



Ethics at Masters' Level

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Ethics

- Research ethics are an integral part of any research project
- Why research ethics?
- Can be viewed in two ways
 - Guidelines and the law
 - Personal standpoint and values

Ethics: Guidelines

- Research guideline:
 - E.g. BERA guidelines, BPA, BSA etc
 - Organisational Guidelines:
 - Research contract/protocol where carrying out research
 - Institution you doing the research in the name of
 - Law:
 - Data Protection (e.g. how long you can store things, informed consent for taking photographs).
 - Child protection CIRB checks

Ethics: Law

- Law
- The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force 1 March 2000 to bring the UK. into line with a European Community Human Rights Directive
 - Consent
 - The individual must be made fully aware of the purposes for which the data are to be used
 - Every item of personal data that is held or processed must be accurate and up to date, and held for no longer than necessary
 - Individuals have the right to know what data are held about them

Ethics: Law

- Law:
- Child Protection
- Vulnerable Adults
 - CRB checks

Ethics: Personal standpoint and values

- Your own perspective will influence the type of research and research ethics you will adopt
- Ask yourself how do I want to be in relation to those I am studying?
- Do I want to see them as objects or agents in the research process?
- In other words do I want to do research on people or in collaboration with people?

Ethics: Personal Standpoint and Values

- How my values influenced the research
- I had a collaborative design and wanted to work alongside those involved in the research I did not see them as **participants**
- I believe in respecting individuals, and wanted to build relationships with them that were reciprocal, trusting and authentic.

Ethics: Qualitative research

- Your position could for example be suited to a qualitative stance to research
 - Feminists, action researchers and the constructivists paradigm, fourth generation evaluation have all, argues Punch (1994)
 - Has a powerful impact on consciousness about ethics in research and have, in particular argues against deception and for takes the interest of the research subjects into account. (90)

Ethics: Qualitative Research

- Essential to this position on ethics is that you are open and honest with those you are working alongside.
- Guba and Lincoln (1989) illustrate:
 - Deception is worse than useless to a non-conventional evaluator; it is destructive of the effort's ultimate intent' (122)

Ethics: Caveats

- Sometimes difficult to draw up a contact/protocol, difficult to keep everybody happy!
- Issues of confidentiality can you offer complete confidentiality?
- Being collaborative/power relations
 - Feminist ethical critiques of research question whether the research relationship is irreducibly exploitative (Wolf, 1996)

References: Ethics

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