Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
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ECDE 7021

Exploring Contemporary Issues in Education 2: **Applying critical skills, contributing to knowledge: leading improvement**

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Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

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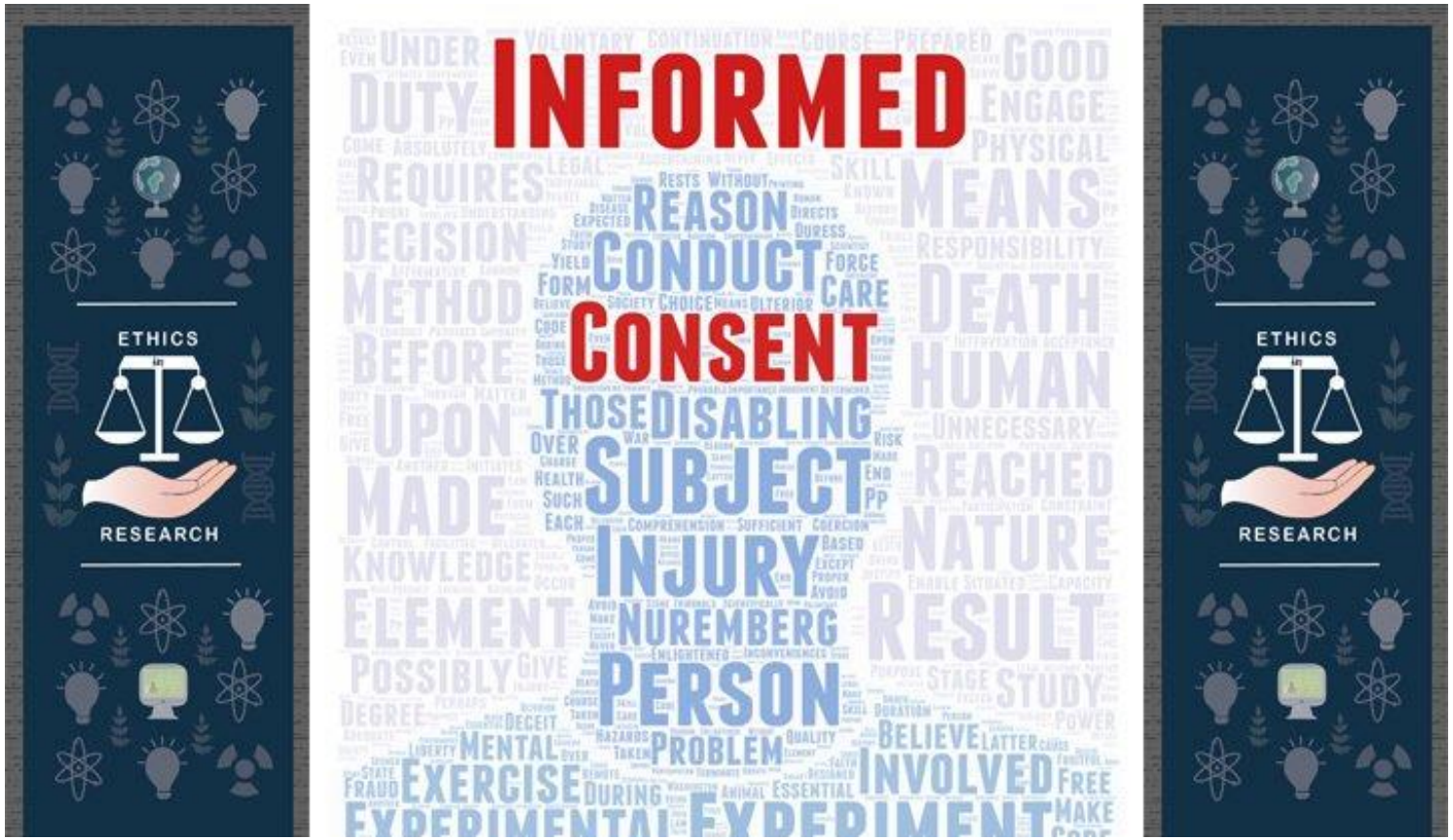
Clear and ethical communication – why is this important?

Clear communication will help with…

- Protecting participants' rights and autonomy
- Building trust and encouraging participation
- Meeting institutional and ethical guidance requirements
- Preventing legal and ethical issues
- Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility
- Facilitating a smooth research process

Voluntary, informed consent – a fundamental tenet of ethical behaviour in research



- ‘It is normally expected that participants’ voluntary informed consent to be involved in a study will be obtained at the start of the study, and that the researchers will remain sensitive and open to the possibility that participants may wish, for any reason and at any time, to withdraw their consent’ (BERA, 2024, p.13)).

What is informed consent?

- Informed consent is one of the founding principles of research ethics. Its intent is that human participants can enter research freely (voluntarily) with full information about what it means for them to take part, and that they give consent before they enter the research.

- Consent should be obtained before the participant enters the research (prospectively), and there must be no undue influence on participants to consent. The minimum requirements for consent to be informed are that the participant understands what the research is and what they are consenting to.

Participant information letter:

The participant information letter is a vital document that balances ethical responsibility, participant autonomy, and research integrity.

It should be clear, concise, and transparent, ensuring that individuals have all the necessary information to make an informed and voluntary decision about their participation.

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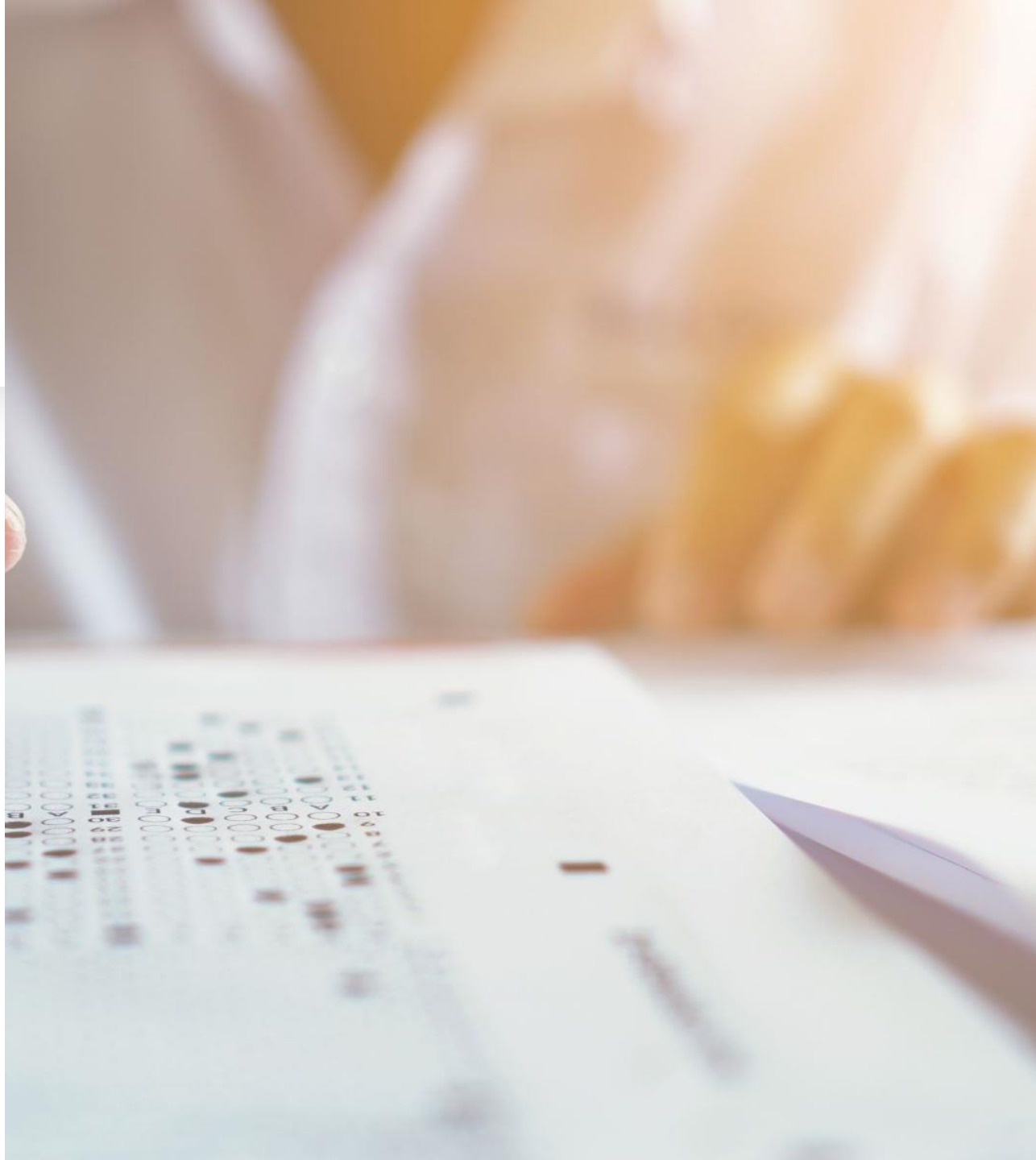
Participant information sheet:

- The participant Information Sheet gives potential participants the necessary understanding for the motivation and procedures of the study and sources of information to answer any further questions to allow them to give informed consent.

- A Consent Form essentially reprises this information to ensure the key points are understood and then records this understanding, usually with a signature. Consent may also be recorded electronically, for example through web-forms by clicking a button. More than one Consent Form may be needed (for adults and children separately, for example). Consent Forms are usually in addition to Participant Information Sheets.



Task: In pairs

Briefly look at the exemplars of information letters in the folder

List the key features/ information

Key components:

- Study title and purpose
- Researcher(s) and affiliation(s)
- Study procedures (what participants will do)
- Risks and benefits
- Confidentiality and data handling
- Voluntary participation and withdrawal
- Contact information for queries

Information Sheets

- What the research is trying to find out
- The purpose of the research
- Who is carrying it out
- Exactly what will be asked of the participants
- How the information they provide will be recorded
- What will then happen to the data
- What degree of confidentiality and anonymity is afforded
- How the information will be analysed
- How the findings will be reported
- Who will see the results of the study

Assent vs Consent

Comparison Table

Characteristics	Assent	Consent
Meaning	Agreeing with something, a request, or to participate in an activity	Giving permission to be involved in an activity
Age	Obtained from people who are not of legal age to give a consent	Obtained from adults (people above the legal age)
In research	Willingness to participate in a study	Legally entered agreement for a subject to participate in a study
In law	Not a legally binding permission	Legally binding permission

DB Difference Between.net

Consent – key elements

- What should participants know before agreeing to participate?
- What potential risks and benefits should be clearly stated?
- How will confidentiality and data protection be ensured?
- How will participants be informed of their right to withdraw?
- How can the form be written in clear, non-technical language to ensure accessibility?

HAVE
A
GO

Top tips:

Read your partner’s draft

Provide a list of top tips that might support them in their re-draft

Feedback:

Questions?