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***Ideology and the discourses of research: the ethics of Ethics for
cross-cultural research in Education¹***

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Abstract

Australian universities require educational researchers, whether students or staff, to apply for approval of their research projects involving humans or animals. This approval is granted by universities' Ethics Committees. As a license to research, this gate-keeping procedure has the complicated task of protecting participants in research studies, as well as researchers and institutions from potential 'harm'. In current times, where the 'public beneficiaries' of educational research are as likely to be global as they are local, the ideologically situated discourses of Ethics requirements can impact on cross-cultural research practices in ways that affect the quality of the research, and sometimes prevent it, calling into question the notion of education as a public good: whose good is it and for which public?

In this paper I report on a case study investigating the ways in which the discourses of one Ethics committee have affected the work of international students conducting educational research in their own countries. I look closely at how the language and procedures of the approval process position cross-cultural researchers. I discuss Education research students' accounts of cross-cultural challenges that arise from the Ethics requirements, as well as the benefits they see. Drawing on suggestions from these participants and insights from socio-cultural and activity theory, I propose practices for the case institution that may permit a more dialogic approach to negotiating student research.

Introduction

In Australian universities Ethics committees have been formed to ensure that researchers take seriously the ethical issues in the conduct and reporting of their research. As a license to research, this gate-keeping procedure has the complicated task of protecting participants in research studies, as well as researchers and institutions from potential 'harm'. This is a laudable undertaking, but in this era of globalisation it is an extremely challenging task. In current times, where the 'public beneficiaries' of educational research are as likely to be international as they are local, the ideologically situated, value-laden discourses of Ethics requirements can impact on cross-cultural research practices in ways that affect the quality of the research, sometimes hindering research in another culture, and positioning the novice researcher's understanding of who he/she can be. These problems call into question the notion of education as a public good: whose good is it and for which public?

¹ The author would like to acknowledge Anne Prince for the idea

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Whose ethical standards should be applied? Can these be considered universal? How do novice researchers from cultures other than the one in which the judgement is made feel about and understand the requirements of an Ethics committee? How will behaviour established as ethical by the University be construed by those potentially involved in the research or by its users?

In this paper I report on part of a case study investigating the ways in which the discourses of one Ethics committee position novice researchers and how they have affected the work of international students conducting educational research in their own countries towards a coursework Masters degree in Education. I provide a brief account of the context within which the research was conducted, and the broader context in which these students plan their research. Next, after establishing the notion that language can never be neutral and is always linked to the way people see themselves, always imbued with ideologically-based values and assumptions, I look closely at how the language and procedures of the approval process position cross-cultural researchers. I discuss Education research students' accounts of cross-cultural challenges that arise from the Ethics requirements, as well as the benefits they see. Drawing on suggestions from these participants and insights from socio-cultural theory, I propose practices for the case institution that may permit a more dialogic approach to negotiating 'ethical' approval of the 'ethical' approaches planned for student (and staff) research.

Participants and Contexts

Participants

Seven international students participated in this study. They had just completed their Masters courses and had been members of a thesis writers' group I ran during the time they were doing research. They had also attended workshops on writing applications to the Ethics Committee and on proposal writing. I held a group interview, which sought their views on the experience of doing research in this course, and on the ways in which institutional practices and programs supported them in this process. One section of this interview focused on the procedures for the Ethics Committee. All of these students were educators in their home countries, and some were very experienced, holding positions of responsibility in their regions.

The broader context

International students in the coursework Masters program, who are of course full-time students, generally take a research methodology unit in their second semester of study. In this unit they plan their research, and by the end of the semester, they generally have submitted their applications for approval of their research to the University Ethics Committee if their research demands this. At this stage, they may have had between one and three sessions with their prospective supervisor. In their third and final semester of the course students are expected to be finalizing data collection², analyzing their data, and

² Some students undertake studies where data collection is not required, other than the reading of theory and prior research. Other students do not work with human participants. The majority, however, do collect data in interactions of one kind or another with other humans.

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writing – always writing. In this third semester, students work with their supervisors, ideally in regular meetings.

Doing research as a student has been characterized as essentially a lonely time, where students feel isolated (Johnson, Lee & Green, 2000). Cadman's (1997) study of international students' experiences in doing research writing reports the metaphors of struggle and loss used by her participants, and argues that their experiences in writing the research contribute to their sense of self – their identity – as no longer being the capable, skilled people they previously felt they were. This "trauma of loss" (Bartlett & Merger, 2000, online) is also experienced by domestic students.

While the students in my study did not express such strong feelings of loss (after all their research process was limited to six months), they certainly felt the need for feeling accompanied in their research journey, and for belonging, being valued. Sri declared her need to work in a "crowded" group, where being, talking laughing and sharing together would lead to feeling "stronger in public" and to feeling "more alive". Rani talks about the pleasure of accompanying each other. They also talked about the experience of feeling different from, but particularly not as capable as, local students. Siti said that "everyone [else] sees the expert". All the students in my study concurred that they felt there was a divide between local students, whom Siti felt seemed to be the "experts" and the international students. Sri expressed this as being "like oil and water".

Johnson et al. (2000) argue that in the institutional context of students doing research,

a certain image of the scholar, a fantasy of how knowledge is produced, shapes current practices of postgraduate pedagogy. The PhD as a form of research training, in the social sciences at least, is based on the idea of the independent scholar working free from connections with the outside world', a disembodied and disembodied figure... (p.146).

They advocate new institutional images of researchers as those who are "skilled in collaboration, in the recognition of the interdependence of human relations, and in the appreciation of the concrete skills and specific capacities of others" (p.146)

Many principles and practices, imbued with the ideology of rationalism, individualism and their focus on autonomy, define the experience for international students doing research in a coursework degree. For such students some of these principles and practices include:

1. the international student visa requirement together with the structure of the degree, which together impose the very short timeframe within which the permission to do the research, the conduct of the research and its reporting must all be achieved;
2. the perception that research that is relevant to the student's home context (whether it is carried out in this context or not) is educationally sound;
3. the practical difficulties in conducting such research;

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4. the ways the language and requirements of the Ethics forms position novice researchers;
5. the access to and responsiveness of the supervisor and the related positioning of the student as an autonomous learner.

In some ways these practices work at odds with each other and cause confusion and frustration for the fledgling researcher. For example, on the one hand, the student is expected and encouraged to plan research in or with participants from his/her home country, while the questions and language used in the ethics form seem to assume that the researcher is a local, monolingual (English speaking) Australian and that local values placed on concepts such as privacy and professional relationships will be applicable everywhere in the world. On the one hand the University embraces diversity while on the other its practices may be defined by local ideologies that inhibit such diversity.

The research context: a thesis writers' study group and workshops

I have been working with international students in my faculty for many years now. I provide them with support in writing their proposals, their theses and their papers. Such support involves workshops on proposal and thesis writing, sessions on applying to the University's Ethics Committee for approval of research plans and weekly thesis writer group meetings dubbed "therapy"³ by Rani, one of the participants in this study. All these sessions focus on negotiating the discourses of the field of education and their associated genres in ways that permit students to feel some control over the ways in which they appear in their writing as competent, thoughtful practitioners. Over these years students have been consistently puzzled about the way the institutional process for approval shapes what they can and can not achieve in their research.

My workshops on filling out the Ethics application forms over the last three years (each semester I run one workshop series consisting of two to three two-hour sessions) have consistently witnessed students' expressions of bemusement, frustration and even outrage at some of the requirements of the form. Equally, the workshops have been the site of animated discussion about how the process of discussing and filling in the form helped the participating students to understand ethical issues they had not previously thought of, yet felt were valid for their own research contexts.

In the workshops on the Ethics application process, I use a critical, genre-based pedagogy with a focus on the decision-making process in answering certain questions. The students in the workshop have all been studying a research methodology subject in which they have readings and discussions on ethical issues, and are also in the process of writing their substantial research proposals. Thus, I begin the workshops with a brief discussion of the intention of the Ethics Committee to protect all stakeholders (researcher(s), participants and affiliated institutions) from harm, while still promoting quality research. This discussion is always animated, and continues throughout the sessions, as it is this

³ Rani and her colleagues in the thesis writers' group saw the sessions as a place of laughter and confessions, where they could admit their failings and their struggles with no strings attached, and share good ideas or pep each other up. They were highly collaborative.

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difficult balance between ‘protection’ and ‘quality’ that students often see as not being achieved in cross-cultural contexts.

I use a form that I have filled out, and one filled out by a former student (who gave me permission to use it in class) to illustrate responses to the questions. In both cases I reveal some of the reasoning behind the responses I on the forms, and we discuss the assumed purpose of the question. Students explore issues to do with their own attempts at filling in the form. It is in these workshops and in one-to-one consultations with me or my colleagues that students have indicated how the filling in of the form affects their sense of themselves as researchers and their ability to investigate what they want to find out about. I draw on my own perceptions of these students’ responses in this paper.

The form, entitled *Application for Ethical Approval of a Research Project Involving Humans* (Monash University Standing Committee On Ethics In Research Involving Humans, 2004, hereafter referred to as the ‘Ethics form’) represents a prominent institutional practice that deeply affects the ways in which researchers can make meaning out of their research, and the ways they see themselves as affiliated with the institution.

The positioning of novice researchers in the Ethics form is, I argue, implicit in the discourse used. I explore this positioning below. However, before embarking on my analysis of the Ethics form and giving my account of students’ perspectives, I wish to acknowledge the readiness of the Ethics Committee to respond to problems with the form, The Committee administrator has invited me to present my findings and to discuss ways of improving the form, the development of which committee members appropriately see as an ongoing project. It is always difficult to create a ‘one-size-fits-all’ style of document for users coming from many different kinds of research traditions and contexts (disciplinary, cultural, national, international). This said, it is important not to assume homogeneity in the contexts and values of the researchers and the public the research will serve. The *intention* of the Committee may seem to be to avoid the imposition of dominant discourses and ideologies. What of the effect?

Language is never neutral

In order to understand how the apparently inert artifact that is the Ethics form can act as a definer, not only of the ways in which research can be conducted, but also of the ways in which international students are invited (or obliged) to see themselves as scholars and researchers, we need to understand the relationships between language, cultural practices and values, social change and identity. Many scholars have written on these issues; I will discuss just a few of their ideas.

The nexus among identity, culture and representation systems such as language has been long established by Hall (1990, 1997), among others, who advocates seeing “identity as a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.” (Hall, 1990, p.51) Hall sees culture as constitutive of identity and language, just as these, in reciprocal ways are constitutive of culture. Nevertheless, Hall problematises the notions of culture and ‘cultural identity’, which can not be understood as unitary or monolithic. Rosaldo (1993, p.3) also argues that

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anthropological and sociological inquiry can no longer be undertaken with an assumption of “the unity of cultural wholes”, but rather must be undertaken through attention to “the myriad crossroads and borderlands”. In the same vein, Pennycook (2001, p.145) adverts against the “colonial othering” inherent in views of “cultural *fixity*” (italics in the original), where the (colonial) local is seen as a norm and therefore does not require examination.

In my investigation it is important to keep in mind these views of culture as multiple and complex, and identity as “negotiated, constructed, and conflicted” in nature (Norton, 1997, p. 409). Identity is about becoming as much as it is about being. The role that language plays in negotiating the crossroads and borderlands and in shaping our becoming, our development of new identities and new spaces for ourselves is very significant, since it is through language that – at least in education – we most often negotiate our intellectual and professional growth. Our identities as scholars and professionals, however are constituted through the language of others as much as they are through our own use of language. This is the effect of representation systems.

James Gee (1999, p.4) introduces his book on investigating language use in discursive practices by proclaiming that language is always positioned and positioning: “Grammar simply does not allow us to write from no perspective”. He looks closely at how grammatical choices and language details in communication may lead to “social activities, identities and politics, far beyond ‘giving and getting information’” (Gee, 1999, p.2).

Prior (2001, p. 59) explains this notion of language further, drawing on the works of Bakhtin and Voloshinov:

For Bakhtin and Voloshinov (1973), language is always situated *and* social because – in production and understanding – it is dialogic along three planes: it uses and responds to past utterances, it is oriented to the immediate context of the situation, and it is addressed to future utterances and situations. Furthermore, they stress that discourse is never a neutral, anonymous system of referential meaning; instead, it is infused with evaluative perspectives, affective colorations, and indexical traces of all kinds.

The evaluative perspectives and affective colorations of language use and interpretation are what interest me viz a viz the Ethics form, because these aspects contribute to students’ identities as researchers, professionals and people in an exercise that is powerful in itself, since it can provide access to or a barrier from the doing of research.

What can one do about the potential for harm coming from the positioning of others through language (whether naïve or not)? Dallmayr (1996, p.134) looks toward a “genuine dialogical learning on the level of basic frameworks, beyond assimilation and exclusion”. I consider his advice in my recommendations for change. First though, I explore how the Ethics form positions students and how they feel about this.

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Benefits and positive positioning

The novice researchers in this study appreciated the intentions of the Ethics Committee to protect them, their participants and the University from any 'harm' that could be caused by the research process. Although there was not a specific exploration of the Ethics form in my interview, the workshops I have held have discussed this matter. Many of the following comments in this section are drawn from insights I have gained in these workshops. The identified benefits revolve around the notion of respect: respect for the researcher, and respect for participants and institutions, and respect for the relationships among these elements, as these are embodied in the language of the form..

Respect for the researcher

There are certain elements in the Ethics Application Form that appear to afford novice researchers respect as individuals with their own culture and identity. The first, as I identify it, is the very first question, which requires the researcher to give his/her name. The fact that the box asks simply for the 'name', with a separate box for 'title' means that the committee is making no assumptions about the constituent parts of a name, nor the order in which it should be written. That decision is left to the student, who can thus choose to maintain his/her culturally based practices in naming; this is an affirmation of identity. I think this should be recognized as a major achievement, since so few forms permit this freedom of identification.

The second element is the question that shows concern for the researcher's own safety:

"Are there any risks for the researchers? Please outline the strategies you have in place to reduce this risk." (Item 6.6)

Although the participants in this study did not mention this, students in my workshops often comment on the considerateness of the question, once they overcome their bemusement.

Respect for the participants and institutions

Students in my workshops have commented that the requirement of the explanatory statement would help to establish a respectful relationship between researcher and participants, and kept them honest as researchers. They also appreciate this component as helpful to them in doing their research. I have seen student researchers use the explanatory statement to remain focused in the process of their thesis writing.

A second item on the Ethics Application form that is respectful of institutions is the requirement to gain permission from the institution that will be the site of the research.

Does your project involve other organisations? **If NO**, please go to Section 3. **If YES**, you are required to seek approval from each organisation and provide SCERH with a copy of the signed letter of permission from each organisation.(Item 2.11)

Most of my workshop students have seen this as a reasonable expectation and one that is common practice in their home contexts. Moreover, the question seems to permit the researchers to use their own judgement and cultural and institutional knowledge to decide

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on the appropriate source of permission. This seems a respectful negotiation of the research procedures.

Items 7.1a and 7.1b (see Appendix) on the communication of the results of the research also appear to afford respect to both the researcher and the participants:

Problematic positioning of student researchers

This section looks at the ways in which the Ethics form positions students in respect of their linguistic and cultural identities, and through the participants' comments it traces how this positioning create obstacles to the conduct of the research and suggest that the Committee sees the researchers in negative way. I have chosen to present this section under subheadings corresponding to the assumptions about the student and the research context that appear to underpin the item/s. The assumptions I discuss in this paper (there are many more) are:

- That the novice researcher is monolingual and mono-cultural, and users of English as a second language are potentially inadequate communicators in both English and their first language;
- That the social context of the research values individualist practices more than collectivist ones;
 - That participants have positive attitudes toward using official, professional, and confidential processes and support structures rather than familiar family and community resources;
 - That the locus of authority lies clearly with the individual family
 - That hierarchical positions are understood as competitive and arbitrary rather than collaborative and responsible;

The novice researcher as monolingual and mono-cultural, and users of English as a second language as potentially inadequate communicators

There are a few items in the Ethics form that seem to assume that the researcher is a speaker of English and no other language, or that the only language in which the researcher might have a reasonable competence is English. These items are potentially an affront to the polyglot researcher, and were indeed noted by Sri as insulting.

One of these items, which attempts to identify the kinds of participants who may be vulnerable to the unprincipled exercise of power, (see Item 2.2 in Appendix) sees "persons whose first language is not English" as vulnerable through a possible lack of ability to communicate. This same focus is also evident in Stevens and Asmar (1999, p.19) in their book for research students about the conduct of research. It is natural for bilingual or multilingual international students to identify with this group. It is also clear that the committee has not envisaged the researcher's ability to communicate with their participants in a shared language other than English. Thus, on two counts, the student researcher is clearly couched as less 'able' as a communicator than a monolingual English speaker.

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The same effect is provided by the item cited below, which is an extract from the Explanatory Statement Checklist. It is merely an added insult to suggest that the researcher is less able than a translator in what may be their first language and their field of expertise, and that they should bear the expense of commercial translation. The word “must” on the fourth line shows that the presumed researcher is regarded as having inadequate linguistic competence in a language other than English

Where the participants may not speak English, a translation of the explanatory statement and consent form by an independent and qualified translator must be provided. Arrangements for lodging written complaints with the Committee must be made and described in the explanatory statement. It is suggested that it would be helpful to give participants a card containing the address and title of the project in English and the language in which interviews are being conducted and explaining that written complaints should be sent to the address. The card should be included so the relevant project can be traced.

This last item has been commented on widely in my workshops and some students have been absolutely incensed at its clear disregard for their expertise.

The form is experienced by students as a practice with an exclusionary intent rather than an inclusive orientation. It serves to reinforce the experience for international students in relation to some of their local colleagues of being like “oil and water”. I say ‘some of’, because I, for one, despite the fact that English is my first language, also feel that some of my most valued achievements that may clearly be pertinent to educational research, are regarded as worthless in the context. I am multilingual and multicultural and that is part of my identity. What of others in this multicultural society in our universities, which publicly pride themselves on their ability to help us to learn from each other in the true spirit of internationalization?

The social context of the research as more individualist than collectivist

A number of items assume that the researcher will be conducting the research in a society that has ‘individualistic’ and rationalistic orientations rather than ‘collectivist’ values. Individualistic interrelations are regarded by Hofstede (1986, p.308) as “loosely integrated” and assuming that “any person looks primarily after his/her own interest and the interest of his/her immediate family”, while collectivist interrelations are “tightly integrated” and are mutually responsible and protective. I claim that the emphasis in the individualistically oriented Ethics procedures is placed on institutionalized procedures, ‘professional’ support, privacy, the authority of the family and the primacy of intellectual property. It should be noted here that I am not subscribing to a simple, essentialising view placing particular cultures along some kind of continuum as suggested by Hofstede (1986). Indeed, this paper has at its heart the notion that there is diversity within and among groups and that this should be respected, understood, and sought out.

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Assumptions regarding appropriate support resources

The Ethics form seems to assume that participants have positive attitudes toward using official, professional, and confidential processes and support structures – and that these are readily accessible – rather than other resources such as family or community resources. At interview, one of my participants, Rani, explained how some of the Ethics Committee’s requirements limited her research sites considerably (confining them to a sole site in a middle class area that had a counselor), and limited the willingness of potential interviewees to participate because of the culturally inappropriate assumptions made about what would protect participants. The requirements (eg, Item 6.4 in the Appendix) were that she provide her interviewees with easy access to a counselor and advise them that she was obliged to break confidentiality to comply with mandatory reporting (in a country, she said, where there are ironically no laws to protect the students). She explained:

The issue with ethics for me was, uh, the things that I had to say that I am going to do, um, didn’t exactly fit into the ... culture, obviously, because they wanted me to have a counselor for my participants and stuff like that. And, that just hindered my data collection back home, because it limited the amount of people that I could interview. Um, as well as the whole thing of mandatory reporting. That was basically the major issues I had. Yeah ... I would have got far more participants and they would have been much more willing if they knew that I wasn’t going to tell the counselor, and things like that, so ... It’s just difficult sitting here and filling up an ethics form for them [the Committee] when they don’t know anything about the culture.

Several participants (Rani, Siti, Sri, Gaya) mentioned the issue of requiring a police check (Item 5.10) for collecting data in schools. They saw this as an obstacle in their countries, where there was no such requirement, and it would be seen as a breach of confidentiality rather than a protection for the school research participants, since they are not protected by law. They did, however, acknowledge the value of the principle behind the requirement, and

The assumption that the locus of authority lies with individuals or families

The notion of informed consent implicit in Item 3.2, which needs to be given by parents for school students, was also a contentious issue among workshop-goers as well as some of my participants. In societies where parents perceive that the teacher has the authority and indeed the responsibility for deciding what is appropriate for students to do, the notion of parental consent serves only to prompt suspicion about the ‘sinister’ nature of the research that should require such an unusual measure to protect – probably – the school.

One of my focus group participants, Nina, alluded to another aspect of this issue, the clear authority of the principal over adult participants. Nina, true to her promise to the Ethics Committee, wished to give choice to teachers regarding participation in her research, but faced difficulties in carrying this through.

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Me. I have problems, because I go to the school, and, it's like a school setting, and in [her country] normally the principal is the owner of the school and she is used to making the decisions, every decision in the school – she can control everything. But through the process for Ethics, you need to have like, Um, sampling, you know what I mean, like volunteering or something like that. But she want to control it – you know what I mean. That is hard for me.

Nina did not have the option of acceding to the principal's 'volunteering' of her staff and postponing choice to the decision whether or not data could be used, which would have been a solution to her dilemma, representing a culturally appropriate way of preserving a value she had adopted from her new study context.. Instead, she struggled with imposing her institution's unmodified ways of working in the world.

The assumption that hierarchical positions are understood as competitive and arbitrary rather than collaborative and responsible

An ongoing issue has been the notion that unequal professional relationships are likely to lend themselves to the unfair use of power in the process of either recruitment or data collection. Such items as 2.8, 2.9 and 5.1 (see the Appendix) are examples of this view.

My discussions with students over the years have shown that in many cases a member of staff may be in a position of leadership in one area of her work and be lead by others in another. They believe there is a strong ethic of collaboration. Siti alluded to this too, saying that the personal approach in getting participants was necessary, because the approach through a third person as planned to prevent 'coercion' was not effective. Siti believed that participants wanted to collaborate when they felt a 'connection' with the person. She agreed that no-one should be made to feel obliged to participate, but that the recruiting process should be personal, as is appropriate and respectful for interactions in her community.

Being forced to lie

From their own experience, my participants agreed that many of the practices implicit in the Ethics form are, to borrow Nina's words, "fixed in here", appropriate for doing research in Australia, but causing "a lot of problems" if research is to be done in the student's own country. Before Nina's observation, Siti had succinctly asked: "Yeah, whose ethics?" in reference to the norms underpinning the form. My participants worried that, because of the inappropriate assumptions based on local Australian norms about how society and relationships work that are implicit in the Ethics form, they were obliged to say they would do something they were almost certain would not work. Rani, referring to her dilemma about telling participants about counselling services, anguishes: "But you don't want to lie to them ... there's no sense!" Sri indicates likewise the gap between the intention and the act: "Actually in Ethics, we didn't really say the truth, we didn't say the truth what we did in getting participants". This was clearly an irony in the eyes of my novice researcher participants: the culturally situated ethics underpinning the Ethics form, apart from making them feel Other/different/inferior, forced them to behave in ways that

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were neither respectful of their own cultural values and practices nor conducive to upholding honesty, a value that was very important to them (and one would hope, to the Ethics Committee).

It is a tribute to my participants and the support they receive from their supervisors that they are able to negotiate these contradictory practices in the pressure-cooker context of a six-month research project.

How can the ethics application process be improved?

I must reiterate that the Ethics Committee in the research setting has no intention of making research difficult for the University's students, nor of being disrespectful toward them. Most questions invite explanation. Nonetheless, the students – my participants and other workshop goers – feel positioned by this form and question the identity it permits them to take on as 'ethical researchers' with valued competences.

I recommend that the questions that assume monolingual competence in English as a norm should be changed. For example, in Item 2.2 (see Appendix), the wording, "Persons whose first language is not English" could be changed to "Persons with inadequate skills in the language of communication for the research". Regarding the explanatory statement checklist, the applicant could be invited to explain in what way he/she made the statement comprehensible for the potential participants, and to state his/her competence in the language(s) used for explanation and data gathering.

Questions about getting permission to do the research, recruiting participants, and obtaining informed consent could all be more open questions. For example, the question on (see Item 5.3 in Appendix) could read: "Please explain the relationship between the researcher and the potential participants, and clarify how the researcher will ensure that participation is genuinely willing". This wording does not mention coercion or power, and allows the applicant to express the cultural mores and values. After recent changes to the Ethics form, the Item asking about informed consent is already expressed in this more open way. It reads: "Please explain how you will obtain informed consent from your participants? If you are not using a consent form, explain why one is unnecessary or inappropriate." (Item 3.2).

Workshops discussing the process of planning 'ethical' research and focusing explicitly on issues related to values in the societies and research traditions should form a second strategy for ensuring that the Ethics form embodies a respectful negotiation of researcher identity and behaviour that sees multilingual, multicultural members of the academic community as bringing valuable competences to their work. Some such workshops already exist, but, to borrow once again from Burbules (1996: 6), it is the "respectful encounter with other traditions and cultures *on their own terms*" that matters in such workshops. Both the Ethics Committee and workshop facilitators should be aware of the many and changing "evaluative perspectives and affective colorations" (Prior (2001, p.59) of the language regulating research practices so that the workshops can be a site for the informed negotiation of identity and practice rather than mere imposition.

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This paper constitutes the first stage in an exploration of the issues raised by one Ethics application process. More perspectives are needed. If research from our universities is to serve the 'public good', then universities must conceive of this public and its researchers as worthy of respect (on their own terms). An ongoing process of dialogue on a respectful basis between novice researchers from various cultural backgrounds needs to become firmly part of the gatekeeping work of any committee, in acknowledgement that the backgrounds, values and research contexts of researchers and researched are diverse and constantly changing.

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APPENDIX

Extracts from the *Application for Ethical Approval of a Research Project Involving Humans* (Monash University Standing Committee On Ethics In Research Involving Humans, 2004)

2.2 If YES to Qu 2.1, please identify if you are using potentially vulnerable participants as listed below

Please place an x as appropriate

YES	Does your research involve any of the following groups/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children or young people under the age of 18
<input type="checkbox"/>	Elderly persons (>60 yo)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons whose first language is not English
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons with an intellectual disability or mental impairment of any kind
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prisoners or people on parole
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children who are Wards of the State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons highly dependant on medical care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Military personnel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons in dependant or unequal relationships relevant to the research
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collectivities / communities (for example, trade union organisation)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal and / or Torres Straight Islanders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deception of participants, concealment or covert observation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Examining potentially sensitive or contentious issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seeking disclosure of information which may be prejudicial to participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Study or participation in illegal activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other. Please specify

2.8 Will any dependent or unequal relationship exist between anyone involved in the recruitment and the participants?

<input type="checkbox"/>	If NO, please proceed to Qu 2.9
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If YES, describe the nature of the relationship, and explain what special precautions will preserve the rights of such people to decline to participate or to withdraw from participation once the research has begun.

2.9 Are any of the researchers a member of, or have any association with, any of the organisations in which you wish to conduct your research?

<input type="checkbox"/>	If NO, please proceed to Qu 2.10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If YES, please explain what your role at that/ those organisation(s) is/are and what measures you have implemented to reduce the possibility of coercion.

3.2	Procedures for gaining informed consent
3.2 a	Please explain how you will obtain informed consent from your participants? If you are not using a consent form, explain why one is unnecessary or inappropriate.

5.3	Is there a dependent or unequal relationship between the person administering the test or procedure and the participant?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If NO, please go to Qu 5.4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If YES, please give details and explain the measures implemented to manage this situation?

6.4	Should serious events or emergencies occur during the conduct of the research what will you do? What facilities are available to deal with such incidents? Is a list of counselling services available with the Explanatory Statement? <i>e.g. an adverse drug reaction, revelation of child abuse, illegal activities, participant becomes distressed during questioning</i>
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7.1a	In what form will information about results of the project be communicated to participants?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thesis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Journal article/ book / chapter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conference presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Report to organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	On-line web based
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oral presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify
<input type="checkbox"/>	Results will not be communicated to participants and / or public

7.1b	How will participants be provided with the results?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participants will be provided with the researcher's contact details in the Explanatory Statement to request the results
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participants will be advised of the website that the results will be available on
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify