

The University Of North Carolina At Asheville (UNCA)
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Project title: Understanding Student Learning in a UNCA ILS Cluster (Food For Thought)

The following information describes the research study in which you are being asked to participate. Please read the information carefully. At the end, you will be asked to sign if you agree to participate.

Investigators

Drs. Karin Peterson (Associate Professor of Sociology), Sally Wasileski (Assistant Professor of Chemistry), Amy Lanou (Assistant Professor of Health and Wellness) and Leah Mathews (Associate Professor of Economics), all of whom are UNCA faculty members, will conduct this research project.

Purpose of Study

We are interested in understanding more about how students learn in UNCA's ILS Cluster program, and especially in how that learning happens in courses that cross disciplines in both the social and natural sciences. In addition, we are interested in what knowledge, experiences, and tools students transfer from one course to another. Finally, we are interested in how students perceive and account for their learning both within the context of a given course and across time. To address these questions, we are studying students enrolled in courses included in the new *Food for Thought Cluster*. We plan to continue our study across several semesters.

What Will Happen During This Study

You have been selected to participate in our study because you are enrolled in at least one *Food for Thought Cluster* course this semester. We will include you in our study whether or not you choose to declare *Food For Thought* to fulfill your ILS Cluster requirement.

There are three components to our study:

- 1) Survey. At the beginning and end of each semester we will ask you to take a survey (about 10 minutes in length) that asks you to report on your perceptions of your own learning in social science and natural science courses. The survey, called the SENCER-SALG inventory (*Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities – Student Assessment of Learning Gains*) is used by college faculty across the country to assess student learning gains in the areas of science and civic engagement. The inventory was created by the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement.
- 2) Class Observations and Informal Interviews. In addition to surveys, by invitation of the faculty teaching in the Food for Thought Cluster (Drs. Lanou, Mathews and Wasileski), Dr. Karin Peterson will be observing some of your classes and cluster activities during this semester (Fall 2007). During lectures and class discussions, she will be observing class interactions and the learning process of the class as a whole. During some group, class or lab activities, with your permission, she will observe your work and ask questions of you and your group about your learning process.
- 3) Outside-of-class Interviews. During the semester, Dr. Peterson will also ask for students to volunteer to be interviewed outside of class time. These 30-60 minute semi-directed interviews will focus on what and how you are learning in the class, what you are interested in, and how the class is impacting you. The interview will be recorded and transcribed by Dr. Peterson. If you volunteer, you will be given the opportunity to sign up for a specific time.

Possible Risks or Discomforts

It is possible that taking a survey will raise issues for you about how you learn. All data from the SENCER-SALG inventory will be anonymous and available to your instructor only after the semester is finished. It is possible that talking with another teacher about your learning process during or outside of class could make you uncomfortable at times. Dr. Peterson will always ask your permission to be observed/interviewed during class activities and labs. Participation is always voluntary. Participation in the outside-of-class interviews is voluntary. If you

volunteer to participate in an interview, you still have the right to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you are also welcome to stop interviews at any time.

Possible Benefits

Some students find it helpful to be made aware of their own learning through surveys and interviews. Your participation will help all of the faculty teaching in the *Food for Thought Cluster* become more aware of how students learn in their own classes and how students learn across the cluster. The researchers will also be writing papers and presenting at conferences where others will hear about our study and benefit from the understanding students in our study provide about their own learning

Privacy

We will make every effort to protect your privacy.

- 1) For the SENCER-SALG survey, we will ask you to register for the survey using your student I.D. number (so that we can compare your responses from the beginning and end of the semester). To protect your anonymity, your instructor will not have access to the survey results until after the end of the semester. In addition, the results will be scored by aggregating responses from everyone in your class. No individuals will be identified in the reporting of the survey results.
- 2) For the in-class observations and informal interviews, Dr. Peterson will attend classes with the permission of your instructor. She will take notes during these classes, including making notes about interactions between students and students and instructor. She will not record your name in her notes. When she reports on her findings, any information that might reveal your identity will be removed. It is possible that your instructor will remember the interactions Dr. Peterson discusses in her reports; however, your instructor will not see her reports until after the end of the semester.
- 3) For the outside-of-class interviews, Dr. Peterson will make an audio recording of your interview and transcribe your interview. The recording of your interview will be destroyed once it has been transcribed. No names or identifying information will be included on the transcript. Transcripts of interviews will not be seen by your instructor until after the end of the semester. When the results of this study are published, participants will be referred to by pseudonyms, not their real names.

Once the study is completed, any records containing the names of interview participants will be destroyed.

Your Rights

The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study, you have the right to stop being in the study at any time, or to exclude yourself from any portion of the study.

Contact Information

Dr. Karin Peterson (828-232-5021, kpeterso@unca.edu), Dr. Sally Wasileski (828-232-5169, swasiles@unca.edu), Dr. Amy Lanou (828-250-2317, alanou@unca.edu), or Dr. Leah Mathews (828-251-6551, lmathews@unca.edu) will gladly answer any questions you may have concerning the purpose, procedures, and outcome of this project. You may also contact the Chair of UNCA's Institutional Review Board (IRB), Dr. Bryan Schaffer (828/251-6849, bschaffe@unca.edu) to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about the rights of study participants. (The IRB is a college committee concerned with the protection of human subjects in research.)

SUMMARY

I have read the information in this consent form and agree to participate in the following parts of this study:

(Please place and X beside those portions of the study in which you agree to participate)

- _____ 1) The Survey (SENCER-SALG) to be administered at the beginning and end of the semester
- _____ 2) Class observations and informal interviews
- _____ 3) Outside-of-class interviews

I have had the chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered for me.

Although the investigators will make every effort to maintain confidentiality, I understand that research records must be made available to UNCA's IRB, if they are requested. I will receive a copy of this form after it has been read and signed.

Printed Name of Participant Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date