ETHICS IN SOTL
KEY PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

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JUSTICE

Treating people fairly and equitably

RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Including their autonomy to freely choose to participate or not

CONCERN FOR WELFARE

Including privacy, informed and ongoing consent, and minimizing risk and maximizing benefit

FOR MORE STRATEGIES, SEE THE COMPREHENSIVE ETHICS IN SOTL GUIDE AT:
http://www.ucalgary.ca/taylorinstitute/guides/ethics-scholarship-teaching-and-learning

ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS

Canada. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. (2014). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.* (December). Retrieved from http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2-2014/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf

TCPS2 ARTICLE 7.4 > KEY PRINCIPLE

When you are acting as both instructor and researcher, mitigate undue influence, coercion, or power imbalances by basing decisions first and foremost on your role as instructor (which sometimes may be at odds with your goals as researcher), and by being sensitive to the inherent power differential between instructor and student.

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- As you design your study, invite colleagues and former students to help you identify **blind spots** you might have in terms of influence, coercion, or power imbalances.
- Use a **third party** to assist with participant recruitment, information provision, and data generation and analysis.
- Analyze student work after **identifying information** has been removed.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 3.1 > 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.

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- *When conducting surveys,* use web-based survey tools (e.g., Qualtrics, etc.) 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.
- *When offering incentives,* keep them to a minimum to avoid undue influence and provide students with clear timelines during which they may opt in or out of participation in the study. If the incentive includes a small percentage of their grade (1 to 5%), give students not participating in the study an opportunity to earn the same incentive through an alternate option.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 3.2 > 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.

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.
- *When conducting focus groups,* ensure that the consent process asks that each member of the focus group to respect the confidentiality of other members, but that you cannot guarantee confidentiality.
- *When using video or audio recording,* because this method of collecting data can inadvertently capture material produced by students who have not consented to participate in the research process, it is advisable that researchers clearly articulate to their institutional REBs why this data collection method (as opposed to others) is important to the research design. If using video, give consenting students the option to choose whether their presence on the video (a) will only be viewed by the research team, or (b) may be viewed by the research team and shared during dissemination of research findings, and to indicate their choice on the informed consent form.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 3.3 > KEY PRINCIPLE

Make sure students have the autonomy to freely and privately choose to participate, refuse to participate, or withdraw from participation at any time during or after the research (provided that it has not already been disseminated).

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Provide students the option to withdraw from the research simply and at any time prior to dissemination. Indicate what will happen to their data after they have withdrawn from the research.
- In cases where the research timeline needs to be extended, whenever possible seek students' consent regarding these extensions.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 4.1 > KEY PRINCIPLE

As much as possible, within the goals of the research project, be inclusive, fair, and equitable when selecting participants.

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Have a clear rationale for participant inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Invite colleagues and/or former students to help you identify assumptions that you might be making about participants, to ensure that your inclusion/exclusion criteria do not suffer from blind spots.
- If there's a language barrier between you (or your third party) and participant(s), involve an intermediary who is competent in both languages to assist with communication.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 4.7 > KEY PRINCIPLE

Ensure 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" (TCPS2, 2014, p. 55) by avoiding circumstances in which the conditions of some participants are significantly more beneficial than the conditions for other participants or for non-participants. You are responsible for gauging if the discrepancy between groups becomes unethical and could have negative implications for the other group(s), in which case contingencies and modifications to a study may be needed.

TCPS2 "RESEARCH RESULTS" > KEY PRINCIPLE

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

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Inform students that you will share the outcomes of your research, and in what format, as soon as they become available. Invite students to provide contact information during the consent process to indicate how to reach them with research outcomes.
- When the outcomes are available, provide participants with the citation of the journal in which it is published or copies of the publication, as well as a written summary of results that is written in clear, understandable language.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 5.1, 5.2 > KEY PRINCIPLE

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

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- Discuss the practical implications of confidentiality with all members of your research team, and where relevant, have all members sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Do not share any specific identifying information about the data collected with anyone other than your research team.
- If information sharing with government agencies, community research partners, research sponsors, or regulatory agencies may occur during the study, describe and include this possibility as part of the information provided to students before they decide whether to participate.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 5.3, 5.4 > KEY PRINCIPLE

At all times during data collection and analysis, 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.
- Store all hardcopies of participant-identifying data in a locked cabinet.
- Keep an up-to-date list of all persons with access to participant information, ensuring they have signed a non-disclosure or confidentiality agreement.

TCPS2 ARTICLE 5.5A, 5.5B > KEY PRINCIPLE

Apply the above principles of privacy, and seek REB review even if your research involves data initially collected for other reasons (e.g., "secondary use of data").

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE

- If generating anonymous data conflicts with your research question and design, when possible, use data that has been de-identified.
- Although seeking participant consent is not required for non-identifiable data, it is still good practice to seek students' consent to use their data again.
- If emailing former students to seek consent to use their previously generated information as data, be sensitive to general overuse of email and full inboxes.

STRATEGIES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE