RESEARCH ETHICS IN TEACHING & LEARNING

Laura Lee

Research Support Officer, CIRTL

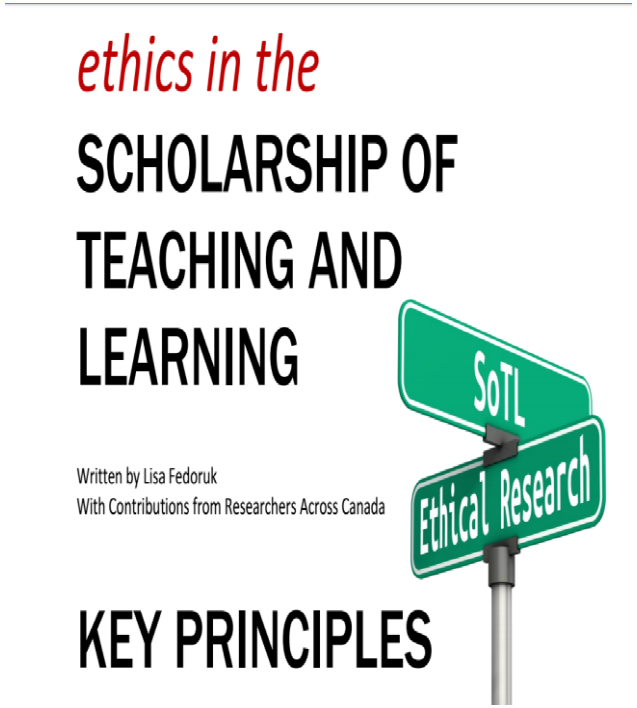
12/10/2017

RESEARCH ETHICS IN T&L

- Protective function for the researcher and researched.
- Supports thoughtful conduct of the research process.
- Enhances credibility of the research.

RESEARCH ETHICS IN T&L

- Classroom as site for systematic inquiry.
- Potentially dilemmatic areas of consideration.
- Core principles respond to these – Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary.



WHEN IS ETHICAL APPROVAL NECESSARY?

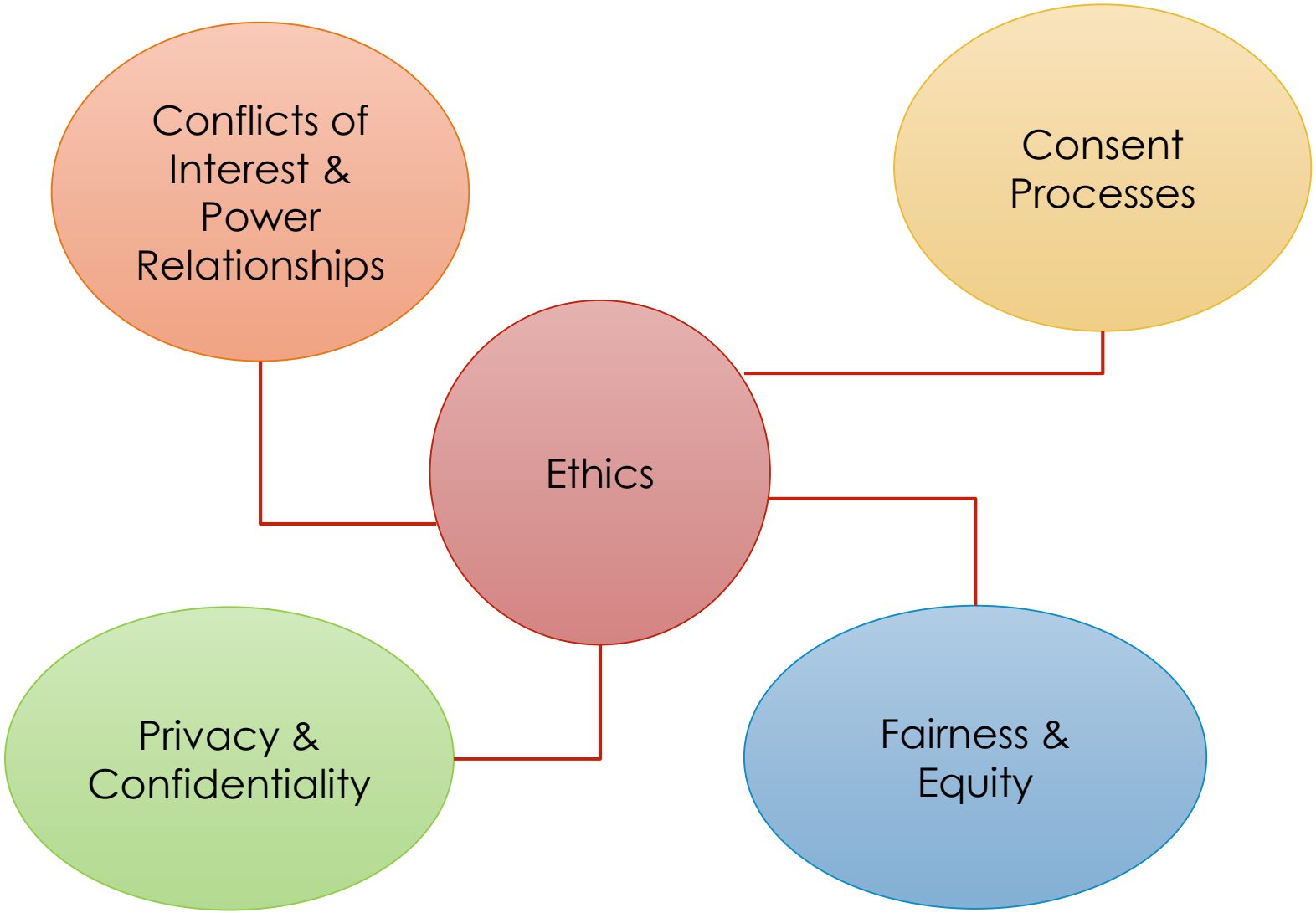
- Distinction between private reflection and public dissemination.

Using data for course development, professional reflection

vs

Presenting research at conferences and/or in journals

CORE PRINCIPLES



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS

❖Dual role as teacher and researcher.

Key principle

- Decision making on basis of role as a *teacher* first.
- Sensitivity to the inherent power differential between teacher and student.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS

Strategies for Ethical Practice:

- Identify blind spots – colleagues, former students.
- Provide contact information for SREC.
- Use a third party to assist with participant recruitment, information provision, and data generation and analysis.
- Collect data *after* final grades have been submitted and released to the students, and after the appeal deadline has passed.

CONSENT PROCESSES

Key Principle

- Ensure that each student's decision to participate in your research (or not) is voluntary, and that their privacy is protected when offering or declining consent.

CONSENT PROCESSES

Strategies for Ethical Practice:

- Use a third party to facilitate consent/withdrawal processes to protect students' privacy.
- Clearly communicate to students that there are no repercussions for their refusal to consent.
- When conducting surveys, use web-based survey tools that allow for students to participate anonymously.
- When collecting consent forms from student participants in class, design the forms so that all students must sign and hand in the paper form in order to prevent knowledge of who is and is not participating.

CONSENT PROCESSES

Key Principle

- Ensure that students' decisions to participate in your research (or not) are informed by telling them about the purpose, benefits, risks, and consequences of your research *before* asking for their consent.

CONSENT PROCESSES

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Describe and discuss (or have a third party describe and discuss) the research with students before seeking their consent to participate.
- Consider the limits of confidentiality e.g. focus groups.
- Include a brief explanation of the research on your course outline or syllabus.

"Please be advised that within this course, you will have the opportunity to volunteer as a research participant in a study that examines X. Details will be provided at Y time point".

CONSENT PROCESSES

Key Principle

- Make sure students have the autonomy to withdraw from participation at any time during the research, or during a specified period of time after the research e.g. two weeks.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Provide students the option to withdraw from the research simply (e.g., by sending an email) during the period specified on the information sheet. Indicate what will happen to their data after they have withdrawn from the research (e.g., that, wherever possible, it will be extracted and destroyed).

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Key Principle

- Be inclusive, fair, and equitable when selecting participants.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Have a clear rationale for participant inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Consider your assumptions about potential participants in your study.

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Key Principle

- Ensure that the benefits of participating in your study are equitably distributed among participants.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Discuss potential research benefits with students at the onset of the study.
- Ensure an equitable distribution of research benefits.

FAIRNESS AND EQUITY

Key Principle

- Upon completion of the study, make the results available and accessible to all participants.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Invite students to provide contact information during the consent process to indicate how to reach them with research outcomes (e.g., an email address to which the outcomes can be sent).

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Key Principle

- Protect the participants' information and the integrity of the research project.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Share specific identifying information about the data collected with the research team only.
- If information sharing may occur during the study, describe and include this possibility as part of the information provided to students before they decide whether to participate.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Key Principle

- Use appropriate safeguards and security measures to protect participant information and data.

Strategies for Ethical Practice

- Use encryption software and/or password protected digital documents, folders, and/or systems to limit access to data and protect participant confidentiality.
- Store all hardcopies of participant-identifying data, including signed consent forms, in a locked cabinet.
- If appropriate, destroy all identifying participant information and identifying data upon completion of the research project.

HOW CAN CIRTL HELP?

- ✓CIRTL Archive
- ✓Templates
- ✓Guidelines

Laura Lee

✉ l.lee@ucc.ie

✆ 021-4904635

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Social Research Ethics Committee

An Introduction

Our domain

- Non-clinical research involving human participants (including behavioural experiments, interviewing and surveying) must be approved by the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC).

- SREC is the appropriate committee where the methodology is not clinical or therapeutic in nature and proposes to involve:

  - direct interaction with human participants for the purpose of data collection using research methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups etc

  - indirect observation with human participant for example using observation, web surveys etc

  - access to, or utilisation of, data concerning identifiable individuals.

Ethical standards

- UCC Code of Research Conduct
  https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/researchatucc/documents/UCCCodeofResearchConduct.pdf
- UCC Child Protection Policy
  https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/ocla/policies/UCCChildProtectionPolicyFINAL.pdf

- And typical ethical requirements of the area
  - in psychology:
  BPS http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf
  APA http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/
  PSI http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/PSI%202011-12%20Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf

Our process

- Application by email (srec@ucc.ie)
- Target turnaround time of approximately 3 weeks.
- If resubmission required, it is sent to the same reviewers who initially assessed the application. A similar turnaround time is to be expected

- Most applications are approved outright, or approved with minor comments (no resubmission required)
- *2016*
  - 181 applications
  - 101 approved outright or with minor comments
  - 70 returned for revision
  - Remainder refused in current form – full resubmission recommended

Forms & documents

- SREC application form
- Sample information sheet and consent form
- Common problems with applications
- All available at: http://www.ucc.ie/en/research/ethics/

Application Form

Application Checklist

This checklist includes all of the items that are required for an application to be deemed complete. In the event that any of these are not present, the application will be returned to the applicant ***without*** having been sent for review. Please ensure that your application includes all of these prior to submission. Thank you and best of luck with your research.

All relevant files are combined into one PDF file (SREC application form, consent forms, information sheets, data collection instruments, permission letters, etc.)	Yes / No
Completed SREC Application Form	Yes / No
Information Sheet(s) / Information Statement (i.e. at the beginning of an electronic survey) included	Yes / No
Consent Sheet(s) / Consent Statement (i.e. at the beginning of an electronic survey) included	Yes / No
Data Collection Instrument: Psychometric Instruments / Interview Guide / Focus Group Schedule / Survey Questionnaire / etc. included	Yes / No
Copy of permission letters to undertake research from relevant agencies/services included (if available)	Yes / No
If you are under academic supervision, your supervisor(s) have approved the wording of and co-signed this application prior to submission	Yes / No
If this is a resubmission, all the revised and new text is highlighted in yellow	Yes / No

ETHICAL APPROVAL SELF-EVALUATION

If your answer falls into any of the shaded boxes below, please address each point later on in the application form

		YES	NO
1	Do you consider that this project has significant ethical implications?	■	
2	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?		■
3	Will participation be voluntary?		■
4	Will you obtain informed consent in writing from participants?		■
5	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason, and (where relevant) omit questionnaire items / questions to which they do not wish to respond?		■
6	Will data be treated with full confidentiality / anonymity (as appropriate)?		■
7	Will data be securely held for a minimum period of ten years after the completion of a research project, in line with the University's *Code of Research Conduct* (2016)?		■
8	If results are published, will anonymity be maintained and participants not identified? (see Q. 30 below regarding open data considerations, if relevant)		■
9	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?		■
10	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?	■	
11	Will your participants include children / young persons (under 18 years of age)?	■	
12	If yes to question 11, is your research informed by the UCC *Child Protection Policy*? http://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/policy/	■	
13	Will your project require you to carry out "relevant work" as defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016?[3]	■	
14	Do you require official Garda Vetting through UCC before collecting data from children or vulnerable adults?[4]	■	
15	Will your participants include people with learning or communication difficulties?	■	
16	Will your participants include patients / service users / clients?	■	
17	Will your participants include people in custody?	■	
18	Will your participants include people engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking, illegal Internet behaviour, crime, etc.)?	■	
19a	Is there a realistic risk of participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress?	■	
19b	Is there a realistic risk of the researcher experiencing either physical or psychological distress?	■	
20	If yes to question 19a, has a proposed procedure for linking the participants to an appropriate support, including the name of a contact person, been given? (see Q. 33)		■
21	If yes to question 19b, has a proposed procedure/support structure been identified?		■
22	Are your research participants students with whom you have some current/previous connection (module coordinator, research supervisor, professional tutor, etc.)?	■	
23	Will your study participants receive payment / gifts / voucher / etc. for participating in this study?	■	

Major foci

- Informed consent
- Confidentiality & anonymity
- Right to withdraw
- Non-harm
- Debriefing
- Data management

Informed consent

- Explicit
- Voluntary
- Informed

- Children
- Other vulnerable populations

- Deception
- Secondary data

Confidentiality & anonymity

- Anonymisation
- Use of coded ID

- Focus groups
- Limits of confidentiality

Right to withdraw

- Explicit duration
- Cannot be open-ended

Non-harm

- No greater risk than everyday
- Protocol to manage distress
- Details of support services

- Denial of benefit

Debriefing

- Standard

- Cases of deception
- Cases with risk of distress

Data management

- Security of storage
- How? Password-protected? Strongbox?
- NAS? Onedrive for Business?
- Who has access?

- Duration – 10 years

Common Problems in Applications

- Incomplete applications
- Storage of data
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Right to withdraw
- Voluntary consent
- Failure of anticipation