

# 2

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RELATIONAL REFLEXIVE ETHICS IN RESEARCH

### The Three Rs<sup>1</sup>

*A [hu]man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon this world.*

—Albert Camus

**O**ther, Others, Othered, Otherization, Otherness, alien, different, dissimilar, distant, etic, exotic, foreign, outsider, strange, unfamiliar, unlike, unknown, unusual.

In this chapter, I review the idea of *Other* in research, the federal designation of certain participants as vulnerable in research, and the contemporary concept of participant as capable and competent. Further, I challenge these stances by arguing research participants may be both *capable and competent yet vulnerable* at the same time. I also intend this discussion to provide readers with the foundation of the stance from which I view research, so readers can engage with the text with my biases and perspectives in mind. I trace the strands of the research ethics framework I

<sup>1</sup>Thanks to my coauthors and the journal *Quality & Quantity* for their contributions to and support of an earlier version of this work, Lahman, M. K., Geist, M. R., Rodriguez, K. L., Graglia, P., & DeRoche, K. K. (2011). Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics in research: The three Rs. *Quality & Quantity*, 45(6), 1397–1414.

Thanks also to Villegas and Lucas (2002) for their extensive work in the area of Culturally Responsive Teaching, which is the foundation of this chapter.

developed, with colleagues (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011), the three Rs—Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics (CRRRE)—and detail ethical dilemmas I am privileged to share from research colleagues' actual experiences as they struggle to make ethical decisions.

*Maria: I first became interested in the issues surrounding working with people from diverse cultures when as a novice teacher I took a position teaching in a setting with some cultural diversity. I found the diversity exciting, yet also confusing and intimidating at times. As a White woman who had the position of "authority" in the classroom, I desired to understand the parents' hopes and dreams for their child so I could support their efforts. Initially, I turned to the literature and experts' advice in an attempt to understand how to effectively relate with families. When I taught a child from a family which was Muslim and Pakistani, I read a book on understanding Islamic culture and talked to other teachers who had worked with Muslim families and an expert at the local university on Islamic culture. Nervous and naïve, I did not ask the parents of the child any specific cultural questions. Respecting the culture of the family and causing no conflict was so important to me I essentially shut off communication. This was a practice I continued that year until I received a wake-up call when a Hindi family informed me, contrary to my assumptions, they didn't follow any religious eating customs. I realized in my effort to understand the families, I was inadvertently treating them with racism at worst and at best as a stereotype. By not involving the specific family in my quest for understanding, I was lumping the family into a vast culture that might not account for or represent the whole of who they are. In essence, I was Othering them.*

## OTHER IN RESEARCH<sup>2</sup>

---

An unrestrained acknowledgement of the Other . . .

a genuine turn to the Other is needed.

—Avakian (2015, p. 81)

According to Johnson et al. (2004), "Othering is a process that identifies those that are thought to be different from oneself or the mainstream and it can reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination" (p. 254). Johnson et al. traced the concept of Othering to de Beauvoir's 1952 feminist writings regarding how dominant society places negative selves on Others, while Schwandt (2001)

---

<sup>2</sup>An earlier version of this section appears in Lahman, M. K. E. (2008). Always othered: Ethical research with children. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 6(3), 281–300.

pointed to Said's (1978) ground-breaking work on Orientalism as a place where understanding the Other was problematized early on. People who are Othered may be marginalized, have less opportunity, and/or be excluded. Othering is powerful and hard to sway or influence since it is not only the way we mark people, but also the way we identify ourselves in relation to others (Johnson et al., 2004).

Through a compelling treatise extending Spivak's (1988) work, Beverley (2000) conceived of the relationship between the researcher and the researched (or "subaltern") as "constructed out of the opposing terms of a master slave dialectic: metropolis/periphery, nation/region, European/indigenous, creole/mestizos, elite/popular, urban/rural, intellectual/manual, male/female, lettered/illiterate" (p. 562)—a description of the dominant, bifurcated relationship with the Othered. Looking back across history, the relationship may be described as the powerful (researcher) examining the exotic, unknown, unexplored, or Othered (participant). Denzin and Lincoln (2000c) asked, "Who is the Other? Can we ever hope to speak automatically of the experiences of the Other, or an Other? And if not, how do we create a social science that includes the Other?" (p. 1050).

The idea of Other in research indicates a person who is at the least unfamiliar and at the most grossly marginalized. Schwandt (2015) reminds us what we cannot forget or escape through a critical stance; all research is based on an attempt to understand the Other. If we understood, there would be no Other. Schwandt (2001) has said, "an examination of Otherness brings a reconsideration of the Other" (p. 181). Vidich and Lyman (2000) wrote that the essential research concern is, "How is it possible to understand the other when the other's values are not one's own?" (p. 41). "We potentially walk into the field with constructions of 'other' however seemingly benign, feeding the politics of representation and becoming part of a negative figuration" (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000, p. 117). Much of research has recolonized the participant as Other and perpetuated what is already believed about the Other (Fine et al., 2000). Research may be utilized to better control the Other rather than to understand or improve the Others' lives.

While historically and currently the Other has been an object to theoretically dissect and "archive" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000a, p. 13), critical scholars' examinations are allowing the concern of Otherization in research to become transparent. The concept of Othered may be seen in the areas of indigenous person studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000c, p. 1050), queer theory (Gamson, 2000), politics (Tope, Pickett, Cobb, & Dirlam, 2014), interview methodology (Roer-Strier, 2015; Sands & Krumer-Nevo, 2006), children/youth (Staunæs, 2005), etc. Scholars in critical fields such as queer theories, feminism, multiculturalism, anthropology, and post-modernism are considering the issue of Other (Schwandt, 2001). Roer-Strier and Sands (2015) wrote,

Feminist researchers have played a leading role in these debates (Olesen, 2011). Responding to assumptions of neutrality, rationality, and objectivity in what was considered ideal social science research, they proposed that researchers engage in more complex thinking about power relations, positionality, and reflexivity as means to disrupt modernist assumptions (Wolf, 1996). (p. 252)

While Othering has been developed theoretically and conceptually in the literature, there is a dearth of empirical research, illustrating examples of Othering practices (Johnson et al., 2004) unexperienced readers may wish to draw upon. Johnson et al. (2004) have noted a recent empirical expansion showing psychological, social, and health consequences such as depression (Littleford & Wright O'Dougherty, 1998), stress (Noh et al., 1999), shorter life expectancy, and barriers to health care access for those who are Othered. Johnson et al. are one group of researchers who have sought to fill this gap in the area of health research. Their findings seem to be instructive to social science in general. Johnston et al. identified three areas of Othering practice in the discourse of health care professionals explaining their experiences with patients who were not in the majority.

- Essentialized Explanations. “Involves making overgeneralization about . . . culture, race, location, social background, and health care practices” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 261).
- Culturalized Explanations. Culture is treated as a reflection of stereotypical, overgeneralized opinions instead of as a “dynamic and lived experience” (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 263).
- Racialized Explanations. For educated professionals, these explanations are often coded and hidden behind discussions of ethnicity and class since any overt reference to race may be seen as racist. Behind this hidden language, one will see an emphasis on the Others' differences as being deficiencies (Johnson et al., 2004, p. 264).

It must be noted, due to the limitations of language, it may be nearly impossible to describe certain experience without speaking in an essentialized manner.

*Maria: I recently found myself as though vocally paralyzed when returning from a trip to an area of the world few of my acquaintances have visited. While I always supplied caveats in brackets around whatever I said, I found it next to impossible not to speak in romantic ways about experiences that were profoundly positive, and in comparative, bifurcated ways when explaining an experience. Perhaps acknowledging our awareness of the dilemma language limitations poses is a step toward reducing Othering. I pressed on verbally despite this problem because I strongly feel we must not stop communicating due to trying to be appropriate. I have noticed in classes I teach some members stop speaking due to a constant feeling of every word being critiqued. When we lose dialogue, we lose the opportunity for change. Silent Othering is surely the most difficult form of this injustice with which to contend.*

While researchers have argued for the possibility of crossing the void to become like an insider (Mandell, 1988), I have argued some groups are *always Othered*

(Lahman, 2008). In this text, I continue to explore the idea that children may be always Othered (Chapter 5) and with colleagues explore if persons of differing sexual orientations and genders may be *inescapably Othered* (Chapter 7). So what then do we do as researchers? Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) have said,

Knowing the Other is one of the major motivations for doing qualitative research. The researcher wishes to know the Other in order to give a voice to people [now a critiqued phrase] who were previously ignored or were the object of distorted conceptions. The motivation to know the Other may also be beneficial for the research participants because, unlike other kinds of inquiry, in qualitative research they have the opportunity to experience recognition, acknowledgment, and empathy. In this respect, knowing the Other possesses a potential for emancipation from binding stereotypes. However, the desire to know the Other can be a potential source of dominance, when it becomes a mode of subduing her in a network of interpretations and representations. (p. 299)

A first step toward knowing the Other is of course knowing oneself:

Before the search for the Other comes the search for one's own self, one's own beliefs, principles, and dogmas, far from the obscurities, disguises, and superficial manner in which things have been interpreted by and conveyed through the centuries. This is the reason that, before approaching the Other, one has to rethink one's own claims. One has to take pains for searching for Truth, trying to understand and to reinterpret what has been so far said. (Avakian, p. 80, 2015)

## VULNERABLE IN RESEARCH

---

Vulnerable: accessible, assailable, defenseless, exposed, helpless, impotent, liable, naked, on the spot, out on a limb, powerless, sensitive, sitting duck, susceptible, unguarded, unprotected, unsafe, weak, wide open.

A closely connected idea to the Other is that of vulnerability. Methodological discussion is plentiful regarding vulnerable participants (e.g., Liamputtong, 2007; Staunæs, 2005). Related terms in research literature include *sensitive*, *hard-to-reach*, or *hidden populations* (Adler & Adler, 2001; Liamputtong, 2007). It is important to consider what the designation of a group of people as vulnerable in research might mean. A dictionary definition describes the word *vulnerable* as when one is “susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm; a person in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect” (“Vulnerable,” 2017, *Oxford Dictionaries*). To expand on this definition, I opened this section with synonyms and phrases that represent nuances of the word vulnerability.

White, upper-class, or middle-class, documented citizen, educated researchers who hold power positions in society (i.e., medical professionals, university professors, government employees) typically conduct research on/with participants who are perhaps uneducated, racially diverse, of lower classes, undocumented, and vulnerable. The following phrases underscore the possible positionalities of these participants: “doubly vulnerable persons” (Moore & Miller, 1999, p. 1034), those with “multifaceted vulnerability, . . . overlapping marginality” (Liamputtong, 2007, p. 4), and “intersecting marginalities” (Lahman, 2008, p. 282).

In some countries, certain groups are federally described as “vulnerable” in research or, as worded in Canada, in need of “special care.” In the United States federal regulations governing human subjects of vulnerable groups state “the IRB . . . should be particularly cognizant of the special problems of research involving vulnerable populations, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons” (Office of Human Research Protection, 2010). In Canada, special care is required for underdeveloped communities, women, youth/children, aboriginals, and prisoners. Great Britain, similarly to the United States, has the vulnerable designation but, notably, includes people with communication difficulties, patients receiving care, and people who are engaging in illegal activities.

One of the major concerns surrounding vulnerable designations is increased regulation around the research review process for these groups, which may in turn decrease needed research (White, 2007). Juritzen, Grimen, and Heggen (2011) sounded the following warning:

The intervention of the monitoring agencies could thereby produce unintended effects, by having potentially negative consequences for those that the ethical codes of research have been meant to protect: vulnerable and exposed participants. One objection which is being raised claims that this principle depends on the precondition that those who participate in research projects are competent to provide consent. This excludes large groups, such as children and those who are unconscious, mentally unstable, mentally disabled or demented, who all in various ways could stand to benefit from having their living conditions elucidated by research. (p. 643)

The body of literature that critiques the designation of vulnerable in research does not always provide practical ways forward. When creating this designation, whether governments were trying to protect groups of potentially vulnerable individuals or trying to protect governments, what are ways to enhance the purpose of the required designation? First, understand the historical and current contexts of people designated as vulnerable in research. Second, consider all people who give their time to be in research as potentially vulnerable. See Box 2.1 for an extended discussion of this stance. Third, consider examining the vulnerability of participants you research through their strengths and capacities, and not solely their vulnerable status. Fourth, consider engaging in collaboration with the constituents

you research as much as possible in all phases of research. REB members should also consider this so that there is clear understanding of the reviews they make in relation to the desires of the groups being researched.

Iltis, Wall, Lesandrini, Rangel, and Chibnall (2009) presented several scholars' work who have provided other ways to consider vulnerability, one of which is Kipnis. Kipnis (2001) developed a bioethical taxonomy in which he argued the focus on an entire group as vulnerable should shift to the conditions that cause someone to be vulnerable. I have slightly reframed the taxonomy for social science researchers (see Table 2.1). In this taxonomy, any participant may be vulnerable depending on differing aspects of power. The National Bioethics Advisory Committee (NBAC; 2001) adopted a framework similar to Kipnis' but removed the section termed "infrastructural" and added a socially vulnerable group. While to my knowledge neither of these organizing structures of vulnerability have been adopted by a REB, they are useful in fueling conversation and pointing a way forward rather than offering criticism without suggestions for improvement.

Vulnerable as a label, while most likely well intended as we have seen, has been strongly critiqued in the literature. At the least, there is a concern of paternalism (White, 2007) and at most, a potential disturbing reduction in research with populations designated as vulnerable (Iltis et al., 2009) due to what has been described as aggressive, impinging oversight by research ethics boards. Therefore, I am advancing the notion of *capable and competent, yet vulnerable* participants (Lahman, 2008). This position is multifaceted and takes into account that power issues may not be resolved or even may be irresolvable.

**TABLE 2.1 ■ Potential Vulnerability in Participants: A Research Ethics Taxonomy**

Potential Vulnerability	Researcher Question	Examples
1. Cognitive	Does the participant have the capacity to deliberate about and decide whether or not to participate in the study?	cognitively disabled, historically/legally children
2. Judicious	Is the participant liable to the authority of others who may have an independent interest in that participation?	students, armed forces, prisoners
3. Deferential	Is the participant given to patterns of deferential behavior that may mask an underlying unwillingness to participate?	low-in-a-hierarchy workers, novice workers

(Continued)



TABLE 2.1 ■ (Continued)

Potential Vulnerability	Researcher Question	Examples
4. Medical	Has the participant been selected, in part, because he or she has a serious health-related condition for which there are no satisfactory remedies?	hospice patients, memory care residents
5. Allocational	Is the participant seriously lacking in important social goods that will be provided as a consequence of his or her participation in research?	homeless, poor
6. Infrastructural	Does the political, organizational, economic, and social context of the research setting possess the integrity and resources needed to manage the study?	sites of natural disaster or political instability, lack of ethical oversight from mentors, colleagues, REBs

Source: Adapted from Kipnis (2001).

## PARTICIPANT AS CAPABLE AND COMPETENT, YET VULNERABLE

*Maria: Have you ever thought about the amount of pigs in Western literature from traditional tales (“The Three Pigs”) to contemporary authors (E. B. White, King-Smith)? Since I grew up in this norm, I can’t say I thought about porcine literature one way or the other until I taught my first international Muslim child, Farida (I referred to earlier), in a preschool class. We were enacting a little skit from a piece of barnyard literature we had enjoyed. I frequently ended any study of a book we were working with by asking the children how we might dramatize it. In this case, I felt sure I assigned the various animals and in essence “required” Farida to be the pig in the play. From a Western perspective, the pig was cute and funny. I could tell Farida was excited or nervous since she giggled a lot during the skit, but that was all I picked up on. Soon her gracious parents scheduled a conference with me and in the kindest way possible explained that by asking Farida to be a pig, it was as though I had asked her to enact*



*being something akin to “a prostitute.” I am sure you can imagine as a young teacher in her early 20s who felt culturally competent, and whose family had worked in some of the most Islamic concentrated areas of the world such as Somalia, how awful I felt about my actions. I was aware of the taboo on pork and the uncleanliness of pigs, but had not connected this with the highly anthropomorphized pigs of literature. The family and I connected deeply over this learning experience. Farida was their oldest child and they intended to stay in the United States long term. I explained I felt they would need to tell her teachers this same information every year for a while given the dominance of pigs in the US early childhood language arts curriculum. I learned a powerful lesson that cultural understanding is not possible at the outset of a relationship. The family also demonstrated to me that openness and kindness when dealing with ignorance may be the best way to lead to deep learning. What is needed is a willingness to communicate, be responsive, and to allow yourself to remain in tension<sup>3</sup> with perspectives you may be unfamiliar with or not be able to understand.*

As a researcher and methodologist whose primary areas of experience and training are the worlds of young children, for much of my career, I have been nested in what has been called the New Childhood Sociology (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; James & Prout, 2015) precipitated in part by research such as Corsaro’s compelling research with preschoolers (e.g., 1985) and a global movement to recognize children’s rights and agency ([www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx)). As I began to work with REBs extensively, I have felt concerned about the designation of vulnerability.

The fallacy behind the vulnerable designation is the same that has been critiqued in hate crime literature (Westbrook, 2008). It may be we are again paternalizing, essentializing, stereotyping, or racializing someone by putting them in a vulnerable category perhaps even unknown to them. A question to consider is should a potentially vulnerable person need a federally mandated designated label to receive the respectful treatment they deserve?

Why not then consider all people potentially vulnerable as articulated in Tyler’s ethical stance (Box 2.1)? The possible fallacy behind this stance is we may overshadow the vulnerable person and contexts while trying to point out we are all potentially vulnerable, thus ignoring the vast privileges accorded to many of us, myself included, that buffer our vulnerabilities. However, it certainly is responsive to hold all the human participants we work with as capable and competent, yet potentially vulnerable, as we design and enact our research studies.

<sup>3</sup>I use *tension* here in reference to the pull that occurs on a tightened rope or string. When the rope is slack, no action is occurring. When pulled tight, there is a sense of energy, being ready, but for what? When we stay in tension with an idea, we are in a receptive mode ready to receive, but we do not know what will be the outcome yet. It may be one may need to retain this listening posture for extensive periods of time in order to begin to have any sense of understanding.

## BOX 2.1. ALL PEOPLE ARE POTENTIALLY VULNERABLE: A RESEARCH ETHICS STANCE

*Tyler Kincaid*

(The following is an example of an aspirational ethical stance developed in a graduate research ethics course. See the appendices for more examples.)

When conducting research with human participants, whether it is within the confines of a public or personal setting, whether it is conducted with one person or one hundred, there is potential to do as much harm as good. The good is represented in the new understandings we might find, the conclusions we can make from data collected, and the decisions we make that positively affect the lives that we live. The harm is the negative side effects of the research that can directly affect the lives of the participants, the researchers, and those that are directly or indirectly affected by the decisions made by the researchers.

In the realm of social science, it is paramount that we consider the good and the bad that researchers can cause because of one important element: the vulnerable human subject. The most common way of protecting the human subject is to try to minimize or eliminate the possible harms that might be caused to the subject by considering the subject's vulnerabilities. Through this ethical stance, I will present an argument that all populations should be considered as potentially vulnerable, and by doing so, researchers can provide two distinct benefits to the participants: (1) increase the welfare of all participants, and (2) decrease the marginalization and stigmatization of vulnerable subpopulations.

### **Ethical Research Guidelines**

The Belmont Report provided the outline of how we should ethically conduct research, and systematically provided three of the most important areas to consider when conducting research with human participants: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). In fact, these three fundamental concepts are the basis for what is now the standard practice that all United States research conducted using human participants must follow. The IRB process, one that requires a detailed description of all aspects of projected research projects from start to finish, works as a *door* between the researchers and the participants. The researchers must show that there is enough evidence that their research has abundant protection of both participants and the researcher (respect for persons), will minimize the risks and maximize the benefits (beneficence), and will provide lasting positive effects to the communities of those populations being researched (justice). This door must be passed through by all researchers in order to reach the participants, and also works as a much-needed barrier (or exit) for all participants that need a way to protect themselves when they might not otherwise know how to. This door is needed because of the vulnerabilities of any participants that may

arise when researchers talk to, relate with, observe, and collect data from them. Furthermore, the IRB process defines how researchers should deal with those individuals that have a diminished role in their ability to exit, or keep shut the metaphorical door between themselves and the researcher. These participants are labeled, categorized, and defined as vulnerable populations. The vulnerable populations of interest to the IRB process are defined as individuals who experience diminished autonomy, protection, and legal status (among a multitude of other aspects). These populations are protected with an extra lock on the metaphorical door between the researcher and participant. These populations are defined as children (minors), cognitive disabled persons, prisoners, pregnant women, among others (Liamputtong, 2007). The role of protecting these populations has been widely deliberated, and for the most part broken down to the selected subpopulations. Cognitively disabled, pregnant women, children, and prisoners have specific guidelines to follow to protect their mental and physical safety (Aday, 2001), and those groups of individuals with an increased probability for mental disabilities, such as homeless persons, have strict guidelines to follow to protect the welfare of their ability to help protect themselves (Aday, 2001; Gelberg, Andersen, & Leake, 2000). These vulnerable subpopulations need protection, researchers need to reassure that they will be protected, and guidelines like the IRB process need to protect the fundamental process to protect them.

### Questions?

Yet, I cannot help but wonder whether or not we are protecting everyone. Are there populations that are being left out or situations we cannot anticipate? What if someone is not in one of the protected vulnerable subpopulations, but somehow, unknown to the researcher has an increased risk or being harmed by the research? What if the metaphorical door, set up to protect the participant is not seen by everyone? What if the chances that a person from a population that is not considered vulnerable only has a minuscule, one in a million chance of possibly being harmed? What if that one in a million is someone you know, like your son, daughter, mother, or father? Would it change your idea of who should be considered vulnerable?

Furthermore, if we label, categorize, and define these subpopulations to the smallest degree possible, do we create a situation where they will be labeled as such forever? Will they always be considered vulnerable? What if a cognitively disabled person does not want to be known primarily for their disability, but just as a person with thoughts, feelings, and experiences just like everyone else? What if a homeless woman wants to be known as a woman, regardless of where she might sleep at night? Can these people not protect themselves much of the time? Do they always need extra attention that will inevitably always shine a spotlight on weakness, even if the attention is unwanted?

### Answer: Researchers Consider Every Population as Vulnerable

The action of the research process brings at least two people together to share thoughts, feelings, characteristics, and histories; and this action opens the

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

door for vulnerabilities to be seen, observed, recorded, and reported. There are historical reasons why we need to protect people during the sensitive action of research, and these reasons are based on the harm that individuals have received due to the extreme oversight of ethical considerations. Thankfully, we have progressed as researchers and created guidelines to follow that are foundationally based on the ideas of benefiting the participants, while protecting their safety. Furthermore, we have a process that protects those that might be at an increased risk of harm and considers their specific vulnerabilities. However, this process has two flaws that I cannot help but contemplate. First, by considering each specific vulnerable subpopulation, we might also not consider other populations that are not specifically listed as vulnerable. I listed the general vulnerable populations of interest, but does that mean that someone not listed does not have an increased risk of harm? I do not believe that we can ever know the risk of harm of each person, and that if we are to overlook a research project, or a participant because they are not considered “vulnerable,” then we have failed that person. We have failed to protect everyone. The one in a million has a voice, a life, a family, a history that we have not fully protected. Second, if we label each population as a specific subpopulation, we might set a precedent for marginalizing people as no more than what their label is. Now they are only disabled, or homeless; and they must be considered as such regardless of their want to be labeled that way or not.

### **Consider All Populations as Vulnerable**

If we are to consider every population as potentially vulnerable, we can increase the welfare of all participants, and at the same time decrease the marginalization of subpopulations. Considering each population as potentially vulnerable will inevitably increase the oversight needed to keep the metaphorical door intact between those that want to conduct research and those being researched. Yet, this idea is to protect everyone, to increase the respect for persons, beneficence, and justice of everyone, even the one in a million. The potential reduction of stereotypes and stigmas that we put upon “vulnerable” subpopulations will help us eventually move away from parceling people into defined groups, where they have to be labeled, categorized, and defined.

Obviously, there are and will be those that will find this concept unacceptable. Believing I have no right to speak for other populations, and that if we are to consider all participants as vulnerable, then we have ignored the complexities of the people and again have opened the door for harm. We must ensure that if a gay man wants to be heard as a gay man than he has every right to be heard that way, and that he should not be censored as simply a man. To this, I do not yet have the answers, but have poised questions to work with in the future as the role of ethical research evolves with the progression of time. That if we are to set our goals to achieve a perfect world, where equality and fairness is paramount, then we might actually get there someday.

Courtesy Tyler Kincaid. Used with permission.

## CREATING AN ASPIRATIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS STANCE

### Minimalist to Aspirational Ethics

Contemporary ethical codes may be somewhat crudely divided into minimalist codes and aspirational positions. Typically, REBs and some scientific community codes are minimalist in nature or what has been called procedural ethics (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004; Sparkes & Smith, 2014) focusing on aspects of the research design that need to be planned prior to being in the field and not the ongoing, unpredictable relational aspects of research. This is not to say procedural ethics should focus on the deeper aspects of research. These moments should not be and indeed cannot be part of an overall code but, instead, are times when the professionalism and dedication of the researcher to promote the good of humankind are called upon in an aspirational manner.

In Table 2.2, I review just a few examples of what Sieber and Tolich (2013) have called scientific community codes in the United States. One may easily see a commitment to the U.S.'s Belmont principles of beneficence, respect, and justice. Part of the process of creating an ethical stance of your own is identifying which scientific community codes you are obligated to adhere to.

**TABLE 2.2 ■ Comparison of Discipline Ethical Codes to Belmont Principles**

Belmont Report	American Anthropological Association (AAA)	American Educational Research Association (AERA)	American Psychological Association (APA)	American Sociological Association (ASA)
Respect for people Beneficence Justice	Responsibility to people and animals with whom anthropologists study and work  Science and scholarship	Professional competence  Integrity  Professional, scientific, and scholarly responsibility	Beneficence/nonmaleficence  Fidelity and responsibility  Integrity  Justice  Respect for rights and dignity	Professional competence  Integrity  Professional and scientific responsibility  Respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity  Social responsibility

Source: Adapted from Adams and Lawrence (2015, p. 5).

Due to the remarkable variability of ethical situations that may occur during research, it is important for researchers to give thought to the stance they wish to aspire prior to conducting research. Ethical dilemmas arising throughout the research process have been called situational ethics, “ethics in practice” and “ethically important moments” (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004, p. 262). Israel (2015) presents a brief discussion of the need for ethics such as these using the phrase “beyond regulatory compliance” (p. 191). Here Israel makes an important point that social science researchers have allowed the creation of enforceable, procedural ethics to remain largely out of their hands and are complying, grudgingly in some cases. What would be more beneficial is to see ourselves as active members of an ethically aspiring research community who can be agents of change. As social scientists, we need to work with regulators to develop resources and review processes that encourage and enhance ethical practices, while sustaining the research we vitally need to conduct with the communities we serve.

Aspirational ethics are the highest stance the researcher tries to attain in ethics above and beyond minimal requirements (Magnuson & Norem, 1997; Southern, Smith, & Oliver, 2005). Researchers’ aspirational ethical stances may differ depending on culture, values, and morals, and are judged and processed internally with no mandated checks. Examples of aspirational stances include *relational ethics* (Ellis, 2007), *feminist ethics* (Olsen, 2005), *virtue ethics* (Southern et al., 2005; Sparkes & Smith, 2014), *narrative ethics* (Schwandt, 2007), *covenantal ethics* (May, 1975; Schwandt, 2007), *ethics in practice* (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004), *caring ethics* (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984), and an understanding of *situational ethics* (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004). See Israel (2015) and Sparkes and Smith (2014) for a current, clear, and comprehensive presentation of many of these types of ethics. See Box 2.2 for an app that offers guidance with some of the many ethical theories and decisions.

## BOX 2.2. THERE’S AN APP FOR THAT!

Maria Lahman

No, I am not kidding, there is. Out of the numerous ethics apps that are offered, most are either every day value related, religiously based, or field specific (e.g., medical, lawyer). However, the app Ethical Decision Making created by Kirk Hanson, a professor at Santa Clara University, and the director of the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, has some utility for human researchers. Notably, the app allows one to explore ethics under major theories such as utilitarian ethics or virtue ethics. Importantly, it is FREE. The app bears the following description:

Facing a tough decision? Work through your options with a framework for making an ethical decision. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics framework has been viewed more than a million times on the Web. It will help you:

- Identify the people who have a stake in your decision
- Consider your options through five different ethical perspectives
- Weigh different approaches
- Score different potential decisions

(<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ethical-decision-making/id799710217?mt=8>)

At the time of this writing, the app had only three ratings, which unhelpfully range from 3 stars to 5. One may read more about the ethical center the app is generated from at [www.scu.edu/ethics/](http://www.scu.edu/ethics/).

## WHY CREATE YOUR OWN ETHICAL STANCE?

In this text, I make the case for creating a personal ethical research stance that springs from a foundation of mandatory ethical codes such as federal mandates/discipline codes (e.g., APA), and personal aspirational beliefs. After your research has been approved by the university REB and you move into the phase of actually conducting research, that is when ethical situations will begin to arise. Hopefully, the ethical situations will mostly be of the nature the ethics board would not wish you to report such as seen in Box 2.3. The researcher is reflexively considering the issues of identity, labeling, and if or when to share her beliefs with participants, she may do so with colleagues, mentors, and even the participants. This issue is not one that REBs or procedural ethics cover. Situations that need reporting typically have to do with potential, imminent, or past physical and/or mental harm. A well thought out personal aspirational ethics stance that is flexible and allows room for growth as a researcher helps you to be prepared prior to being in the field. With this type of stance in place, you will know how you hope to be responsive and what resource you can draw on when you are unsure how to respond, or the response you have had is not well received, or has unanticipated consequences.

### Beginning to Create an Ethical Research Stance

A helpful first step when thinking about an ethical stance is taking time to consider what personal and formal experiences and influences have brought you to the beliefs you hold about what is good and bad. At the end of each chapter I provide



## BOX 2.3. RESEARCH ETHICS VIGNETTE

*Katrina Rodriguez*

During research I conducted with focus groups of women identifying as Latina, Chicana, Mexican-American, and Hispanic, a discussion of ethnicity ensued. When speaking about their views on labels of self-identity within the Latina/o community, participants vocalized.

*Jo:* "I'm sure no one at this table will be using the term Hispanic."

*Yesy:* "I don't understand why people say Hispanic. There is no Hispania people!"

*Leneise:* "I took a class where I learned that Hispanic is a U.S. coined term. I choose Hispanic because I think we are all connected by color, background, and language."

*Elizabeth:* "I try to avoid using the term Hispanic; however, I feel that sometimes it's necessary because that's what others will understand more easily."

According to participants, each ethnic label has socio-political and socio-cultural explanations. For instance, many participants were especially opposed to the term *Hispanic* because it was adopted for government use for the 1970s Census and because the term falls within the legacy of Spanish colonization of the Americas (Torres, 2004).

As a researcher who is a Mexican-American female, I wondered if I should insert myself into this discussion. Certainly, I have strong feelings on the topic and can trace the trajectory of my thoughts and feelings about labels and how these have changed. What is potentially gained or lost when a researcher reveals her experiences and beliefs to participants?

Lahman, M. E., Geist, M., Rodriguez, K., Graglia, P., Deroche, K. (2011).

reflexive questions to assist with this process. Examples of these could include culture, personal identities, family, education, books, religion, and spiritualism.

For me, all of my training in early childhood education and child development encouraged me to try to identify what was right and good when working with a family and supporting the family in those endeavors. As one can see, a lot of judgment is occurring here since who decides what is right, good, and working well? A cultural model will compel researchers to consider what is right and good outside of their social norms. I feel I am fortunate to have had early childhood educator mentors like my mother, Ann Kathryn Eby, and early childhood educator Naomi Krall who could not only articulate this value, but also exemplified it

in their daily practice. Much of early education can be said to be the enforcing of and honoring of middle-class, White women's values. Mom and Naomi helped me see the good in cultures diverse and even oppositional from the ones in which I grew up.

This leads to a second step. What is right, good and working well in the cultures you study and the participants who are nested in those cultures? As part of my personal connection to the broader field of ethics, I also considered how fundamental stories are to who I am. My mother grew up in East Africa and was an incomparable story teller. Her stories could be both amazing and frustrating if you wanted a simple yes or no answer to a question. My mother's tales of East Africa and being Mennonite spun daily counter culture and stories of resistance for me. These tales fit well with how Nigerian author Adichie (n.d.) contends that the hearing of many tales points to the truth. If we hear only one version of a story we are being led with blinders on. Adichie illustrates her point by describing the single narrative, many people have about Africa as a story of deprivation and catastrophe and not the ones of richness and potential my mother told.

Third, identify the REB and scientific community codes you must adhere to in order to be a reputable researcher. For me these would be the United States' IRB, American Education Research Association, National Association of Education for Young Children, and additionally I am strongly, influenced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Immerse yourself in these codes to the extent that you truly know the principle. Then you should be in a position to critique the codes. What seems to work? What is missing? Does the code take into account cultural complexity or is it bound to a dominant culture belief system? If the area you research does not have a code why might that be? How might you contribute to a research community group beginning to engage with ethical issues and developing a code?

Fourth, read about aspirational ethical codes that exist and ethical dilemmas researchers have had. In this textbook and others, I reference many examples and resources that are available. Consider collaborating with a group of colleagues who are interested in this topic and begin to create an ethical stance. At this stage, I presented the stance that follows to many different groups from formal to informal and sought feedback on what made sense, lacked clarity, or seemed to be a weakness to them. This collaboration was invaluable to the development of my working ethical stance. I use the word *working* since I seek ways to enhance and refine my thoughts in an effort to always be becoming.

## EXEMPLAR OF AN ASPIRATIONAL ETHICS STANCE

---

As I began to immerse myself in procedural ethics as an IRB chair and research professor, out of the many frustrations I had I started to create an ethical stance

for my research that became more formalized into a framework. My graduate work was centered around the topic of caring teachers in early childhood education and drew heavily on Noddings (1984). Thus, an ethic of caring as a primary frame of CRRRE emerged. As a researcher, if I care, I want to be culturally responsive, relational, and reflexive. I was also highly influenced by Ellis's (e.g. 2001, 2007) willingness to share her research uncertainties and missteps and tried to use this teaching tactic with my own students. This meant I engaged deeply with Ellis's (2007) work in relational ethics. Finally, throughout all of my degrees in education and child development, the importance of knowing my own contexts and deep respect for others' contexts were woven throughout the curriculum. The idea that resonated most with me was cultural responsiveness (CR) (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b). Cultural responsiveness seemed to capture the sense that we can try, we must try, but we may fail and try again. My understanding of CR is one of being open, aware, a listener, a learner, and willing to live in tension with ideas that we are unsure of. Culturally responsive people acknowledge the researcher cannot know everything and is open to learn from others.

## BOX 2.4. RESEARCH ETHICS VIGNETTE

(In this research vignette, the researcher wishes to remain anonymous. This vignette highlighting researcher responsibility is a good example of how all researchers can use CRRRE or aspirational ethical stances.)

When I was a graduate student, I was a part of study where a survey of student satisfaction was administered to over 400 students within a school setting. I was responsible for the design and implementation of the survey. In an attempt to reduce the inherent power differential that occurs when a researcher administers a survey to a marginalized group of participants, I trained a cadre of students from the school to administer the satisfaction survey to a stratified random sample of their peers in both group and individual settings.

After a few months, administrators and the researcher alike noticed members of the student survey group displaying advanced leadership skills. As a result of these observations, administrators requested an additional qualitative investigation of student leadership development through research involvement. In tune with the CRRRE framework, I was aware of the inherent ethical issue in my personal/professional relationship with the cadre members of the student research group since I had trained them for the original survey administration. Therefore, a different graduate level intern conducted the individual semi-structured interviews of the student research group participants. However, because the intern was not familiar with qualitative methods, I still managed, coded, and had access to all data, which was clearly stated in the consent/assent forms. At the time, I rationalized this decision based on the potential benefits of understanding the dynamics of a

student research group, although retrospectively I feel I should have declined to manage the qualitative study.

Midway through the study, I received a troubled call from the intern who had just completed an interview. The intern explained one of the student participants was frustrated with the student research group and the original survey administration. Based on this discussion, I immediately listened to a recording of the student's interview, who I will call Mark. Mark was upset with members of the student research group and stated his emotional well-being was affected. While upset with a number of issues, it was Mark's frustration with his peers' lack of fidelity to the satisfaction survey research design that was most alarming. Mark stated he observed and confronted other members of the student research group who had administered surveys to anyone they could find as opposed to the students previously selected in the random sample. Mark described his repeated attempts to share this information with school administrators, which resulted in "being completely ignored." He was told, "Don't worry about it, we've got it under control" and "Mark, if you have any other concerns, just come to me and I'll address them for you," comments that made him feel belittled.

I considered the information received from Mark's interview. First, the satisfaction survey results seemed to be based on a convenience sample rather than the intended stratified random sample. However, because the information was shared in a confidential interview, how to act on this knowledge became an ethical dilemma. More importantly, Mark felt emotionally distressed by the events that occurred during the research process and, although not directly mentioned, I may have allowed his distress to occur under my oversight. After dialogue with other researchers, a review of ethical guidelines, and reflexive consideration, I determined Mark's well-being was the most pressing issue. I was also emotionally affected by this situation and reconsidered my value as a researcher and whether to continue pursuing this type of research.

Lahman, M. E., Geist, M., Rodriguez, K., Graglia, P., Deroche, K. (2011).

## Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics

In the following section, I describe Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics (CRRRE), an ethical stance I initially developed and then extended with coauthors (Lahman et al., 2011). In order to develop the stance and receive feedback I have presented it numerous times to colleagues and students who as researchers represent the breadth of possible research designs and social science disciplines. I assert aspects of CRRRE are applicable to all human researchers and research.

By using the term CRRRE, I am suggesting a stance that acknowledges as researchers, we will not be able to fully understand the perspective of the varied cultures with whom we interact as well as the need to be flexible and open to examining ethical issues from the perspective of the participants to the extent possible. When we conduct research across diverse cultures, people's expectations may be vastly different or, conversely, when we assume expectations will be different in detail, they may be fundamentally the same. Most people want to be

treated with respect and in a moral manner. While the three *Rs* are interrelated and would be integrated in practice, in the following sections and for the sake of discussion, I will consider each of the three *Rs* of ethics separately.

## Culturally Responsive Ethics

CRRRE researchers are culturally responsive. Culture is a construct that cannot be easily comprehended because we ourselves are immersed in culture at all times and cannot separate ourselves from it (Cole, 1988; Schwandt, 2007). Culture has been described as “the shared beliefs and values of a group of people that are thought about and acted on” (Lahman & D’Amato, 2007, p. 181). Culture is not “an objectified, self-enclosed, coherent thing or object” or “learned by observing and documenting but something that is inferred” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 59) and includes traditions, rituals, ways of life, and customs. When we are culturally responsive (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b), we must first be aware of the cultures in which we are personally embedded and then attempt to understand others’ cultures. Culture is more than the beliefs of a particular group; it is also located within constantly shifting contexts of meaning embedded within historical, social, economic, and political practices (Johnson et al., 2004). It is at the intersection of the varieties of contexts in which individuals are nested. This may include but is not limited to race, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, and age. This notion, seen as *varieties of person*, attempts to illustrate human lives as delightfully varied and complex with people who hold similar characteristics possibly differing from one another (Davis, 1998; Lahman, 2008). “The process of carefully testing assumptions and open-mindedly revising one’s understanding in the light of new information is essential for learning about cultural ways” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 30). This is an engaged, responsive process.

The ideal of being responsive within research ethics brings to the meaning of the word “response”—an added sense of urgency and positivity, as in the dictionary definition of responsive, which engenders “reacting quickly, strongly or favorably to something” (“Responsive,” n.d., Encarta), also “sympathetically” (“Response,” 1983, p. 1055). Noddings (1984) extended these basic definitions saying,

A caring response involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, the other’s objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. Our reason for acting then, have to do both with the other’s wants and desires and with the objective elements of his problematic situation. (p. 24)

In culturally responsive teaching, “all students are sensitively accommodated and thus learn successfully” (Le Roux, 2001, p. 41). Similarly, a culturally responsive researcher attempts to sensitively accommodate participants and thus

enhances the possibility that trustworthy information can be exchanged successfully. Being a culturally responsive researcher involves the following values based on Farmer, Hauk, and Newmann (2005): (a) “explicit recognition, valuing, and discussion” of cultural differences (p. 61); (b) validating the world-views of participants; (c) explicitly discussing power differentials; and (d) acknowledging nontraditional research methods may work better with participants of differing cultural values. In addition, cultural responsiveness includes an affirming attitude toward cultural differences (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b), and an understanding that individuals’ conceptions of culture are “deeply embedded into the fabric of the social, economic, political, and structural institutions of the society of which these individuals were socialized” (Banks, 1996, p. 66). On a practical level, being responsive means providing “ongoing information as it becomes available, even when it requires the use of appropriate and judicious researcher self-disclosure” (Etherington, 2007, p. 614). A researcher whose stance is grounded in CRRRE will not shy away from such responsive actions.

## Relational Ethics

CRRRE researchers are *relational*. The construct relational has been described by Ellis (2007) as recognizing and valuing “mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between the researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities they live and work in” (p. 4). Relational researchers “hold relational concerns as high as research” (Ellis, 2007, p. 25). Relational researchers balance their research with their “obligations toward, care for, and connection with those who participate in our research” (Etherington, 2007, p. 614). Built on this foundation, CRRRE researchers “seek the good” (Ellis, 2007, p. 23), build trust, and exercise an ethic of care.

Relational researchers have been said to seek the good. This statement, meant to be pondered, is supported by Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (2000; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman, 1997) extensive writing in this area. What the “good” is must be guided by basic principles enacted differently depending on the context of the ethical situation. Ellis (2007) gives a series of suggestions on how to seek the good and be a relational researcher: understanding REBs are not the end of ethics; discussing research with others; practicing “process consent” (Munhall, 1988); considering if good justifies risk; letting participants read researchers’ work; when writing, describing instead of labeling or judging; “hold[ing] relational concerns as high as research” (p. 25); and finally, attempting a stance of care.

Molyneux, Peshu, and Marsh (2005) noted trust is a basic component of relational research and examined trust in relation to biomedical research. Trust is a “relational notion, describing a voluntary relationship between two or more people” (Molyneux et al., 2005, p. 1463). The authors go on to encourage the establishment of participant trust and researcher respect for healthy mistrust by participants in research relationships. While trust will not prevent problems, they believed holding this relational stance from the outset of the research process

will assist in working with problems as they occur. Healthy mistrust is described as participants actively attempting to understand the research process and not simply signing over their rights in ignorance. The authors pointed out a relational stance is an internal ethical stance that cannot be regulated by governments or boards, which relates directly to the idea of aspiration and CRRRE.

Being relational is related to care and feminism (Noddings, 1984, 1988, 1992; Olsen, 1994, 2005) such that “relationships with participants lie at the heart of feminist ethical concerns” (Olsen, 2005, p. 255). In the tradition of Gilligan (1982), CRRRE researchers want to engage with participants’ different voice(s). By caring ethics, I mean a theoretical stance that emphasizes reciprocal relationships, recognition, growth, and responsiveness enacted through applied care giving. An ethic that emphasizes relations or care does not mean a rejection of all other ethics. Instead, it may become the frame on which researchers construct their ethical stance as “it demands instead that the search for just outcomes to ethical problems takes account of care, compassion, and our interpersonal relationships, and ties to families and groups” (Israel & Hay, 2006, p. 22).

## Reflexive Ethics

While reflexivity is arguably one of the most important constructs in qualitative research, I feel all researchers, regardless of paradigm, would benefit by conducting research from a reflexive stance. Reflexivity as discussed here is an optimistic, activist construct that in research has been said to be

an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment. . . . Reflexivity, then, is ubiquitous. It permeates every aspect of the research process, challenging us to be more fully conscious of the ideology, culture, and politics of those we study and those we select as our audience. (Hertz, 1997, p. viii)

Finlay and Gough (2003) added,

The root of the word “reflexive” means to “bend back upon oneself.” In research terms, this can be translated as thoughtful, self-aware analysis of the intersubjective dynamics between researcher and the researched. Reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers’ social background, assumptions, positioning behavior impact on the research process. (p. ix)

Therefore, if reflection is seen as occurring after an experience, reflexivity occurs before, during, and after an experience, such that it “becomes a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness” (Callaway, cited in Hertz, 1997, p. viii). To engage with issues in a reflexive manner, researchers are encouraged to keep a researcher journal where they reflect on happenings in the field (Janesick, 1999) and to dialogue with colleagues and mentors.



Etherington (2007) suggested reflexivity applied to ethics has many facets. In the case of CRRRE, a researcher is sensitive to the interactions of self, others, and situations. This sensitivity is not dissimilar to reflexivity in counseling that relies on “an ability to notice our responses to the world around us, to stories, and to other people and events, and to use that knowledge to inform and direct our actions, communications, and understanding” (Etherington, 2007, p. 599). A reflexive researcher notices the reactions to a research situation and adapts in a responsive, ethical, moral way where the participant’s dignity, safety, privacy, and autonomy are respected. Additionally, the researcher pays special attention to the possible power imbalances between the researcher and the participants. Finally, reflexive researchers use their writing as a tool to be transparent so their “work can be understood, not only in terms of *what* we have discovered, but *how* we have discovered it” (Etherington, 2007, p. 601). Attention to these influences provides reflexive researchers the opportunity to look at the research process and critically view their own role and actions (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

In qualitative research, reflexivity is used to enhance the trustworthiness of the study (Hertz, 1997). Reflexivity can be a way to examine the complete research process and a vital procedure for enhancing validity. In quantitative research, although not explicitly stated as such, researchers are reflexive when paying attention to issues that influence validity such as history and maturation effects. This type of reflexivity improves the quality, trustworthiness, and/or validity of the inferences made. In this sense, reflexivity is related to “knowledge creation” (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 275), or what I would call ethical knowledge creation.

## **Eight Strands of Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics: The Stance in Practice**

Culturally responsive teaching includes six strands in the teacher–student educational relationship (Villegas & Lucas, 2002a, 2002b). Shifting this perspective from teaching to research ethics, I changed the terms teacher/student to researcher/participant. In addition, I added two strands from the literature on relational research (Ellis, 2007; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman, 1997) and reflexivity (Finlay & Gough, 2003; Hertz, 1997). Therefore, CRRRE in research may be said to have the following eight strands (see Table 2.3) where the researcher (a) is socio-culturally conscious; (b) is able to operate from an asset-based framework seeing all participants’ backgrounds as opportunities for research; (c) sees herself or himself as a change agent responsible for creating environments for all participants to be successfully heard; (d) is able to creatively navigate varied participants’ communication styles and preferences in order to co-construct knowledge; and (e) utilizes individual participants’ stories to expand and build their research knowledge base and acknowledges the personal perspectives of her or his identity. Additionally, a researcher with a culturally responsive, relational research ethic (f) seeks the good through research; (g) is reflexive throughout

the research process; and (h) cultivates culturally responsive, relational reflexive research practices. CRRRE researchers are focused on creating research environments that best meet the participants where they are and allow for new ways to understand and co-construct knowledge.

An assumption inherent in the eight strands of CRRRE is all researchers can adopt or incorporate aspects of the strands into their own inquiry. CRRRE may be enacted differently depending on the researcher, research topic, participants, and research design; however, for all researchers regardless of methodology, this

**TABLE 2.3 ■ The Eight Strands of Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics Informed by Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics	Culturally Responsive Teaching
Gaining socio-cultural consciousness	Gaining socio-cultural consciousness
Developing an asset-based framework by seeing all participants' backgrounds as opportunities for research	Developing an affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds
Developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change responsible for creating environments for all participants to be successfully heard	Developing the commitment and skills to act as agents of change
Creatively navigating varied participants' communication styles and preferences in order to co-construct knowledge	Understanding the constructive beginnings of culturally responsive teaching
Utilizes the individual participants' stories to expand and build research knowledge base and acknowledges researcher perspectives	Learning about students and their communities
Committing to seek the good through research (Ellis, 2007)	
Employing reflexivity throughout the research process (Finlay & Gough, 2003; Hertz, 1997)	
Cultivating culturally responsive relational ethical research practices	Cultivating culturally responsive teaching practices

Source: Extended from Villegas and Lucas (2002a, 2002b).

stance is primarily about who we are as researchers, what goals we set for our research, and a commitment to the primacy of the research participants and process being valued over outcomes. For instance, in an experimental design, much of the obvious influence of CRRRE will take place prior to the design's implementation through attempts to understanding the culture of the sample one plans to work with, designing the experiment accordingly, and examining the nature of the biases we inherently bring to research as relatively privileged academics. Conversely, in naturalistic research, CRRRE may be obvious throughout the entire research process. In the following sections I elaborate on each strand.

*Socio-cultural consciousness.* In the first strand, CRRRE researchers strive to be socio-culturally conscious, meaning cognizant and fully mindful that participants may have different, multiple, and conflicting perspectives about reality, society, power, and knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2004) than the researchers or other participants. These ideologies are influenced by one's position in society and are shaped by factors such as race/ethnicity, social class, age, gender, sexual orientation, native language, as well as life's experiences in general (Ladson-Billings, 2004; author; Villegas & Lucas, 2002a).

*Asset based.* The second strand of CRRRE is the ability to operate from an asset-based framework by viewing all participants' backgrounds as opportunities for research. An asset-based perspective emphasizes that dominant White, male, middle-class, adult, heterosexual, abled, Christian values, while valid, are not inherently superior (Tatum, 1997). Cultural differences in areas such as "thinking, talking, and behaving" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002b, p. 36) are not considered problems but are seen as opportunities for new understandings.

A researcher who visits the home of participants of another culture will want to conduct background research to be aware of customs the researcher may wish to anticipate such as a possible need to accept food and drink when offered. The researcher may then want to ask questions about the specific person's culture as part of respecting and valuing other perspectives. This keeps interaction from becoming stereotypical, as seen in the preceding examples, since within each larger culture, a person's personal beliefs and customs may be profoundly different.

*Change agent.* The third strand of CRRRE necessitates researchers see themselves as change agents responsible for creating environments for all participants to be heard. The emphasis is on researchers creating environments that encourage all participants, no matter their culture, ability, language, reading level, etc., to participate successfully in the research. For instance, researchers have written extensively about changing focus groups to be culturally appropriate. The traditional focus group setting will not be comfortable to all people. Methodological suggestions include use of food, dialogue, comfortable chairs, décor, and understanding natural speech patterns (Allen, 2006; Madriz, 2002; Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell, & Britten, 2002; Rodriguez, Schwartz, Lahman, & Geist, 2011).

*Co-construction.* The fourth strand encompasses creatively navigating varied participants' communication styles and preferences. Researchers have suggested certain groups such as youth (DeRoche & Lahman, 2008), children (Nespor, 1997), and groups deemed vulnerable (Liamputtong, 2007) may benefit from alternative modes of data collection (e.g., journals, drawing, photos, video, enactment). Examples from photo methodology include photo elicitation (Harper, 1994, 2000, 2005) and Photo Voice (Wang & Burris, 1997), where researchers use photos to help draw out or elicit information from participants or alternatively seek to empower participants by putting cameras in their hands to document experience.

*Storied lives.* In the fifth strand, personal stories of participants are utilized to expand and build the research knowledge base. Explicitly acknowledging the personal stories of participants is a major tenet in qualitative research. I also believe that by incorporating a qualitative portion into a quantitative study, traditionally known as pre-research, it is possible to understand on a deeper level subsequent data generated.

Equally important in strand five is acknowledging the personal stories or perspectives of the researchers, which can be attempted through discussing research goals and biases with fellow researchers, reflexively journaling (Janesick, 1999), and including the "researcher stance" portion for certain articles. However, it is appropriate, particularly in critical or feminist research, for researchers to share their story or perspective with the participant. Given the use of the word "storied," this strand initially seems more conducive to qualitative researchers and is indeed part of the qualitative tradition. However, all researchers have experiences, whether or not we choose to refer to them as "stories." I argue that quantitative researchers acknowledging, at least in their conversation and methodological writings, what their stories are may create more robust research.

*Seek the good.* CRRRE researchers seek the good through research. Ultimately, this means CRRRE researchers are conducting research that is valuable to society in the following ways: by promoting equity, understanding behavior by improving services, and by valuing participants over the results.

*Reflexivity.* Being reflexive throughout the research process characterizes the next CRRRE strand. Positive reflexivity involves an examination of the researcher's practice as related to previous strands. It does not include narcissism or wallowing in one's own musing. Reflexivity involves a continued contemplation while in the research process in order to improve it. It is recommended this occur not in isolation but in relation to other researchers as we read professional methodological accounts, dialogue with colleagues, and consult with student researchers and clients.

*Cultivate Culturally Responsive Relational Reflexive Ethics practices.* The last strand of CRRRE is a commitment to cultivating culturally responsive, reflexive,

relational oriented research practices or an integration of all of the strands. This comprehensive category is described in detail using ethical examples.

By using the term CRRRE, I am suggesting a stance that acknowledges we as researchers will not be able to fully understand the perspective of the varied cultures with whom we interact as well as the need to be flexible and open to examining ethical issues from the perspective of the participants to the greatest extent possible. When we conduct research across diverse cultures, people's expectations may be vastly different or, conversely, when we assume expectations will be different in detail, they may be fundamentally the same. Most people want to be treated with respect and in an ethical manner.

In closing, as readers negotiate the following sections of the book, they will want to keep the CRRRE framework in mind as a possible model as they begin to build or add to existing ethical stances of their own. Considering questions provided at the end of each chapter either in small groups or through journaling will help lay the ground work for an aspirational ethical stance of one's own and toward *becoming*.

## Reflexive Questions

1. Other in research
  - Whom have you Othered?
  - Who Others you?
  - Can research be conducted without Othering?
    - a. If so, how?
    - b. If not, how might Othering be reduced?
2. Vulnerability in research
  - Which stance might you take, and why (see Box 2.1 by Kincaid)?
    - a. Some groups are vulnerable.
    - b. Vulnerable groups should be seen as *capable and competent yet vulnerable*.
    - c. All people are potentially vulnerable.
    - d. What are other possible stances in regard to vulnerability in research?

*Instructor note:* This question works well as a classroom debate. You may put the class into three groups according to their beliefs or into groups where they must argue for a stance they do not believe in. See Appendix F for course activities.

3. Ethnic/racial labeling research ethics vignette in Box 2.3
  - How do you label yourself regarding race and/or ethnicity?
  - How do others label you regarding race and/or ethnicity?
  - What other labels do you use to identify yourself, as in intersecting identities? (e.g., single, middle class, runner, dad)
  - What connotations do these labels have for you? What may these labels connote for others?
  - Identify which of your labels others may find “visible” or “invisible.”
  - Importantly, how might your identities impact the research you conduct?
4. Socio-economic information is a vital part of research participants’ descriptions in a research design, sampling plan, or final research report.
  - How do you determine who to attempt to sample in your research?
  - How do you label participants socio-economically in your research?
  - Where do you derive these labels from?
  - What might be possible impacts of a researcher’s choices in this area?
5. For Box 2.4 titled “Research Ethics Vignette,” discuss the questions below.
  - What ethical dilemmas do you identify in this situation?
  - How was or was not the researcher responsive?
  - What might you do to address this situation in an ethical manner?
6. What research ethics codes are you required to follow (e.g., federal, discipline)?
  - How do these codes compare and contrast?
  - What aspects of the codes appeal to you?
  - What areas do not make sense?
  - What areas do you believe need to be added, updated, or expanded on?
  - When are you required to make formal ethics reports to the ethics research board?
7. Culturally responsive relational reflexive research ethics
  - What might be the participants’ you research primary identities?
  - What might be the participants’ you research secondary identities?
  - How do the participants’ identities inform their unique communication and/or relationship characteristics that are important to acknowledge within this research?

- What are the naturally occurring contexts the participants already share?
- How might a researcher create and/or join a context that feels comfortable and affirming to participants?
- How does a researcher best explore and identify his or her primary and secondary identities?
- It has been posited that, by first knowing our own identities, we may know others better. Why might this be?

## Resources

### Othering

Thornbury's blog on English language teaching offers an interesting example of Othering in the area of rhetoric and literary genres also using examples of scientific writing style: <https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/2012/04/08/o-is-for-othering/>

### Culturally Responsive

Most resources on the construct *culturally responsive* are about pedagogy. These are well deserving of attention and easily transferable to a research context. The following book is foundational:

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. State University of New York Press.

### Vulnerable Participants

An excellent text by Liamputtong (2007) was groundbreaking in the area of vulnerable people in research. I have used this text to help me think about many of the ideas I present here.

Liamputtong, P. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable*. London: Sage.

Gelberg, L., Andersen, R. M., & Leake, B. D. (2000). The behavioral model for vulnerable populations: Application to medical care use and outcomes for homeless people. *Health Services Research*, 34(6), 1273.