



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

What About My Contribution?

Author(s)

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Year

2000

Description

A scenario that covers ethical issues that arise when researchers publish a paper based on another researcher's refinements.

Body

Engineering version

For the first year of your graduate studies, you worked with Professor One on the Hot Research project. By the end of the first year, you not only became proficient at operating the complex experimental apparatus, but made a small but notable refinement in the approach to the segment assigned to you. At the end of the first year, Professor One went on leave for a semester and you started working on a different project with another supervisor in the same lab.

In the term following Professor One's return from sabbatical, you are told by another student, who is still working on Hot Research, that he and Professor One are coauthoring a paper that incorporated your refinement.

- Are there any ambiguities in the situation?
- What, if anything, can and should you do?

Biology version

As a graduate student, you have worked in Professor One's lab on the Hot Research project since you came here, although your work is largely under the direction of A. R., a postdoc. By the end of the first year, you have not only become proficient at operating the complex experimental apparatus, but made a small but notable refinement in the approach to the segment assigned to you. At that point A. R. leaves the project and the university, and a new postdoc who has been working with another aspect of the project takes an interest in the area in which you had worked with A. R. It is now spring, and you are in the middle of your second year. You hear from another student that the new postdoc is publishing a paper with Professor One on the aspects of Hot Research on which you had worked, incorporating your refinement.

- Are there any ambiguities in the situation?
- What, if anything, can and should you do?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

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Resource Type

Open-ended scenario

Parent Collection

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Topics

Authorship

Collaboration

Mentors and Trainees

Publication Ethics

Research and Practice

Discipline(s)

Engineering

Life and Environmental Sciences

Research Ethics

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