

# Ethical Issues and IRB Policies for SoTL and Action Research

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## Panel Members:

- Kathleen McKinney, Soc and Cross Endowed Chair in SoTL
- Patricia Jarvis, Psych and SoTL Faculty Fellow
- Gary Creasey, Psych and IRB
- Joseph Casto, RSP

# **General Ethical Issues Re: SoTL**

## **Kathleen McKinney**

## **From Pat Hutchings, Carnegie Foundation- key ethical issues in SoTL**

- Issues surrounding the use of student work
- Issues related to the choice of research strategy
- Issues connected to making research results-- whether good or 'bad'-- public

# **Burman and Kleinsasser - nine principles to guide our ethical decisions in doing SoTL**

- Identify or label SoTL projects as inquiry or research.
- Plan the projects before the class starts.
- Have and follow an informed consent process.
- Seek external review of the project.
- Keep students informed about the project.
- Proceed cautiously if using data from previous classes where student consent was not obtained.
- Recognize that students have control over how their work is used.
- Involve students in the SoTL project beyond their role as subjects.
- Share our findings with the students.

# Three General Ethical Criteria applied to SoTL

- Informed Consent
- Right to Privacy
- Protection from Harm

# International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Ethics Statement- Pat Jarvis

- Research Ethics IRB Subcommittee

Regan Gurung -University of Wisconsin – Green Bay

Patricia Jarvis and Gary Creasey - ISU

Charge:

Craft a statement about research ethics and human subject use for IS-SOTL that would be broadly applicable across disciplinary and national boundaries

# International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Ethics Statement

- We propose that all disciplines need to acknowledge the need for both national and international dialogues about ethical standards in the scholarship of teaching and learning.
- This project seeks to stimulate these dialogues by outlining how the principles of the *Belmont Report* can be applied to the scholarship of teaching and learning. See your handout for a draft of what we have done so far.

# International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Ethics Statement

- Our statement follows the Belmont Report by addressing three key aspects of ethics in research as discussed in our statement (handout):
  - Respect for Persons
  - Beneficence
  - Justice



# International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Ethics Statement

- Given that SoTL presents some challenges more traditional research does not such as course instructors doing the research themselves on students whose grades depend on the instructor, it is critical to elucidate additional protections for students.
- For example, pedagogical research conducted on ones' own students are best administered by independent sources and the information provided to the instructor after grades are handed in.

# **International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning - Ethics Statement**

- Assessments used for formative purposes (results being used to change future pedagogy within the same semester/quarter) would best be conducted anonymously.
- This and many other issues will be fleshed out as the subcommittee continues its work.

# SoTL & IRB FAQ- Gary Creasey

1. Is my work research or teaching/training?

45 CFR 46.102: *Human Subject*

Obtaining.....

- a. Data through intervention or interaction, or
- b. Identifiable private information

# SoTL & IRB FAQ

## 45 CFR 46.102: Research

Systematic investigation including research development, testing and evaluation designed to **develop or contribute** to generalizable knowledge.

CONCLUSION: Most SoTL work is subject to IRB review because it meets threshold for human subjects research according to federal guidelines

## SoTL & IRB FAQ

2. Is it OK to use class time for SoTL work?

Federal guidelines (45 CFR 46.101) contain provisions for review of research *in* educational settings involving normal educational practices such as comparison among *instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods*

## SoTL & IRB FAQ

3. HELP! Do I have to disclose all of my study procedures and hypotheses to the students?

45 CFR 46.116(d.)

You can alter the required elements of informed consent (e.g., full study purpose) if:

## SoTL & IRB FAQ

- a. Research involves no more than minimal risk
- b. The alteration will not adversely affect the rights of welfare of the participant
- c. The research could not be practically carried out without the waiver
- d. When appropriate, participant will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation (debriefing)

In protocol, PI should request waiver or alteration and address these conditions