Research and Protecting ESL Students: Honoring Classrooms and Adjudicating Requests

Program Administration Interest Section
Academic Session TESOL 2016

- Bev Earles, Chair, Program Administration

- Power point available following panel on www.ksu.edu/elp

- So, no need to try and write things down

- Discussion of 30 minutes or so to follow presentations

- Topic is relevant to many ESL settings

- University IEP's
- Community Colleges
- K-12
- Private institutions

- TESOL has its own research program

- Our story

- Research requests started coming in

- No policies, guidelines, procedures

- No committee or specified individuals to adjudicate

- IRB divine seal of approval
- IRB - No evidence of viewing international students as a vulnerable population

- Pressure to make hurried decisions – researchers had already made plans

- 2 years on and off working through all the issues

- Reminder that the IEP students are here primarily to learn English

- While research is not part of our mission, we do understand that it is essential for the field

- Distinctions among our own teachers doing research, students from other departments, and outsiders

- Now have a committee of faculty

- A set of guidelines and procedures

Ethical Research in ESL from the Researcher's Perspective

Peter De Costa
Scott Sterling

Our Goals

1. Introduce research ethics
2. Express the researcher's point of view on data collection in classrooms
3. Share the IEP context that we are most familiar with
4. Discuss data we have about students' point of view on research
5. Offer some things to consider when you design a policy for research inside your program

Who are we?

- Researchers interested in research ethics in applied linguistics
  - Scott = conducts research in ESL context
    - Topics: research ethics and humor
  - Peter = conducts research in EFL context
    - Topics: identity, ideology, English as a lingua franca, emotions, and ethics
- Peter currently works at MSU
- Scott recently graduated from MSU and is now employed at Indiana State University

Part 1: Introducing research ethics

Introduction: Ethics in TESOL

- Most TESOL researchers would not disagree with the core principles of:
  (1) Respect for persons
  (2) Yielding optimal benefits while minimizing harm
  (3) Justice
- Generally committed to an ethical protocol that averts harming research participants in any way

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Advancing Excellence in English Language Teaching

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Research Agenda 2014

Submitted by the TESOL Research Agenda Task Force

Christine Coombe, Co-Chair

Dudley Reynolds, Co-Chair

Neil J Anderson

Kathleen Bailey

Sue Garton

Jun Liu

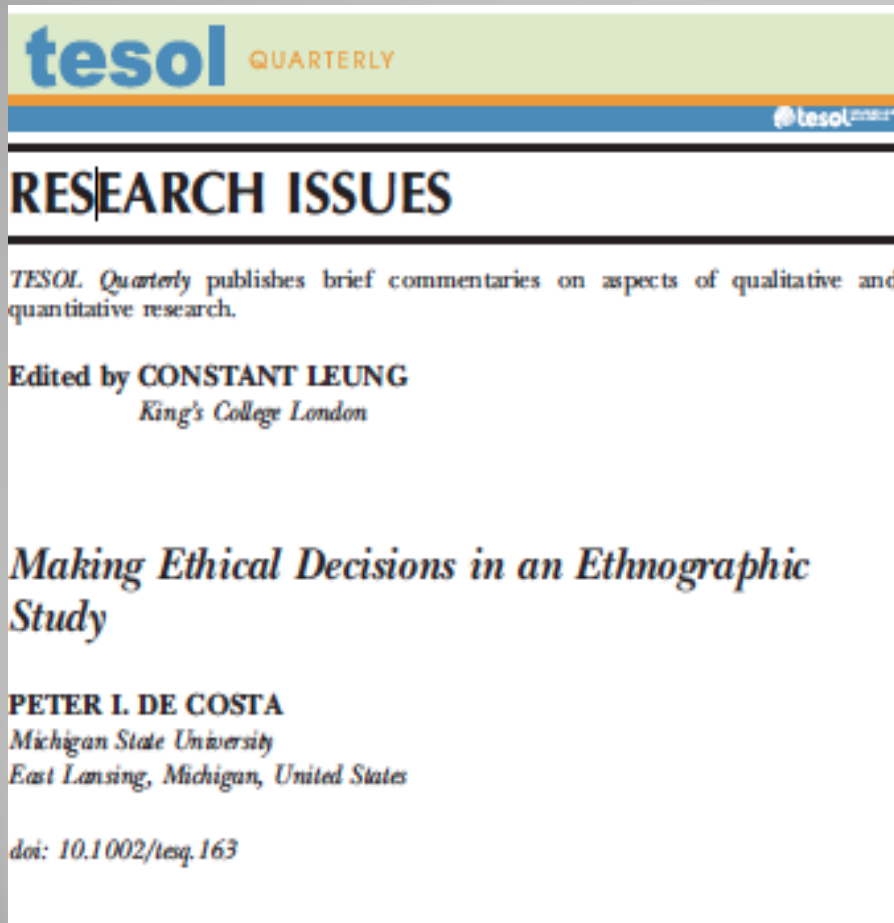Guadalupe Valdes

Lillian Wong

Introducing Ethics

- However, how TESOL researchers go about realizing these principles generally differ, and this is often influenced by:

(1) The methodological paradigm they subscribe to; their training

(2) The area of research in which they work

(3) Their individual personality

(4) The macro and micro factors that shape their research process

Overview of Ethics Introduction

The first part of today's talk will focus on:

- The distinction between *macroethics* and *microethics*
- Address how ethical tensions can be addressed *before, during, and after* the data collection process

The first part of today's talk will draw on:

tesol QUARTERLY

RESEARCH ISSUES

TESOL Quarterly publishes brief commentaries on aspects of qualitative and quantitative research.

Edited by CONSTANT LEUNG
King's College London

Making Ethical Decisions in an Ethnographic Study

PETER I. DE COSTA
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan, United States

doi: 10.1002/tesq.163

The first part of today's talk will draw on:

De Costa, P.I. (2015). Ethics in applied linguistics research. In B. Paltridge & A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource* (pp. 245-257). London: Bloomsbury.

The first part of today's talk will draw on:
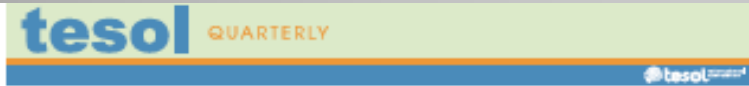
tesol QUARTERLY

TESOL Quarterly Research Guidelines

AHMAR MAHBOOB, BRIAN PALTRIDGE, AND AEK PHAKITI
University of Sydney
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

ELVIS WAGNER
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SUE STARFIELD AND ANNE BURNS
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Mahboob, A., Paltridge, B., Phakiti, A., Wagner, E., Starfield, S., Burns, A., Jones, R.H., & De Costa, P. I. (2016). TESOL Quarterly research guidelines. *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(1), 42-65.

Underlying Assumptions on Ethical Practices in TESOL

- Brown (2004): "Ethics is an area where all research methods and techniques come together and tend to agree" (p. 498)
- Important to recognize is that what is considered ethical may vary from one researcher to the next
- What constitutes ethical research also depends on the research methods adopted, whether they are quantitative or qualitative

One Way to Explore Ethics: Macroethics and Microethics

- Kubanyiova (2008) makes the distinction between *macroethics* and *microethics*.

Macroethics	Microethics
- Procedural ethics of Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols and ethical principles articulated in professional codes of conduct	- Everyday ethical dilemmas that arise from the specific roles and responsibilities that researchers and research participants adopt in specific research contexts

Macroethics and *Microethics*

- Much of the ethics literature to date seems to be influenced by macroethical concerns in that it offers guidelines, often described as "best practices"
- Macroethical practices have come under the increasing scrutiny of university-wide IRB protocols that are also often aimed at protecting the institution as much as the research participants

MSU IRB – Investigators – L ×

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDS (IRBs)

Investigators: Log In

HOME | **CONTACT IRB**

INVESTIGATOR LOGIN

Use this system to view or submit applications, view and respond to comments from reviewers, and send attachments.

To respond to comments, type in your identification number and click "Start Search." Then go to *View Existing Applications*, find the application you wish to view, and use the pull down menu in the "Select Action" box to access & reply to comments.

If you have forgotten your ID number, please contact the IRB office.

MSU Faculty/Staff	Z-PID	Z########
MSU Students	A-PID	A########
Non-Affiliated	IRB-Assigned Number	G########

Enter Project Investigator ID # (No Dashes): [   ]

Click button with mouse -->
(Do not hit the enter key!)

Start Search

I'M NEW

DongJie&Blo chapt...2015

Enacting Ethical Practices

- Drawing on Creswell's (2013) framework for addressing ethical issues, we discuss the conduct of macro- and micro-ethical practices over three phases:

(1) Prior to conducting and at the start of the study

(2) During data collection and data analysis

(3) Reporting the data and publishing the study

Enacting Ethical Practices

Underpinning these practices is the need to maintain rigor throughout the research process, which includes adopting sound techniques and instruments

Part 1: Prior to conducting and at the start of the study

- On a macroethical level, IRB protocols need to be observed
- TESOL researchers also play a vital role in educating IRBs because not all cultural settings require the same forms of consent; (Holliday, 2015): different settings require different degrees of formality, informality and understanding
- Consent forms need to be made accessible and understandable by simplifying the language, translating forms into multiple languages, and creating the option for oral consent so that such consent is in compliance with local cultural practices

Prior to conducting and at the start of the study

- On a microethical level, it is important that the instruments used be valid and reliable
- Given that participants give up their time to take part in studies even though they may be compensated for their participation, it is essential that researchers be cognizant of the time allocated to conduct interviews and experiments, and to administer questionnaires
- Language used in interviews or questionnaires needs to be translated, or at least be simplified to a comprehensible level

Prior to conducting and at the start of the study

- One way to avert teething problems, in general is to conduct a pilot study and minimize the ethical impact on participants
- Any negative impact is further reduced if the needs of participants are served
- The effects of the research project need to be considered before embarking on the project, and this includes weighing the potential negative impact of treatments on participants when conducting experiments (Gass, 2015)

Part 2: During data collection and data analysis

- A flexible approach is needed when dealing with ethical problems that may emerge in specific research contexts
- Analyzing data is also fraught with ethical demands
- When analyzing quantitative data, researchers need to select appropriate statistical tests (e.g. parametric or non-parametric) to answer research questions (Phakiti, 2015)
- Transparent, rigorous, and informed data analyses is necessary

Part 3: Reporting the data and publishing the study

- Burns (2015): researchers need to consider if the ends and outcomes contribute towards educational improvement and to factor in to whom research findings will be disseminated upon project completion

- Shohamy (2004): researchers' responsibility regarding the uses and misuses of research results, which may be used inappropriately by consumers for immoral and unethical purposes

- However, there is no foolproof way for researchers to prevent their work from being misappropriated

Part 3: Reporting the data and publishing the study

- One possible way to evade this problem on a microethical level is to foreground the statistical and practical significance of one's findings (Norris & Ortega, 2006; Plonsky & Gass, 2011)
- Attention needs to be paid to plagiarism (Hamp-Lyon, 2009; Wen & Gao, 2007) and issues surrounding co-authorship
- Student-faculty collaborative research is prone to abuse

Some Things to Think About

- When conducting applied linguistic research, some problems can be anticipated, while others need to be dealt with in an emergent manner

- No silver bullet to dealing with ethical issues.

- On their part, journal editors and TESOL can also provide leadership by offering readers more detailed ethical guidelines and examples of good practice

- Another way is to have experienced TESOL researchers share narratives of their own experiences (De Costa, 2016)
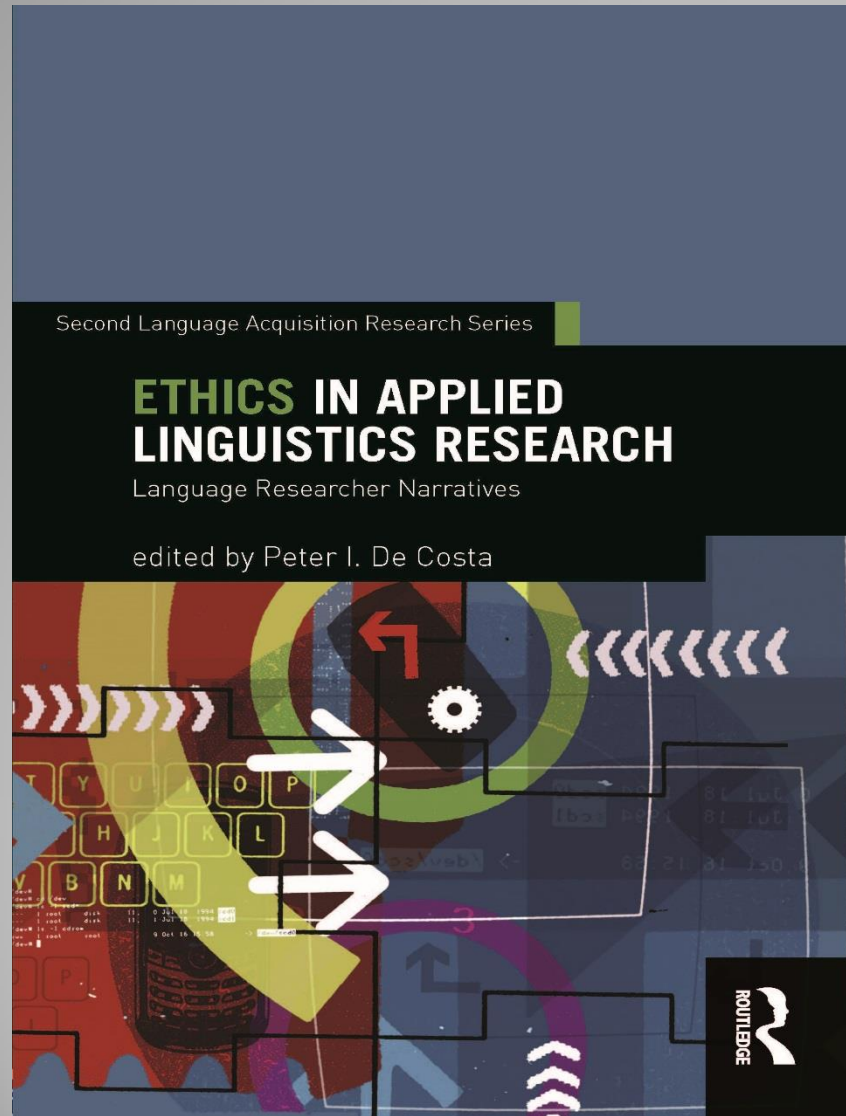
De Costa, P. I. (Ed.) (2016). *Ethics in applied linguistics research: Language researcher narratives*. New York: Routledge.

Foreword	Lourdes Ortega
Afterword	Jane Zuengler

Contents of the Edited Volume

Part I	Laying the Groundwork
Chapter 1	Training in Research Ethics among Applied Linguistics and SLA Researchers (Scott Sterling, Paula Winke, and Susan Gass)
Chapter 2	Data Selection as an Ethical Issue: Dealing with Outliers in Telling a Research Story (Brian Paltridge)

Part II	Applying Ethics to Different Linguistic Communities
Chapter 3	Quotidian Ethics in the Neoliberal University: Research and Practice Collide (Sue Starfield)
Chapter 4	Narratives of Ethical Dilemmas in Research with Immigrants with Limited Formal Schooling (Martha Bigelow and Nicole Pettitt)
Chapter 5	Ethical Dilemmas and Language Policy (LP) Advising (Joseph Lo Bianco)

Part 2: Working with ELC Administrators

Michigan State University

- English Language Center (ELC)
  - Intensive English Program
  - Faculty
    - Full, part time, and teaching assistants
  - Director splits duties between IEP, a PhD program in Second Language Studies, an MATESOL program, and others

Research at ELC

- ELC = researcher friendly
  - Understands the role that research plays at the university
  - Understands the need for CV boosting by instructors
  - Understands the downstream effects that research has on ESL in general
    - Research was often feed back through brownbags, workshops, or other public presentations

How to Gain Access to Students

Policy and Procedures for Conducting Research in the ELC

1. MSU-affiliated students and faculty members who want to do research in the ELC must contact Dr. Daniel Reed and Dr. Debra Hardison before recruiting participants. Drs. Reed and Hardison will document the requests by specifying levels/sections involved, amount of class time taken up, number of students affected, and verifying approval by IRB or course instructor.

Dan Reed	Debra Hardison
reeddan@msu.edu	hardiso2@msu.edu

Once approval is received from Drs. Reed and Hardison, the researcher may proceed with the recruiting plan that was approved by the IRB. Please note that teachers can refuse the request even if the project has been approved by the IRB and the ELC. Similarly, students can refuse to participate or opt out of the project at any time.

2. Outside researchers (nonMSU-affiliated) must submit their requests by mid-October for Fall access and by mid-March for Spring. Recruiting and data collection by outside researchers when approved is limited to the latter part of the semester. Researchers will be notified on November 1 for fall semester data collections and by April 1 for research in the spring.

Benefits of this Policy

- Easy to navigate
  - Just need to send a form to one of the two people
- Just hard enough
  - Enough of deterrent to stop frivolous requests
- Traceable
  - Research requests won't overburden students
- Three levels of authentication needed
  - IRB = not ESL experts but research experts
  - Drs. = gatekeepers who can evaluate project
  - Instructor/student = has final say

Policy in Action - How Scott collected data in ELC for dissertation

- Followed all procedural ethics rules
  - ◦ IRB approval, ELC forms signed
- Used connections for intensive data collection
  - ◦ TA friends and faculty I knew closely
  - ◦ Intensive data collection = one full 50 minute class session
- Emailed all faculty to gain access for non-invasive part
  - ◦ 5 minutes of class to sign students up for out of class focus group

What Scott found

1) ESL students have **agency** and wanted to a participate because they wanted:
- $20 for participation
- chance to use academic English
- to help the ESL community (siblings or their children in the future)
- the "cool" experience
- to help be because they realized that I needed their help

What Scott found

2) Students do not necessarily understand various roles

- Participants thought:
  - ◦ I was a teacher at their IEP
  - ◦ I knew their teacher
  - ◦ I would report back to their teacher
  - ◦ The research was FOR the ELC
  - ◦ That I was a psychologist
- Mostly not true at the time

What Scott found

3) Students did not read consent form nor did they understand the research

- Students signed consent form but had no idea what I would do with video recordings
- How it would affect them in the future
- What I would be asking them or why

When Making a Research Policy

Make sure that:

1. research is safe but don't take away students' agency
2. roles are fully explained to students
3. researcher understands ESL students and their needs as a group
   - Because IRB likely won't be able to help

Help Researchers fill in Gaps

- How will your research TRULY benefit OUR students?
- Will students really know who you are or what you are asking of them?
- If you are taking over a whole class, how will you ensure that students who don't want to participate are not being ostracized?
- Will data collection disrupt instruction? Is there educational value in the research?
- Can students actually understand the consent form?
- Can instructors within your program collect data on their own students or with students inside your program?
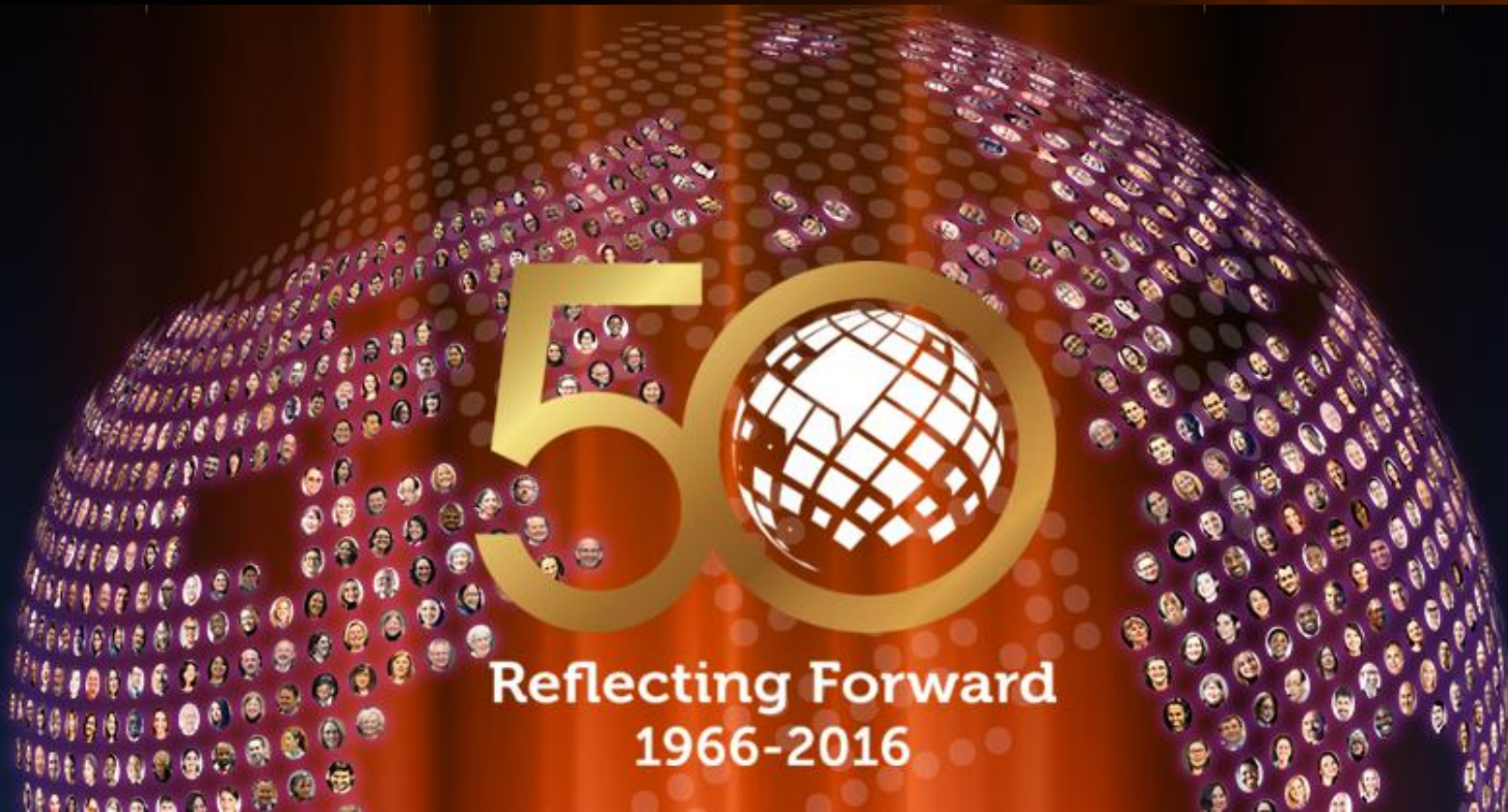
Researcher's Perspective

- Make path to accessing students easy to navigate
  - Don't ask for information you are not going to use
  - Make forms easy to fill out
  - Make policy clear from the onset
- As a gatekeeper, be a resource not a burden
  - TAs, other students/researchers, pedagogues depend on ESL student data
  - Much of the data presented at TESOL was collected on someone's students
- Make expectations clear from start
  - Do you want me to offer extra credit or pay students? Should I offer tutoring hours equal to number of hours of disruption?
  - Should I get in and get out or stay and provide something back?

Researcher's Perspective

- Many researchers are not highly trained in research ethics (Sterling, Winke & Gass, 2016)
  - Many still care about students and want to do what is best
  - Even if objectives clash, many are amendable to being helpful to your IEP
    - Researchers are not opposed to giving back but they might just not know how or what you need

What's next later today?

Research Colloquium: 3:00-4:45pm BCC Room Key 11

Ethics in Transnational Research: Researcher Perspectives

Paper 1: How Difficult are ESL Consent Forms to Read?	Scott Sterling (Indiana State University)
Paper 2: Translating Lived Experiences: Perspectives on Ethics from the Colonizer and the Colonized	Sandie Kouritzin (University of Manitoba) & Satoru Nakagawa (University of Manitoba & University of Winnipeg)
Paper 3: Ethical Challenges in Conducting Text-based Online TESOL Research	Xuesong Gao & Jian Tao (The University of Hong Kong)
Paper 4: Advisers' Dilemmas with Struggling Dissertation Writers: Questions of Agency, Directiveness, and Kinds of Support	Christine Pearson Casanave (Temple University, Japan Campus; Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey)
Paper 5: Researching Marginalised Groups: Ethical Issues as a Potential Gatekeeping Strategy	Mike Baynham & Jessica Bradley (University of Leeds)

Thank you

Peter I. De Costa (pdecosta@msu.edu)
Scott Sterling (scott.sterling@indstate.edu)

Managing a Research Mission in an IEP

Jacqueline R. Evans, Director
Program in Intensive English (PIE)
Northern Arizona University
Jackie.Evans@nau.edu

- PIE's Research Mission is the following:

    To provide research opportunities for university faculty, doctoral students, and MA-TESL students that advance disciplinary knowledge and effective second language teaching and learning

NORTHERN
ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY

Program in Intensive English

- 25-50 projects are conducted in PIE each semester
- Projects may involve in-class activities, out-of-class activities, and archived data

- NAU IRB approval
- PIE Review Process
  - Purposes of Review process:
    - Provide input and request revisions to projects
    - Control the number of projects conducted with groups of students
    - Determine whether projects take place in or out of class
  - Projects are reviewed by
    - PIE Research Coordinator
    - PIE Directors
    - PIE Curricular Coordinators and Teachers

NORTHERN
ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY
Program in Intensive English

- Protecting Students
  - PIE conducts its own in-class presentation and discussion of research mission with request for IRB consent form signatures
  - Researcher then asks for permission from students for specific project ensuring students have two opportunities to opt in or out of project

- What happens when projects are completed?
  - Final research report is submitted to PIE with practical implications for PIE curriculum and instruction
  - PIE requests that researchers come back and report findings to students

Classroom/Action Research

Ensuring Students Rather Than Researchers Come First

Kara Mac Donald
Defense Language Institute

Institutional Context

Institution:

- U.S. Military Higher Education, Foreign Language Center
- 8 Schools, 3,500 approx. students
- Faculty & Staff, 2,000 approx.
- High stakes funding for students
- High stakes testing environment

Performance Standards

- **Faculty Performance Standards**:
- **Associate Professors and Full Professors** - are required to conduct an action research once a year
- **Assistant Professors** - in non-classroom positions (faculty Development and other support roles) are required to conduct an action research once a year
- **Instructors** – are encouraged to conduct research to present in formal academic venues

Institutional Incentive/Support for Education

- Faculty are encouraged to pursue higher education
- Faculty Advancement Incentives
- Academic Funding Opportunities

DLIFLC Faculty Education Levels

Other 3%
Ph.D. 15%
BA 29%
MA 53%

- Other
- BA
- MA
- Ph.D.
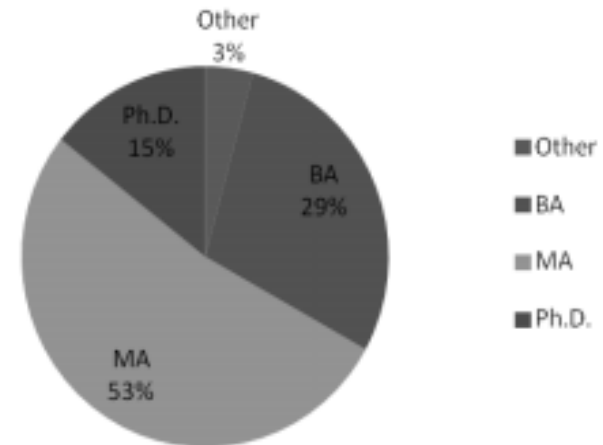
Culture of Classroom/Action Research

Fostering Research Among Faculty:

- Performance Standards
- Faculty Enrolled in Postgraduate Degrees
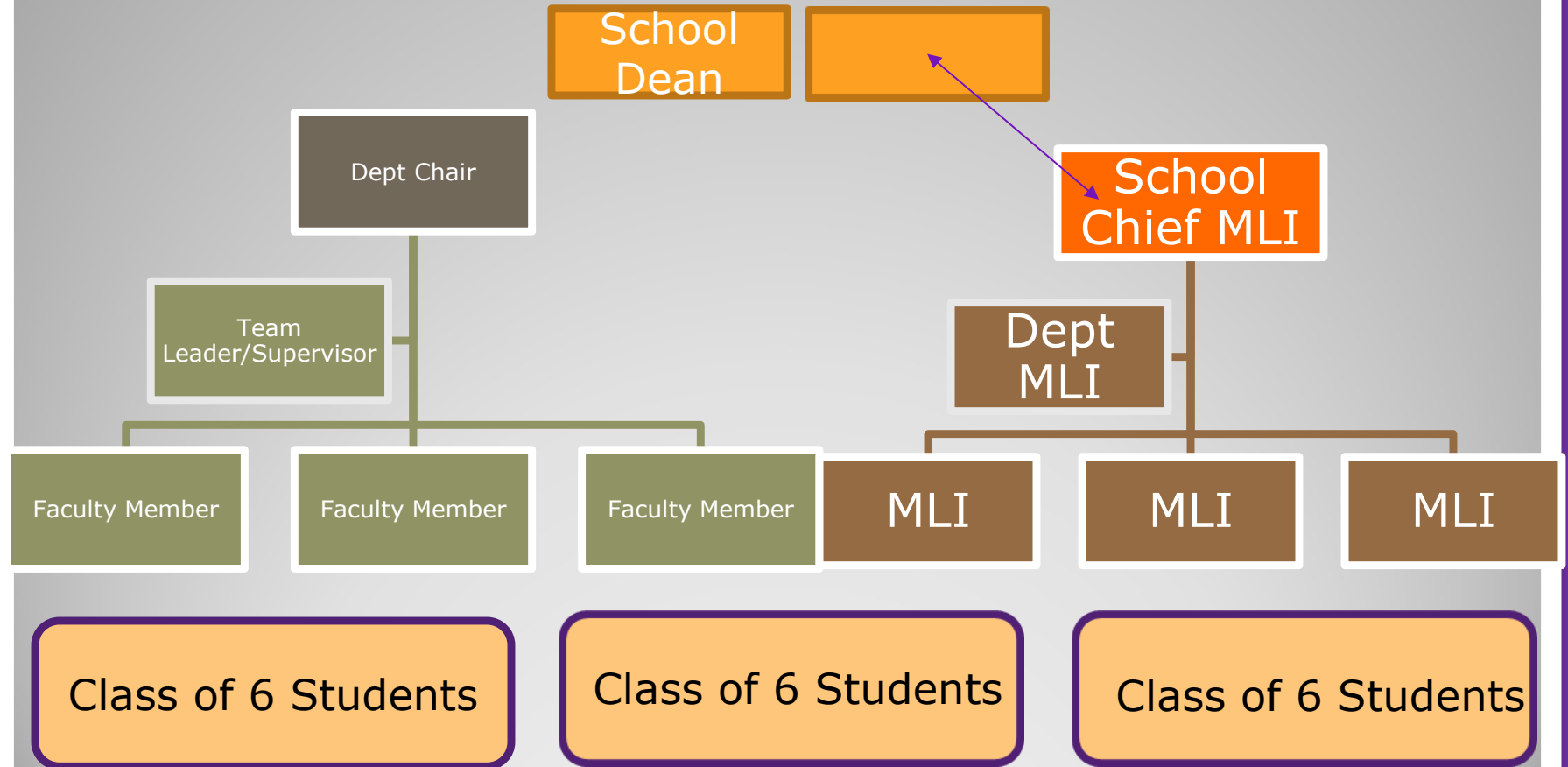- Academic Activity – Conference Presentation, Publications, etc.

Result In:

- Classroom/Action Research as a common occurrence

Ensuring Students Come First

- The Instructional Structure
- Accountability by All Stakeholders
- Institutional Culture

Accountability by All Stakeholders

- How can the institute ensure that students rather than researchers come first - as they do?
  - Formal Approval Process for Research involving students from supervisory chain
  - Monitoring of Research from supervisory chain
  - Student Feedback – Mechanisms established
  - Documentation & Submission - Formal Report/Paper-How did the study inform the DLI

Institutional Culture

- Institutional Culture - Students Drive the Institute
- Teachers are Invested in Addressing Students Needs
  - Student Graduation Rates Inform
    - Funding
    - Faculty Evaluation (in part)
    - And so on…….

Applicability to Other Contexts

Let's take a look –

- The Instructional Structure
- Accountability by All Stakeholders
- Institutional Culture

Regulating the Research Footprint

Maureen Burke
The University of Iowa
maureen-burke@uiowa.edu

Our philosophy

- Support second language research

- Be vigilant in protecting our students

- Ensure student learning is not disrupted

Our policy

- All requests must be approved by me
- Do not allow researchers to gather data in classes

Typical requests

- Classroom observations
  - for TESL certificates
  - for Peace Corps
- Graduate student research
  - for a class assignment
  - for thesis research
  - for conference presentation
- Faculty
  - research

The procedure

- Request in writing or face-to-face
- Must provide
  - a summary of their project
  - type of project (class, thesis, etc.)
  - how they plan to gather data
  - IRB approval status

Process if approved

- Provide flyer with information for students
- Provide the student consent form
- Show IRB approval
- ESL faculty explain the project
- Interested students contact the researcher
- Researcher conducts study