Ethical Considerations for Using Student Academic Information as Research Data
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...AN IRB PERSPECTIVE!
Objectives

Share guiding principles of IRB review, specifically in the context of research using student academic data.

Discuss areas of a project design and the specific challenges, and potential solutions, at each of the areas.

Compare two different approaches for using student academic data.
Definition of Research

*Research* means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.

45 CFR 46.102d
Belmont Report

Three Basic Ethical Principles:

Respect for Persons
- “individuals should be treated as autonomous agents”
- “protect those with diminished autonomy”

Beneficence
- Do not harm
- Maximize benefits/minimize possible harm

Justice
- Fairness in distribution
- What is deserved

Applications:

Informed Consent
- Voluntariness
- Undue Influence
Types of review

- Full board review
- Expedited review procedures
  - Specific requirements (including informed consent)
  - Seven specific “circumstances”
    - 6. Collection from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes
    - 7. Research... employing survey, interview, oral history, focus groups, program evaluation, etc....
45 CFR 46

Types of review

◦ Full board review
◦ Expedited review procedures
  ◦ Specific requirements (including informed consent)
◦ Exempt review
  ◦ Exempt from some/certain requirements for expedited review
Claim for Exemptions

Claim #1

- The research will be conducted in commonly accepted education settings AND it involves normal educational practices...

Claim #2

- The research involves educational tests, survey or interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, AND...
  - (aa) information obtained cannot be identified,
  - (bb) discloser could not place the subject at risk,
  - (cc) subjects are elected officials
Other Considerations

FERPA

Institutional Policies
Elements of a Proposal

- Rationale
- Subjects
- Procedures
- Protection
- Consent
Potential Concerns

Rationale

◦ What is the nature of the project?

◦ Why are the data being collected?

◦ How will the results be shared?

◦ For what reason are the results intended?
Potential Concerns

Subjects

◦ Selection
  ◦ Are they vulnerable (protected)?
  ◦ Are they subject to power/authority of investigators?

◦ Recruitment
  ◦ Will their identity be known?
  ◦ How will they be contacted?
  ◦ How is contact information obtained?
Potential Concerns

Procedures

◦ Expedited
  ◦ Is consent process appropriate?
  ◦ Are data (confidentiality) being protected?

◦ Exempt
  ◦ Is the research being conducted in an educational setting AND involves “normal education practices”?
  ◦ Educational tests/survey or interview/observation
  ◦ AND data recorded anonymously
Potential Concerns

Consent

◦ Expedited
  ◦ Consent is both a process and a form!

◦ Exempt
  ◦ The process of consent is still important.
  ◦ An information sheet often takes the place of the consent form.
Two contrasting examples
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of a modified curriculum on student achievement.

- Expedited or Exempt?
Curriculum Effect on Achievement

Subjects – students in the class of the investigator

Methods – score on course assignments compared between students in the “old” and “new” course

Following the completion of the term, course records will be de-identified and analyzed.
Curriculum Effect on Achievement

Subjects – students in the 4 sections of an introductory class (PI not an instructor)

Participants will be recruited by PI visiting each section.

Methods – subjects will provide consent and complete a learning style assessment in the student activity center.

Academic information will be matched to learning style using a coding system.
Questions?
Resources

TTU HRPP

HHS.gov
  ◦ 45 CFR 46
  ◦ Belmont Report