schools can also reflect on my questions, being mindful of ethical and legal limitations for their interactions with students in social media venues. For a discussion on the limitations of K-12 teachers' academic freedom, which pertains to their ability to use social media sites as venues for instruction, see Hare (1990).

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As faculty, we need to think about the benefits that can come from using social media tools in our classes. The challenge for us as faculty lies in learning how to become effective teachers with social media tools. One needs to look at the scholarly work that investigates and deliberates on the ethical and legal challenges that exist in online teaching. There is a burgeoning literature that identifies the problems that exist in online teaching (Clark, Werth, & Ahten, 2012; Suplee, Lachman, Siebert, & Anselmi, 2008; Wildermuth & Davis, 2012). And scholars investigate how students' use of social media has an impact on their in-person learning experiences in K-12 schools and universities (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Vance, 2010). However, in the case of the latter, the focus is on digital spaces that the university operates. But this assumes there are no interactions that happen in social media venues that are relevant for the in-person learning environment or the university sanctioned digital learning environment or, as Greenhow et al. argue, that the tools supplement and are not part of the learning environment.[3]

The lesson is that we need to think of applications such as X and Instagram as venues for meaningful student interactions that can shape the direction of learning in the university sanctioned digital space or the standard four walls of the classroom. There can be lessons in learning that result from critiques of the course expectations that result in an impact on the classroom, whether it is online or in person. As with classroom incivility that occurs in person, posts and exchanges on X and Instagram can form into classroom incivility that challenges the flow of the learning environment in class meetings, whether online or in person. My experience with X and Instagram in my teaching informs my reasoning—the tweets and posts were the outcome of classroom incivility that went viral, beyond the limit of university sanctioned in-person and online classroom spaces.

This article does not look at the phenomenon of cyberbullying and incidents of threats, threatening behaviour, intimidation, and harassment that require

[3] Greenhow, Akhmedova, Sutcliffe, and Sung's contribution to this issue provides a thorough literature review on the value of social media for students' learning in secondary and postsecondary education.

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immediate intervention from university administrators (i.e., an instructor filing a report on a student's misbehaviour with the dean of students, see Lampman, 2012 on when to report such incidents), campus safety officers, or police officers and can result in criminal or institutional sanction for the student or students in the incidents. I focus instead on the possibility of disruptions to classroom rhythms (Boice, 1996, 2000) that don't threaten the immediate safety of faculty and students.[4] These ticks can generate discomfort among faculty and can demoralize faculty and students (Boice, 1996, 2000; Kopp & Finney, 2013) but they don't create immediate dangers. Although such experiences can help in students' learning, particularly when they encounter content that interrupts their understandings of the world (Tupper, 2004), their persistence can discourage faculty from teaching about controversial matters. Yoon and Moore in this issue arrive at the same conclusion in the context of faculty who draw on their research to address conflict and controversy in society. In this article, I show how the concept of classroom incivility can help us comprehend the conflicts that spill onto social media apps from the classroom.

The Incident

"It's Taken on a Life of its Own"

In Winter 2021, I received a panicked email from my department chair—he received a link to a tweet from a student about an assignment in my Indigenous peoples' education course. The tweet criticized my expectations of the assignment saying that it encouraged students to appropriate stories of residential school survivors. There was an impression that I did not empathize with survivors of residential

[4] It is important to say that classroom incivility, whether in person or online in a university sanctioned classroom or on a social media site, can still be threatening for instructors and students. Similarly, there can be threats to physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellbeing that can result from any encounter with classroom incivility, wherever its location is. However, I choose not to examine those incidents that require an immediate intervention and can result in a criminal or institutional sanction, preferring to write instead about problems that arise that can have a negative affect on the classroom environment over the long term.

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schools. My chair needed to meet with me immediately. At our meeting, he said the following of the tweet: "it's taken on a life of its own." This expression was my chair's perception of the tweet because there was no evidence he or I had that there was displeasure among the rest of the students (more than 20 per section) with the assignment. A sense of frustration clouded our meeting because neither he nor I understood how X operated. Similarly, we were unsure about the reception of a tweet, and its impact on teaching at the university. Inevitably, there was no resolution because we did not know who tweeted the reference to my assignment, nor did we even know if the user was a student in one of my two sections of the Indigenous peoples' education class. In the next section, I provide a description of the course, the pedagogical backdrop for my teaching of it, and the assignment that follows. I don't share the tweet and the Instagram story about it to respect the students who provided their critiques of it.

The title of the course is "Aboriginal Education and Contexts for Professional and Personal Engagement." The students are usually teacher candidates (the term that Canadian educational researchers use to describe students in teacher education programs) registered in the Bachelor of Education program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. They usually take the course in the second year of a four-year bachelors' program, or the first year of the after degree route for students in the BEd program who already hold a bachelor's degree. The course precedes their introductory practicum. Since the course is a mandatory one that all students need to take to complete the BEd program and to qualify for interim teacher certification in the province of Alberta, students who register in the elementary and secondary education route take the course.

The following is the course description from my outline of the 2023 fall term. The course description in Fall 2023 was the same as when I started to teach the course in the Fall 2019, although the Alberta government updated its Teaching Quality Standard in 2023.

> In the course preservice teachers will continue to develop knowledge of Aboriginal peoples' histories, educational experiences, knowledge systems,

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> and ways of knowing and being[5] and will develop further an understanding of the implications of this knowledge for the professional roles and obligations for teachers. Students will engage in a learning process of self-and-other awareness and will be supported by Indigenous educators, faculty members, and Elders. (Anuik, 2023, p. 2)

Among many, the course links especially with the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard that states that Alberta's "teachers play a fundamental role in establishing the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized" (p. 1), and that all students need to know about "[r]esidential schools and their legacy" (p. 5).

The challenge is how one learns about the residential schools and their impact on the contemporary learning environment. The Canadian government and the churches' records on residential schools reside in Library and Archives Canada and faith-based archives. However, the voices of those who attended the schools and of their families are harder to find. Similarly, a lot of misinformation about residential schools continues to be available (see Carleton, 2021; Howell & Ng-A-Fook, 2022).[6] Thus, a corresponding requirement exists, which is that we attempt to critically examine the dominant narratives by media such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). It is these objectives—to enable students to understand the role they play in establishing learning conditions, the need to educate about the impact of residential schools, and the necessity for investigating the sources that detail experiences of students in residential schools—that resulted in the following assignment from the 2020–2021 academic year. The following is an excerpt of the assignment titled "Letter Home" from Winter 2021. I ask students to view the

[5] The first course in the series is Contexts of Education, which contains within it a substantial component on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit educational issues.
[6] I insert the in-text citations so that the reader can learn about the issues in Canada with misinformation about residential schools—they don't appear in the assignment description.

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documentary titled *The Eyes of the Children—Christmas at a Residential School*[7] (CBC/Radio-Canada, 2022).

Context

You are a student in the Kamloops Indian Residential School (featured in the above documentary) in October of 1962. You are in the seventh grade and are studying away from home for the first time in your life. You can write home frequently to your family.

Assignment

You are to write a letter to your family. My expectation is that this letter reflects the contextual knowledge that you have from the documentary above and class to this point. This letter is not in the format of a scholarly essay. Therefore, place references on a separate references page. Similarly, you need to cite only the documentary—there is no additional research that is necessary.

If you are uncertain about how to start the letter, then I recommend that you check out more of the CBC's coverage of the Indian Residential Schools.[8]

Two months into my teaching of one section of the course, the tweet appeared that objected to the assignment. The user operated with a pseudonym and shared a scan of only the assignment in the course outline. A few days later, an Instagram user published a post with criticisms of the assignment and references to scholarly work.[9]

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[7] The title changed, and I will identify the new title and explain the change later in this article.
[8] There was a link that was active in 2021 that showed students other visual and audio clips of reports by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation since 1955. The link is no longer active.
[9] I don't share the Tweet, the post, and any comments to respect the users. In our discussion of this article, Gemma Porter points out the anonymous nature of classroom incivility when it moves into digital spaces. The outcome is that it is not always clear if the individual with the grievance is a student

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The week of these two posts there was a sense of urgency that I take concrete action to remedy a problem, even if the problem itself was unclear to me, the instructor. In response to the two incidents, I apologized to my students in subsequent class meetings for any offense that the assignment may have caused, and provided an alternative assignment if they believed that they could not carry out the assignment. The apology and the accommodation were in response to the single tweet. A few days later, I assured my chair that I would not use the assignment in a subsequent section of the course. On the surface, it seems that I caved to pressure from the chair who received an alert about the tweet and the post from the dean of the Faculty of Education. However, there was never a directive that I rescind the assignment. The decision to provide an alternative to the assignment in the two sections of the course was mine to make.

The incident from March 2021 was during the online teaching phase of the pandemic. And I was holding regular class meetings on Zoom. On reflection, I recognized that the classroom was no longer confined to the regular class meetings on Zoom or the office hours period. There was now an expanded classroom that can include social media tools like Instagram and X.[10] However, there was not a corresponding pedagogical reference to the incident upon which I could draw.

Naming the Incident: Classroom Incivility

I returned to a text I read four years prior where I encountered a term known as classroom civility. The next part of my paper details the concept and provides questions for professors to consider as social media becomes a part of our teaching. I operate from the premise that social media tools are a part of our teaching—we cannot ignore them, and we must embrace their use. There was an epilogue to the

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in the course. Similarly, the ease of distribution of course outlines and other instructional materials means that students within and outside the university can see and comment on information quite quickly. The advent of social media means that professors have to take into consideration feedback on course material from individuals who are not students in their classes and whom they may not know and may never know personally.

[10] I don't have examples to share because I don't use these tools in my teaching.

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incident with the tweet and the post, which I will address later in this paper. Its purpose is to show how I can use a social media tool to provide effective instruction on the documentary. I know that classroom civility—a term with roots from the 1990s and 2000s—is going viral, and its reach is expansive. However, like in person classroom incivility, the incidents catch professors "off guard and without adequate training to handle such behavior" (Morrissette, 2011, para. 14).

My focus is on the display of classroom incivility and how it changes when the university classroom concept escapes the standard received view of three hours a week in a classroom. Over the last 30 years, the expansion of the classroom boundary means that professors must develop expectations for how acceptable communication on email, course software (i.e., eClass, Moodle, etc.), asynchronous forums, and chatrooms looks and how one judges participants to be in violation of such standards. The matter is "whither the classroom" because the language to describe disruption of classroom rhythm is classroom incivility, but this term originates in Boice (2000; see also Bjorklund & Rehling, 2011; Boice, 1996) and predates the electronic and digital turn in university teaching. In Boice's research, electronic communication between students and professors was occasional and predominantly in email, and it was the professor who chose whether or not to use such communication tools. It was not long after Boice's publications in the 1990s and early 2000s that use of electronic and digital spaces became the norm and not the exception. Soon, it was a requirement and not a choice that faculty use such venues for instruction.

Boice's findings remain relevant in the era of digital teaching and social media. In priming new faculty for classroom teaching, Boice dubs classroom incivility as the term to describe the frequent conflicts with students that faculty members face immediately before, during, and immediately following class—the expressions on the part of students shock faculty. Since Boice researched and wrote on classroom civility in the 1990s, he concentrated only on incidents that occurred within the four walls of the classroom or lab because he observed only faculty practice in these spaces. He inferred, accurately I think, that the majority of student and faculty interaction occurred during and around class time, and that class time was only in the classroom.

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While I think that Boice's findings on classroom incivility, which I will share shortly, are still relevant in 2021, the areas where classroom incivility occurs have changed. Incivility has "gone viral" in the online teaching worlds and in the social media venues where students talk about our classes. As professors, we may have interactions with students outside of a conventional class period (i.e., we may use asynchronous applications such as forums). We can also record and post lectures on YouTube or Vimeo for our students to watch as part of class preparation or as part of the three hours per week instructional block. We can host office hours on Zoom or in Google Hangouts or with some other software. The key point here is that we don't need to focus only on blocks on a timetable as the way to teach our students and to interact with them. We may use the three-hour instructional period in ways that most professors did not or could not at the time that Boice researched and wrote about classroom incivility.

I think that there is merit in the identification of Boice's (2000) documentation of the displays of incivility. We can use these observations as a touchstone to discuss how they change in the digital spaces where we find ourselves teaching and interacting. We may go as far as to consider how the presence of digital technology in our physical and digital classrooms has an impact on the display or not of classroom incivility.[11] Similarly, Boice's thesis (2000) that faculty can mitigate, reduce, and even eliminate students' (and their own, as "students and teachers are partners in generating it" [p. 84]) expressions of incivility in the classroom (see also Morrissette, 2001 for promising practices to contain classroom incivility), wherever it is, has as much currency in 2024 as it did in 2000. For Boice and his disciples (i.e., Morrissette, 2001), it is through compassionate teaching, moderate preparation, and regular encouragement of students that faculty play down the prospect for incivility, show they care, and earn "approval" from students that endures throughout the term. In the latter case, the evaluations from students

[11] In the case of the lack of display, it is necessary to recognize that it is possible that instructors can be unaware of incivility if students conceal demonstrations of it on social media, using (as happened to me) pseudonyms, groups with restricted membership, etc.

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demonstrate their appreciation for the professors' conduct, especially, the care that the professor shows, regardless of the type of material or its degree of difficulty. In sum, it is how the professor interacts with students, and how students interact back, that determines the degree of civility or lack of it (Downs, 1992). For the professor, mindfulness is key and needs to be present from the very beginning of the first class[12] (Downs, 1992; see also Morrissette, 2001).

We know that the physical classroom as Boice envisioned is no longer the sole or even primary space where teaching occurs. Nevertheless, in a standard sense, despite the change in physical space, speeded by the Covid-19 pandemic, the concept of classroom as well as the sense of it as a learning environment (Morrissette, 2001) as the main space for learning predominates in higher education. Even though we hold a different view of the venue, the interactions of students and faculty continue in some sort of classroom space. A comprehensive list of these social media venues is not the purpose as they change frequently and use of them varies.

Boice (2000) identifies the following examples of classroom incivility from students. I list each example as a separate bullet point. I begin with the late arrivals, and there is an order in that arriving late to class can result in the other outcomes that we see in the list. Students who display incivility in class

- Arrive late and leave early and, in some instances, miss large numbers of classes over the course of the term
- Are unprepared for class (see also Morrissette, 2001)
- Talk among themselves while the professor lectures, the rest of the class has a discussion, or there is a presentation

[12] Boice (2000) addresses women and professors of colour in his study. Specifically, he points them to valuable scholarly work on contending with disputes concerning gender and race in university classrooms. Over the past 25 years, the scholarly work on gender, race, and higher education has grown, and it is beyond the scope of this paper to review this literature.

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- Work individually on irrelevant tasks (i.e., complete assignments or readings for other courses, converse in online chatrooms, surf the Internet, read social media feeds, answer cell phones, etc.) or disrupt intentionally the rhythm of class lectures, discussions, and group work (Morrissette, 2001)
- Adopt a hostile tone in in-person and electronic interactions with faculty and classmates (see also Downs, 1992; Lampman, 2012)
- Don't take notes or take notes that are insufficient to understand the course content
- Demonstrate comprehension of concepts and theories at a fair or a poor level
- Perform poorly on assignments, tests/exams, and other types of assessments
- Complain about these assessments—the expectations of them and their grades on them—to chairs and deans (see also Kopp & Finney, 2013)
- Use course evaluations to write rude, demeaning, denigrating, and hostile comments (see also Lampman, 2012)

The list is long and not exhaustive but centres on a tone of hostility towards mainly the professor. Or the professor and students perceive hostility on the part of one another (Appleby, 1990). I infer that Boice (2000) is accurate when he says that those who display classroom incivility, regardless of "what they do," "test the limits of your own civility" (p. 98).

The next part of this paper is a reflection on the literature on classroom incivility, social media and higher education, and the incident in my course. I focus on thinking about where the contemporary classroom is. This question is a necessary one because I wonder if there is still a need to block out clearly when and how instruction occurs and when it ceases. I want to draw social media platforms into this question because it is necessary to deliberate on how they merit inclusion in this corral that we know as class time (Vie, 2008). Adams, Raes, Montrieux, and Schellens (2018) argue that X is an addition to the classroom space, and their student participants struggle to define the space between school and private life. However, I wonder if X can be inside the classroom or be its own classroom. I want

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to identify how expressions of classroom incivility as Boice (2000) documents them look the same and different in the online educational venues where we find ourselves and will likely continue to find ourselves. For the purposes of this paper, I include social media applications as online venues.

How are student attacks on professors through social media platforms a demonstration of classroom incivility? This question may be a vexatious one for us because it creates an expectation that we attend to complaints from students outside of what we think of as class time. If we feel that we need to be watching social media feeds, then we need to wonder how they are relevant for our teaching.

Finally, how does one define classroom incivility outside the standard classroom's four walls. We are in an era when social media impacts our teaching (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011). How does incivility appear in the era of social media and online learning? When instructors become aware of demonstrations of it on a social media venue, how do they respond (or not)? How do they determine when it is necessary to respond? Do they involve chairs, deans, or other staff at the university?

The above questions are necessary ones for us to consider because my institution's central administration, which is one of the U15 to which Yoon and Moore refer in their paper in this volume, watches the social media feeds of the public to see if there are references to the institution through these forums. There is an implicit argument that the content of people's posts cannot be ignored and that it does have an impact on professors' teaching. However, one must also consider the promise of social media, as Greenhow, Akhmedova, Sutcliffe, Fisher, and Sung demonstrate in their contribution, which is that "[t]he use of social media in education can also create a community of practice among students in the same classroom or other learning context, creating opportunities for situated learning" (p. 96). In addition to the connectedness with students that Greenhow, Akhmedova, Sutcliffe, Fisher, and Sung ask us to consider, there are also pedagogical implications for how we design and structure the classroom environment. It contains now the physical and online spaces the university operates and these social media tools, which are also spaces where students expect to learn, and faculty must consider in their teaching,

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especially, their teaching environments. We need to envision how we can "leverage the social dimension of these media to enhance the learning experience" (Greenhow et al.,) while attending to the incivilities that can spill onto social media, as they do in other classroom venues, becoming viral and disrupting classroom rhythm, wherever the classroom is. One of the biggest challenges is how to use the social media venues to teach. These spaces change constantly, and there is no assurance of safety and security on the part of the universities that employ us as instructors.

There is an epilogue to the letter home assignment that I think shows how one can use an incident of incivility to lead to more effective instruction. Two months after the incident, in May 2021, the CBC along with all other media outlets in Canada and internationally reported on the unearthing of a mass grave at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia. Coincidentally, the 1962 report on Christmastime in a residential school was at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. The reports prompted me to consider how teacher candidates can not only learn the truth about the residential schools but investigate how news media depicts them in the past and in contemporary society.

In 2008, J. R. Miller, the foremost authority on the history of the residential schools in Canada, warned, on the eve of the launch of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that without truth, there would be no reconciliation (Op-ed in the *Globe and Mail*[13]; see also Miller, 1996, 2017). Miller's warning became the touchstone to a new assignment that uses the broadcast from 1962 more effectively. The CBC keeps the report on its website, with a new title, *Life at the residential school in Kamloops, BC, 1962*, obligating educators to consider how the CBC is responsible for misinformation about the residential schools. For teachers, there is an invitation to consider how we prepare learners to hear the story and to consider the way that one tells it. The following assignment shows how I bring

[13] I am unable to locate a copy of the op-ed. However, the finding aid for the J. R. Miller Fonds at the University of Saskatchewan Archives identifies an op-ed in the *Globe and Mail* ca. 2008–2009.

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together the two objectives—to learn the story and to consider how one tells it—in a single assignment at the end of the Indigenous peoples' education mandatory course.[14]

Truth and Reconciliation Video Reflection Assignment

The Canadian government apologized for its role in the operation of the Indian Residential Schools on June 11, 2008. The Prime Minister delivered the apology on behalf of the Canadian government in Parliament. In his apology, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper inaugurated the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A few weeks after the apology, historian J. R. Miller said that without truth, there would be no reconciliation. Miller's argument is relevant now as Canadians continue to learn about the schools (see Miller, 1996, 2004, 2017). Consider the news reports starting in Spring 2021 of mass graves of children who attended residential schools. The reactions among Canadians to the grim news stories that tell of these discoveries and the abuse in the schools demonstrate that we are a long way from knowing the truth. If we follow Miller's logic on the need to know the truth, then reconciliation is a long way away for Canadians.

Amid the need to know the truth, teachers at all levels of the education system—from the preschool program to the PhD seminar—need to consider how to prepare their students to learn about the truth. We are at the point where there are plenty of curricular resources that are available for teachers of elementary and secondary school students. There is a suggestion that students receive a "trigger warning" before lessons, but a counterpoint for teacher candidates to consider is that they may not have such warnings when they begin to teach in schools. Similarly, the fear of triggering may

[14] As with the letter home assignment, I delete the minutiae (i.e., deadline for submission, resources for technical support, etc.) from the description.

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prevent some teachers and students from learning the truth, reinforcing the lack of awareness that currently plagues Canadian society.

In this assignment, I ask you a series of questions for your reflection. You will use the course content as your source. You will choose the material on which to base your reflection. The questions are as follows: How do we prepare students to hear, to learn, and to know the truth about the Indian residential schools? In essence, how do we get ready to hear a story? I want you to record your responses to these questions in the format of a video of no more than five minutes in length. I want you to keep in mind that your audience is future teachers—they will be students in this class in the coming years. You may serve as one of their practical term supervisors. Thus, direct your answers to these questions to these upcoming teacher candidates. Focus on a single idea, topic, concept, learning outcome, etc. and explain it clearly. Many students identify too many topics, resulting in too many "balls in the air" and not enough time to juggle them in an adequate manner.

Conclusion

My objective is to investigate how classroom incivility extends into the social media space. I draw on my own experience with dissent from students on the content and expectations of assignment in which I ask them to assume the voices of those in the residential schools. I ask them to consider how they would write a letter home to their parents, based on their knowledge of the Indian Residential Schools, their conditions, and the practices of the staff. The critiques from the students centre on my inability to empathize with the suffering in the schools. The students highlight that the assignment forces survivors and their descendants to relive the suffering in the schools through a letter. All the critiques appear in a Tweet and responses to the Tweet and Instagram post.

I recognize how an incident of classroom incivility "went viral." I also understand that professors need to become aware that conflicts in class are no longer confined to the walls of the classroom, the hallways that surround it, the office, the phone, and the email. There is an expanding digital space where conflicts exist, and

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professors need to understand that the boundaries of conflict are broader than at the time when Boice (1996, 2000) coined the term "classroom incivility."

I contend that one cannot just ignore the conflict online. In response, I not only dropped the assignment for those who did not want to do it in Winter 2021. In subsequent terms, I replaced the assignment with a new one that asks students to consider how they as teacher candidates prepare themselves, their colleagues, and their future students to learn about residential schools. The truth is not only facts—it includes considerations of how we tell the story. This new assignment and the chance for teacher candidates to take more responsibility for their learning are outcomes of classroom incivility "gone viral" and how one educational foundations scholar attempted to respond.

Educational researchers need to research two, related areas, which are as follows. First, the use of social media apps as instructional spaces. It is certain that all teaching has an online component, and there are university sanctioned tools that enable instruction in a predominantly in-person setting to continue online. What is less certain is the potential for use of non-university sanctioned social media applications as venues for learning. While Canada's U15 institutions have guidelines that advise academic staff on how to comment on current events from their perspectives as researchers, as Yoon and Moore find in their article in this issue, there is less known about how one can use these tools as venues for learning outside class. As Greenhow and her coauthors find, students are learning in social media venues and taking with them to their classes content that they find in spaces such as TikTok. Thus, academics must research how social media venues can be teaching spaces as much as they are areas for sharing research. Second, there is a need to practice teaching in social media venues and to report on the results in our roles not only as researchers but also as educators or practitioners. It is my belief that my dean shared with me the student's Instagram post that criticized my assignment to help me find a teachable moment, and I did not see in that moment that such an opportunity existed.

Building also on Yoon and Moore's analysis of the guidelines on social media use in the U15, there is the matter of speech outside the university's orbit. Standard

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wisdom suggests that contributions on social media applications lie outside the purview of the university,[15] but the presence of guidelines in the U15, of which my institution is a part, contradicts this wisdom. The message underlying the guidelines is that there can be consequences for staff whose contributions may have an impact on the reputation of an institution. Further research from multiple disciplinary standpoints needs to test the merits of these claims.

Similarly, such research also needs to investigate how guidelines impact students. Students in the BEd program are already members of the teaching profession. Thus, their conduct is not only a concern of the university that they attend but is a consideration for the respective regulatory bodies to which they are subject when they become teacher candidates. There is a tendency in ethics and law in teaching to understand teachers as never truly "free" from the restraints of community standards, as Porter finds in her contribution. And one can infer (but, without research, cannot conclude) that such a requirement applies to teacher candidates. Porter's summary of research on teachers' off duty conduct identifies advice for teachers to avoid or, at the very least, to severely limit one's presence on social media applications. We also know that one's personal stories can be knowledge, especially, for teacher candidates (Anuik, Battiste, & George, 2010; Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Oskineegish, 2019), which can lead us to question how one can use social media applications in an instructional manner and as a way to discuss educational issues that have an impact on educators at all stages of their careers.

The most significant matter for academics concerns the direction of higher education. One can see in Yoon and Moore's contribution to this issue that universities are now corporations and need to consider their reputation for prospective buyers of educational services. I see in my story how quickly the marketing and communications staff, my dean, and my chair reacted to a single tweet and believed in its authority to disrupt the normal rhythms of the university.

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[15] I am grateful to the anonymous peer reviewer for making this point.

Even though there lies an opportunity for discomfort and conflict, there also needs to be an immediate resolution lest the university face criticism from unknown and unidentified sources. The implication if we follow the logic of the university is that if a "student" (I use quotations because I don't know if the one who tweeted was a student) feels upset or discomfort, then it is a responsibility of the instructor and the chair, dean, or director to impose a remedy very quickly that restores a sense of comfort to the student.

This desire to ensure that students feel a sense of comfort occurs at a time when universities must generate more of their revenue from non-governmental sources, which includes student tuition and donations from alumni. These pressures occur alongside requirements that universities commit to reconciliation and equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization mandates, generated in part by governments and in part within university administration.[16] Further research needs to consider how such mandates intersect with pressure within universities to generate revenue from students' tuition and alumni donations. In these instances, how does the need to market a brand with connections to reconciliation and equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization dovetail with a requirement that universities ensure that students continue to pay tuition, and alumni continue to donate. How does this necessity for revenue result in pressures that faculty limit and retract assessments and commentary that may result in sentiments of offence being expressed on social media venues? Can universities claim to have the right to watch social media accounts for mentions of professors, courses, and assignments to protect the right of the brand? How can universities justify such surveillance? It is clear from the story that I share that social media applications have an influence on teaching in university-sanctioned in-person and online venues. It is not

[16] I am aware of what American academics dub "anti-DEI" legislation in several U.S. states having an impact on universities. There will be impacts in Canadian universities and universities around the world and there will be consequences for reconciliation and marketing of universities. I advise readers who want to follow closer the developments as they are taking shape to see Gretzinger, Hicks, Dutton, Smith (2024).

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possible to keep separate the two parts as administrators believe that activity outside the university has an impact on the reputation and brand of the institution.

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