

ECAD4010 Professional and Pedagogic Studies:

Researching the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching?

Session 3:

Becoming an ethical practitioner.
Consent and assent

Yr Athrofa Research Dispositions

Being sceptical

- Understand **empirical evidence** in contested fields
- Being aware of political, economic and social drivers for 'evidence'

Being ethical

- Knowing and using ethical principles of research
- Understanding **positionality**

Being a skilled researcher

- Understanding **qualitative** and **quantitative** methods
- Be able to construct an argument based on evidence
- Employing **critical reading** skills

Being part of an inquiring profession

- Proactively contributing to a range of audiences
- Actively engaging with the inquiry and findings of others

Session Aims



- To explore ethical principles in educational research
- To understand the notion of consent and assent





What are
ethics?



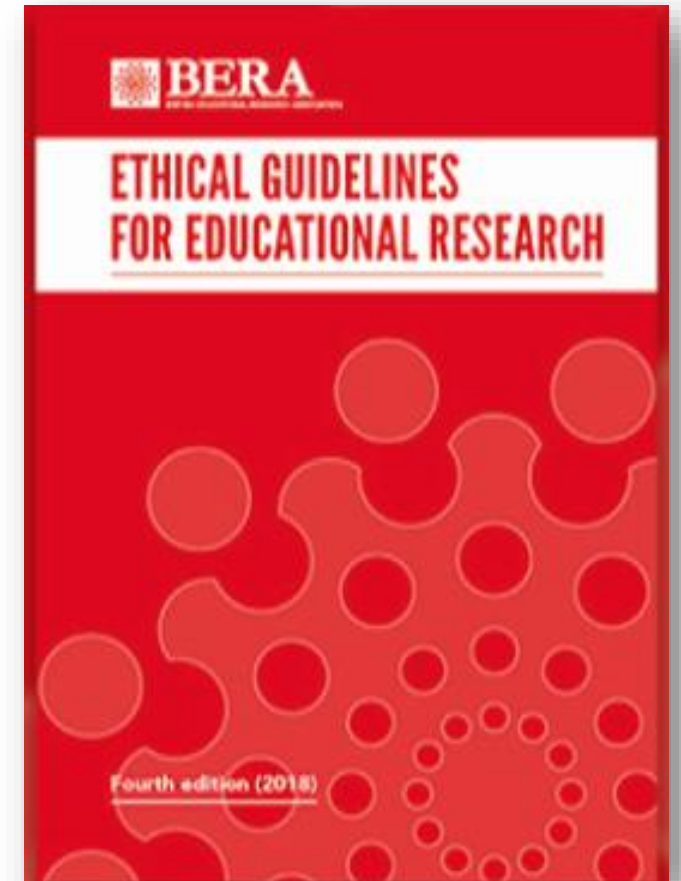
Ethics are sets of moral principles or norms that are used to guide moral choices of behaviour and relationships with others.

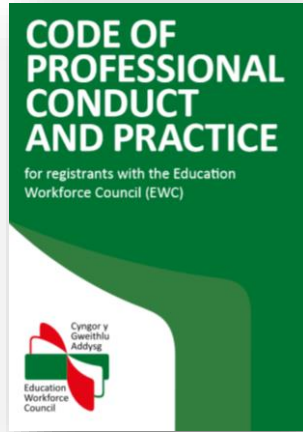
Gray, D (2018) *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage Publications Ltd (page 70)

BERA (2018) guidelines

The BERA guidelines include consideration of the researcher's responsibilities to participants such as:

- Consent/assent
- Right to withdraw
- Harm
- Privacy and data storage





1. Personal and professional responsibility
2. Professional integrity
3. Collaborative working
4. Professional knowledge and understanding
5. Professional learning

The EWC

The EWC is the statutory, self-regulating professional body for education practitioners in Wales. It seeks to raise the status of workers in education and training by maintaining and promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and practice in the interests of registrants, learners and the general public.

The Code

The *Education Workforce Council (Main Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2015*, as amended, stipulates a Code must be published which specifies the standards of professional conduct and practice expected of persons registered with the EWC.

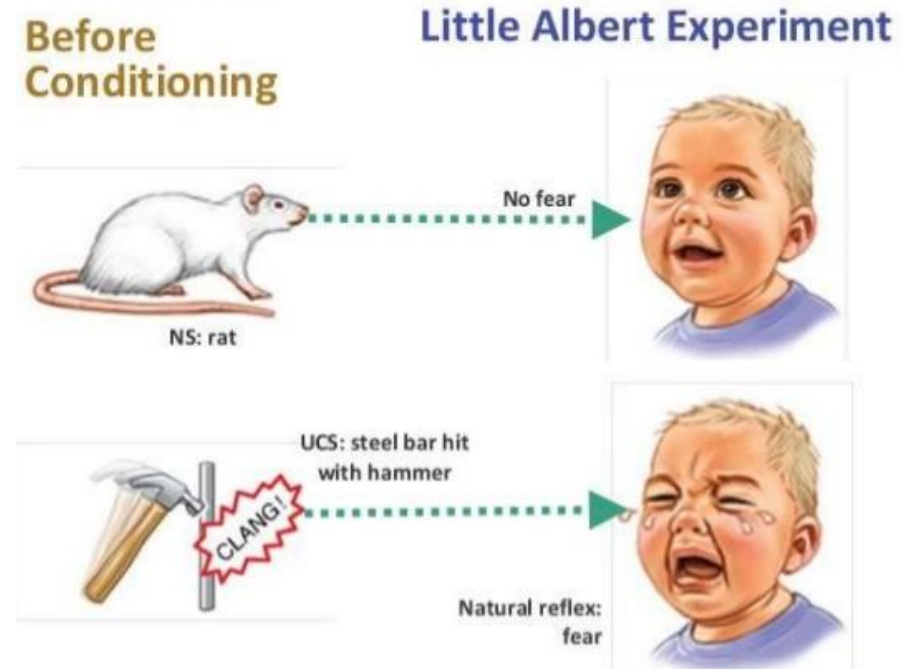
This Code sets out the key principles of good conduct and professional practice EWC registrants uphold, and is intended to inform, support and guide all in their day to day conduct and practice. It is also information for parents, the public and stakeholders involved in the education of learners in Wales, and learners themselves, as to the standards they can expect from registrants.

Failure by a registrant to adhere to the Code may call their registration with the EWC into question. The EWC has legal powers to investigate and hear cases of alleged unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence and criminal offences involving registrants. Every case is investigated on its own merits, including the employment context (the sector / practitioner role) involved. The Code is applied proportionately to any facts found proven in a particular case.



'Little Albert'

- Performed by Watson and Rayner (1920)
- Used to prove classical conditioning theory
- Experimented on Douglas Merritte
- Experiment conditioned a small child to fear a rat
- 'Little Albert' started to generalise his fear in response to anything fluffy, white or both



Watch the video of the 'Little Albert' experiment and consider the following...

- In what ways is this research unethical?
- Should we use the findings of this research in other contexts?





Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice

2017 - 2020

Are 'ethics' absolute?

- Ethical decisions are usually *choices* related to the balance between benefit and risk
- These choices are guided by:
 - ethical guidelines
 - ethics committees
 - ethics approval processes



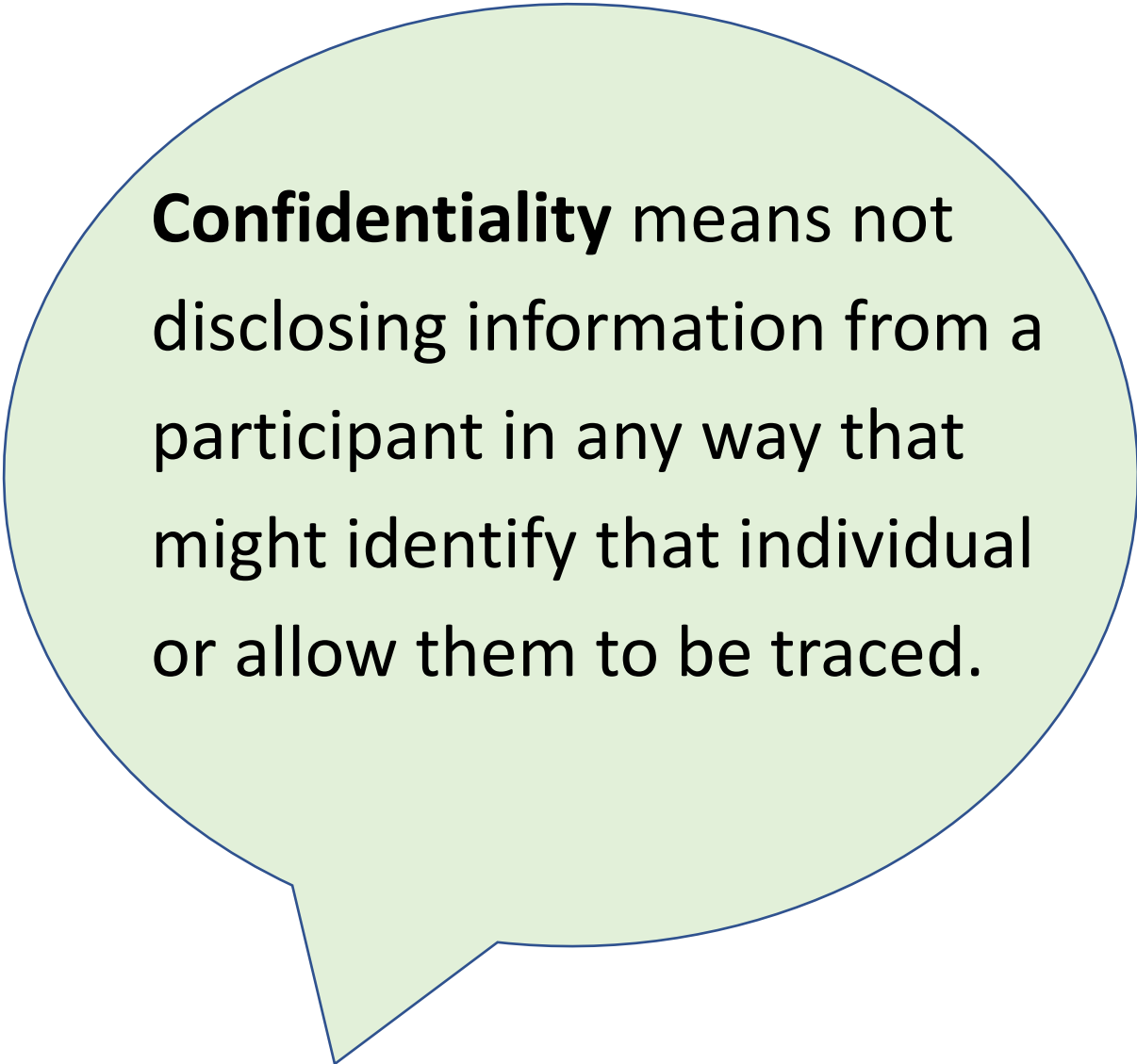
Confidentiality / Anonymity

‘The confidential and anonymous treatment of participants’ data is considered the norm for the conduct of research’ (BERA, 2018:21)

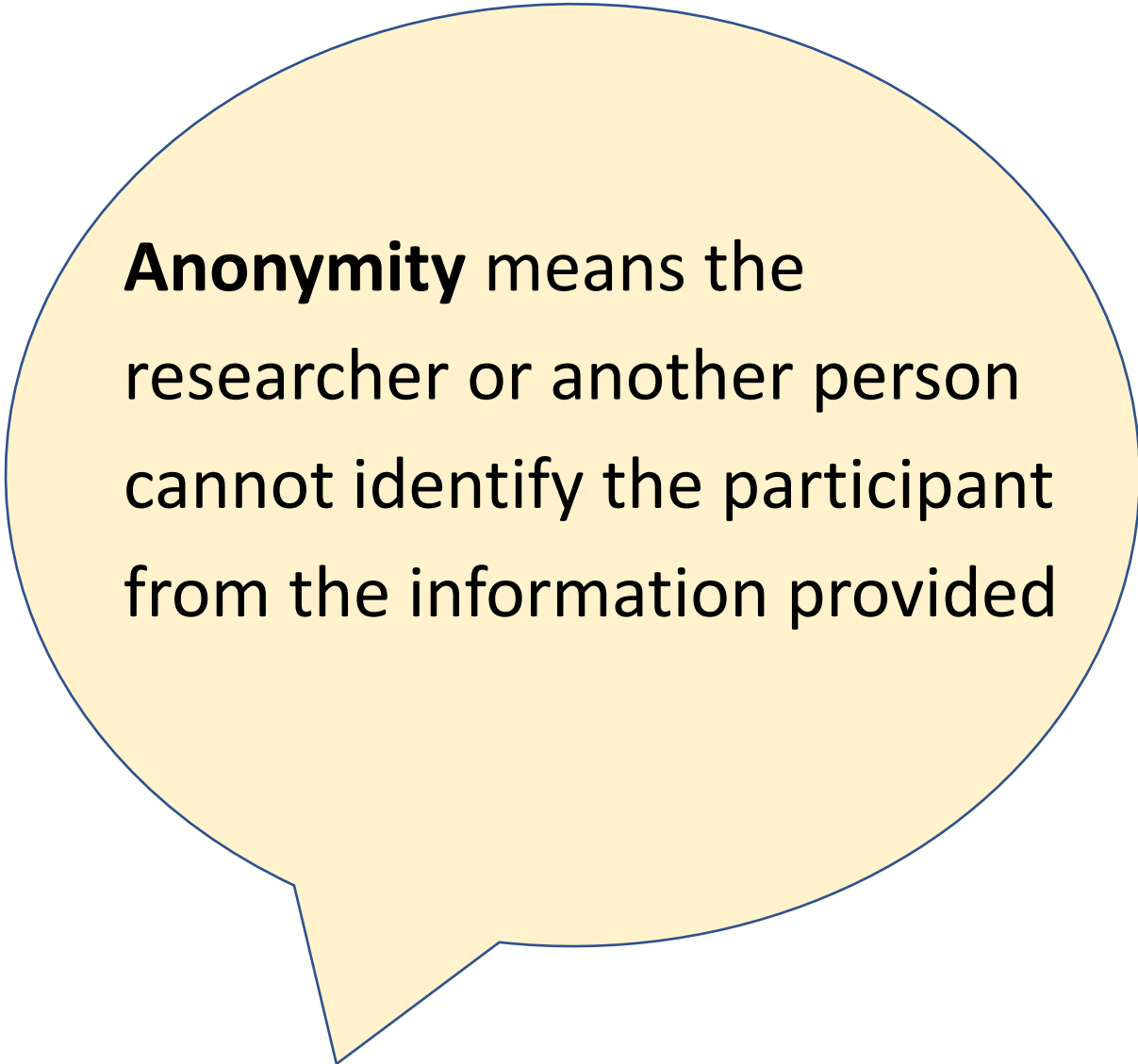
- The participants in your research have the right to privacy.
- This is achieved through ensuring you manage your research data with confidentiality and anonymity in mind.

But... are confidentiality and anonymity the same?



A green speech bubble with a blue outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom-left.

Confidentiality means not disclosing information from a participant in any way that might identify that individual or allow them to be traced.

A yellow speech bubble with a blue outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom-left.

Anonymity means the researcher or another person cannot identify the participant from the information provided

Anonymisation of data

- Being able to share your research is important. However, ethically we must protect our participants.
- Wherever possible, you should not collect identifying information (such as name, address) for your participants.
- You should anonymise your data at source.



**How can we
anonymise data?**



How can we anonymise data?

- The process of anonymising data requires that identifiers are changed in some way.
- This might mean identifying information is removed, substituted or generalised.

Remember that a person's identity can be disclosed from:

- **Direct identifiers** such as names, postcode information or pictures.
- **Indirect identifiers** which, when linked with other available information, could identify someone, for example information on workplace, occupation, salary or age.

Consent and assent

- **Informed Consent** is a voluntary agreement to participate in **research**.
- Not just a form that is signed, but it is a process whereby the subject has an understanding of the research and its risks.
- Informed consent is essential before starting your research.
- **Assent** is a term used to express willingness to participate in research by persons who are by definition too young to give **informed consent** but who are old enough to understand the proposed research in general, its expected risks and possible benefits, and the activities expected of them as subjects.

Consent and assent – what is the difference?

Consent may only be given by individuals who have reached the age of 18

Assent is the agreement of someone not able to give legal consent to participate in an activity

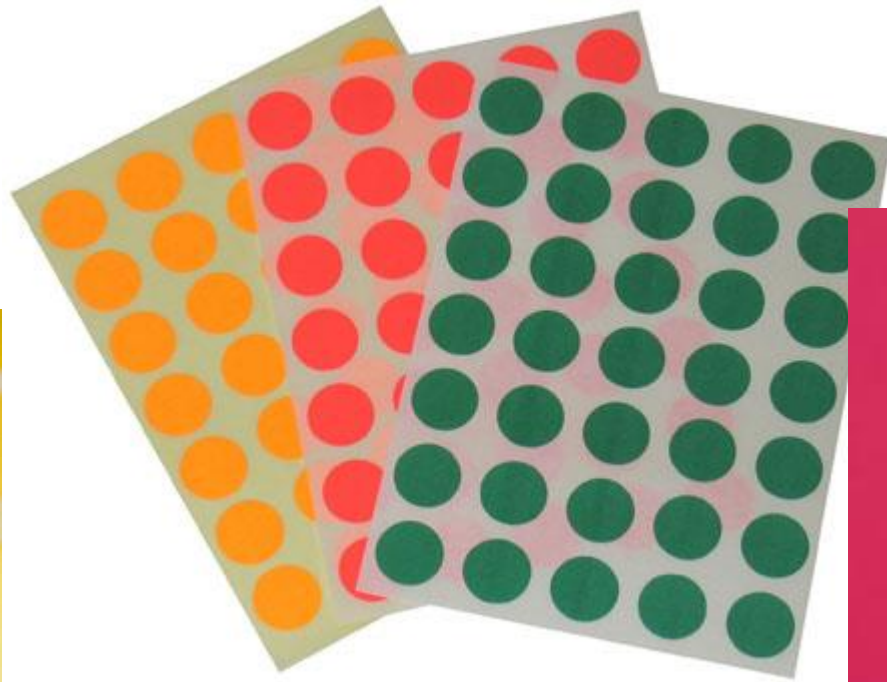
Obtaining parental consent for a child is currently sufficient for that individual to participate in research. However, supplementing this with informed assent respects the opportunity for children to make their own choices, including the right to dissent or drop out, and be involved in the decision-making process (Dockett, Perry, & Kearney, 2013). Some researchers argue that obtaining assent serves as an important reminder to treat children with respect and dignity, but also may benefit children's development as autonomous decision makers (Ford et al., 2007). The idea that parents act as surrogate decision makers for their children, whose views are sufficient for defining their children's needs, has been shifting towards the idea that listening to children and understanding their own needs and wishes not only shows respect for children's rights but is relevant to the improvement of social policies and practices (Lindeke et al., 2000; Mayall, 2000).

Source: Pyle, A and Daniels, E (2015). Using a picture book to gain assent in research with young children. Early Child Development and Care



- Read the excerpt above (full text is hyperlinked at the bottom of the page)
- While reading, make notes on arguments **FOR** informed consent and assent
- What is the difference between consent and assent?





Directed Task 3

Using the content of this session, produce **ONE power point slide** which addresses the following questions. You will need to reference materials when writing your assignment, so check out **BERA guidelines (2018)** and other relevant sources.

- What aspects of research with young children may be ethically problematic?
- How would you protect your participants?



