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EDP 3273 Learning and Development within the School Context

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Protecting Human Research Participants Course Reflection

Historically, a lack of ethical practice in human research has led to torture, manipulation and murder. The Nazi physicians’ crimes against humanity during World War 2 led to the development of ethical and legal concepts in the conduct of inquiry involving humans. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research’s certification training course, “Protecting Human Research Participants”, led to my further proficiency in the necessity of ethical research guidelines as established by The Belmont Report. These guidelines ensure that research participants are treated with respect, beneficence and justice as priorities. Upon reflection, I realized the importance of practicing an ethical conduct of research with humans as an educator in Elementary classrooms by applying the concepts to daily education and research.

The NIH’s training course clarified my obligation as a researcher to protect the rights and welfare of the human subjects involved in the investigation. Human subjects are living individuals from which an investigator obtains data by intervention or interaction, including the selection of identifiable personal information. Codes and regulations like The Belmont Report and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ 45 CFR 46 provide basic ethical principles and conditions for research utilizing human subjects. The foundation for the HHS’s regulations and guidelines include respect for persons, beneficence and justice. Individuals are treated as autonomous agents and persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to additional protections to preserve the principle of respect in research. To ensure participants are respected they must know the risks and benefits of involvement in the project, and their decisions are not to be influenced by implied threats or excessive compensation. Beneficence is also essential to ethical conduct of research with humans. To guarantee beneficence researchers must do not harm and maximize possible benefits while minimizing risks. Justice in human research requires that subjects are treated fairly and equitably in bearing burdens or receiving benefits of research. Preserving the rights of human research participants allows for an ethical and respectable practice of investigation.

As an intern collecting data in Elementary schools, and as a future educator, I am held accountable for ensuring that my research remains within the ethical code established for investigators. Performing quality, acceptable research requires honesty, trust and respect between the investigator and subjects. The classroom climate I intend to foster as a teacher will create a community built on strong moral values, as exemplified through character education. The exchange of honesty and respect between myself and my pupils will ensure the accumulation of trust. To ensure respect for persons in research, children are unable to legally provide effective informed consent. Therefore, they are entitled to additional protections. As an educator, it is important to acquire parent or guardian consent while performing research tasks. Confidentiality is a vital factor in establishing beneficence in research. While interning or reporting on students’ progress to outward sources, deidentifying of students will be accomplished by anonymizing their names. Justice will be a common topic in a democratic classroom, so I will consistently strive for the equitable distribution of benefits to students. Not all young learners benefit most from being treated equally, but they do need to be treated fairly to mold success by appreciating each individual’s needs. Applying guidelines for human subjects that warrant respect, beneficence and justice will protect students’ rights while I am performing internship research, as well as teaching in the classroom.

Upon completion of the NIH’s training course regarding protecting human research participants I have retained the necessary ethical guidelines to perform a respectable study in Elementary classrooms. The rights and welfare of research subjects are protected by the investigator’s application of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. By building a relationship of trust, respect and honesty researchers are able to conduct proper studies that comply to guidelines established by The Belmont Report and 45 CFR 46. In the classroom, I will ensure the ethical treatment of students by applying the same principles. As an intern, and teacher, it is important to consider consent, anonymity and equitable treatment while observing and participating in classroom activities. The NIH’s certification training course has led to personal understanding of my obligations to protect students’ rights in the classroom.

