

Protecting Human Research Participants/Ethical Research Assignment

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What is the difference between conducting research that requires an IRB approval and a Classroom Project involving Human Participants?

As outlined in our *Guidelines for Classroom Projects Involving Human Participants*, sensitive subject matter and vulnerable populations require IRB approval. Sensitive subject matter includes subjects related to sexual attitudes or preferences, addictive substances, and illegal activities. If any of the information would affect a person's reputation or could potentially affect their mental health then it would require IRB approval. Vulnerable participants include minors, those with special needs and students who are expecting a child. Mertler outlines, "Research will contain data that has the demographic identifiers removed." An example of this would be: 10% of students require interventions. We do not know the names or addresses of these students. We could say that 8% of 9th grade students need interventions but there is no personal data connected to those students. We want to be very careful to preserve confidentiality.

Throughout your program, how will you complete your MAED course requirements to ensure your participants are protected and the information you gather remains within your coursework only?

Once my cohort of participants have been selected I will make sure that any questions they are asked will fall specifically within the coursework requirements. When submitting data for the coursework, all personal identifiable information will be removed from the research paper. It is very important to protect participants from harm by not exposing them to any unnecessary physical or emotional harm. This can be accomplished by being respectful of their privacy and not discussing anything that could potentially embarrass them. I will assume that all participants are part of a vulnerable group. Checking in with participants periodically to make sure they are comfortable and let them know that they can express themselves or decline to

answer questions if they want, up front so that they will have the opportunity to decline participation at any time. I will be careful to obtain parental consent and be sure that students are participating voluntarily. They will be informed of all of the details of their participation including time involved and expectations of their involvement.

If a participant becomes uncomfortable with your data collection, what steps can you take to assist your participants with their concerns?

Parents and participants will be informed that their identity will remain confidential. They will also be informed what kind of data is being collected and how it will be used appropriately. They should also be informed that they are able to withdraw at any time. Open communication with both parents and students is essential. Every question should be phrased in a way that leaves the participant feeling respected and encouraged. In my current position I am dealing with students who have challenges academically and socially-emotionally. I believe the reason that they perform very well with me is because they know they are respected as individuals. They are treated with the expectation that they are capable and that they just need to be shown how. When a student is in crisis I give them the opportunity to de-escalate in a safe space. I want every student to feel like they are in control of their time and space and ability to learn. That means being flexible in that moment.

Considering the *basic ethical principles* and other ethical topics discussed in your materials, discuss some ethical data collection strategies you can implement with your participants when conducting an observation, interview, and/or survey.

The Belmont Report discusses basic ethical principles to be put into practice. The most important thing to remember is to always show respect for participants. Each participant should be able to say whether or not they are willing to participate. We must be very careful about

vulnerable populations. Since we are working with minors we know that all participants are vulnerable and should be treated as such. Their parents or guardians should have full knowledge of their participation and the questions that will be asked.

“Beneficence” is another important factor outlined in the Belmont Report. This includes an effort to secure the well-being of participants in addition to respecting and protecting them. “Two general rules have been formulated as complementary expressions of beneficent actions in this sense: **(1)** do not harm and **(2)** maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms. “As a counselor I will always be focused on well-being and the best possible outcome for students.

Justice has a unique definition as we explore research. Students deserve an equitable distribution of benefit without burden. There needs to be a careful balance between equal share and individual need.

To collect data with these things in mind students should be randomly assigned, permission slips should go to parents/guardians, and students should participate voluntarily. Students should also be given the language and opportunity to decline if they feel uncomfortable. Their data should not include their names or other demographics that could easily identify who they are or even where they go to school. The permission slips should include enough information to inform the parents of the questions that will be asked and the information that will be shared.

References

- CUI Institutional Review Board (IRB). 2019. Guidelines for classroom projects involving human participants. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L-WrXg5OE_wuq5zktlhglFc7CRU15PuQal_BYg-Zjuc/edit
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