Suffolk University
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
73 Tremont St.
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Protocol Number:

FOR IRB USE ONLY----- ☐ Meets Criteria for Exemption ☐ Does Not Meet Criteria for Exemption under category _____

HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH APPLICATION EXEMPTION
FROM CONTINUING REVIEW BY THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Instructions: Please complete this form with all appropriate signatures and attach a copy of the study protocol and all supporting documentation, to include verification of CITI training for key personnel for all new non-exempt human subject research. All the questions must be addressed in order to provide the Institutional Review Board with the necessary information to review your proposed research study. IRB approval **must** be obtained prior to beginning any non-exempt human subjects research. **The application should be written in layman's terms such that it can be understood by a non-scientist.**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION:	
Protocol Title: A comparison of methods aimed at enhancing student engagement in an ECR course	
Date: 12/13/13	
2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	
Name: Susan M Orsillo	**CITI Certified:** ☒ **Yes** **Date:** 10/28/12
School/Department: CAS Psychology	
Campus Mailing Address: 41 Temple St/ Donohue	**Telephone Number:** (617)305-1924
E-mail Address:sorsillo@suffolk.edu	☒ **Faculty** ☐ **Staff** ☐
3. CO-INVESTIGATOR: If additional space is needed, please add on a separate page.	
Name:	**CITI Certified:** ☐ **Yes** **Date:**
School/Department:	
Campus Mailing Address:	**Telephone Number:** ( ) -
E-mail Address:	☐ **Faculty** ☐ **Staff** ☐ **Student**

4. RESEARCH STAFF: If additional space is needed, please add on a separate page.	
Name	**CITI Certified**
To Be Determined	☐ **Yes** **Date:**
	☐ **Yes** **Date:**
	☐ **Yes** **Date:**

5. COLLABORATORS: If you will be conducting this study in collaboration with non-Suffolk investigators or in non-Suffolk facilities, please complete the section below. If the IRB from a collaborating institution has approved their participation in this research study, attach a copy of the IRB approval letter. ☐ **N/A**

Name	**Affiliated Institution**	**IRB Approval**	**CITI Certified**
		☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Pending**	☐ **Yes**
		☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Pending**	☐ **Yes**
		☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Pending**	☐ **Yes**

Do the collaborating institutions hold a Federalwide Assurance (FWA)? ☐ **Yes** ☐ No
If yes, specify which institutions hold an FWA:

Does the involvement of Suffolk University include the receipt of a sub-award from a collaborating institution? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Does any part of this research involve collaboration with an **independent** (not with FWA institution or organization) investigator?
☐ **Yes** ☐ No
If yes, please identify investigator:

Is the involvement of a Suffolk University investigator limited to the evaluation of archived de-identified data? ☐ **Yes** ☒ No
If yes, check Category 4 under Section 7 and complete Sections 8, 15, 16, 18, 23, 25 and 26 only.

6. FUNDING SOURCES: If the study is funded, please provide a copy of the full grant, proposal and/or award ☒ **N/A**	
☐ External Federal-Funding	Agency:
☐ External Non-Federal Funding	Source:

7. EXEMPTION CATEGORIES: The following categories of research are exempt from continuing review by the IRB. Check all that apply

☒ **Category 1**. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as:

- research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or
- research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

☐ **Category 2**. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

- information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Note: this exemption does NOT apply to research involving children as subjects, except for research involving observation of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

☐ **Category 3.** Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that otherwise would not be exempt if:

- the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or
- federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

☐ **Category 4.** Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

☐ **Category 5.** Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:

- public benefit or service programs;
- procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs;
- possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
- possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

☐ **Category 6.** Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies if:

- wholesome foods without additives are consumed or
- a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

8. PURPOSE AND SCOPE: Please provide a brief summary of any relevant background information, study aims and its hypothesis. Please provide a rationale for the use of human subjects in meeting your study objectives.

Background: According to the 9th annual report on the state of online learning in U.S. higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2011) over 6.1 million students took at least one online course during the Fall of 2012, representing an increase of 560,000 students over the previous year. Almost 1/3 of all college students now take at least one course online. Blended or hybrid learning, which has been defined as a course in which 30 to 79% of the proportion of content is delivered online, has also grown dramatically in recent years, although at a somewhat slower rate (Allen, Seaman, & Garrett, 2007). A recent meta-analysis demonstrated that blended/hybrid classes (but not fully online courses) are associated with stronger learning outcomes than face-to-face instruction alone (Means et al., 2010). Blended courses also appear to enhance a sense of classroom community more than online or face-to-face instruction (Rovai & Jordan, 2004).
Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of pedagogical recommendations regarding best practices in blended learning, including the development of the Blended Toolkit, an online compendium of effective practices, processes, research, faculty development, model courses, and evaluation resources (UCF & AASCU, 2013). Although these resources are extremely helpful, it can be difficult to synthesis the diversity of available information and translate it into specific practices. In an attempt to identify commonalities across these various guidelines, McGee and Reis (2012) analyzed 67 published descriptions of best practices in blended/hybrid learning. One consistent finding is that varied interactivity, involving instructor to student, student to student, and student to other resources is perceived to be key to student engagement in blended/hybrid courses. Interestingly, learner-to-learner interaction can predict course satisfaction more strongly than learner-to-instructor interaction (Jung et al., 2002; Rodriguez, 2006), thus research into methods that enhance such interaction is critical.

Study Aims:
The goal of the present study is investigate the impact of guided small group online discussions in enhancing classroom community and improving professional development among students enrolled in a psychology internship course. This is an exploratory project - I do not have specific hypotheses.

Participants
All students, aged 18 or older, enrolled in Psychology Internship (Psy 350a and Psy 350b) during the Spring 2014 and Summer 2014 will be eligible for participation. No more than 100 students will participate. The rationale for using human subjects is that the research question is only relevant to humans.

Duration: **From:** 1/6/2014 **To:** 1/5/2015

Study Site(s): Suffolk University

9. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY POPULATION

Total Number of Subjects: 100	**Age Range**: 18 and older
Characteristics of Study Population: Please check all that apply.	
☐ Elderly	☐ Children
☒ Suffolk Students/Staff	☐ Educationally-Disadvantaged Persons
☐ Non-English Speaking	☐ Economically Disadvantaged Persons
☐ Ethnic Minorities (exclusively)	☐ Pregnant Women
☐ Fetuses/Neonates	☐ Other:

10. SELECTION OF SUBJECTS: Describe the inclusion/exclusion criteria and explain rationale for such. Explain rationale for using special populations such as children, pregnant women, minorities or any vulnerable individuals and describe the additional safeguards that are in place to protect their rights and welfare. Provide rationale for concluding that the risks and benefits are fairly distributed among the population that stands to benefit from the research. If Suffolk University students are involved in research as subjects appropriate measures must be in place to ensure the age requirement for informed consent (age 18 or older) is met. If not, parental permission must be sought for their participation.

The rationale for using Suffolk students is that I am examining the effectiveness of educational practices at Suffolk University. As students enrolled in the course and Juniors and Seniors it is unlikely that any students will be younger than 18. However, the Informed Consent Form also specifically states that students must be 18 to participate.

11. RECRUITMENT TOOLS: Please provide copies for all marked.

☐	**Flyers, Posters, Brochures**
☐	**Study Advertisement** (*e.g., radio, television, online (Facebook, craigslist, private or public websites), newspaper, student newsletters, etc.)*
☐	**Word of Mouth** *(e.g., participants referring other individuals to study)*
☐	**In Person Recruitment** *(e.g., public events, meetings, open houses, school events, etc.)*
☐	**Referrals (***e.g., psychologist refer patients to study, teachers refer students to study, etc.)*
☐	**Scripts** *(e.g., phone scripts, e-mail scripts, screening scripts, presentations, etc)*

12. RECRUITMENT PROCESS: Describe in detail how subjects will be identified, method of initial contact and rationale for such method. If the recruitment process involves the recruitment of children who are being accessed through school or places where children participate in extracurricular activities, a letter of authorization must be obtained from the school principal, district superintendent, or administrative director or CEO of all applicable sites and included with the application.

Students will be provided with an Informed Consent Form (ICF) describing the goals of the study and the nature of their involvement. (see Appendix A). In order to minimize coercion, students will be invited to participate in the study by a Research Assistant (RA) without the instructor/Principal Investigator in the room. The RA will explain the details of the study by going over the consent form in class, underscoring the voluntary nature of participation. After students have the opportunity to read the ICF and ask questions, students will be instructed to either sign the form (if they wish to participate) or leave it blank (if they do not) and to place it into a sealed envelope. This envelope will be collected and stored by the RA until the semester is over and grades have been submitted. At that point, the investigator will "break the blind" by opening the envelopes and determining whose data can be used for research purposes.

13. INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT/PARENTAL PERMISSION PROCEDURES: Provide copies as separate attachments for all marked.

☒	**Written Informed Consent will be obtained**
☐	**Waiver of Documentation of Informed Consent per §46.117(c)** *(Please complete appropriate form)*
☐	**Informed Consent will be obtained via a short form written document per §46.117(b)(2)**
☐	**Waiver of some of the elements of informed consent per §46.116(d)** *(Please complete appropriate form)*
☐	**Waiver of informed consent per §46.116(d)** *(Please complete appropriate form)*

14. INFORMED CONSENT OR ASSENT AND PARENTAL PERMISSION PROCESS: Describe consent/assent and/or parental permission procedures to be followed, including the circumstances under which consent/assent and/or parental permission will be sought and obtained, the nature of information to be provided to prospective subjects, and method of documentation.

Students will be provided with an Informed Consent Form (ICF) describing the goals of the study and the nature of their involvement. (see Appendix A). In order to minimize coercion, students will be invited to participate in the study by a Research Assistant (RA) without the instructor/Principal Investigator in the room. The RA will explain the details of the study, underscoring the voluntary nature of participation. After students have the opportunity to read the ICF and ask questions, students will be instructed to either sign the form (if they wish to participate) or leave it blank (if they do not) and to place it into a sealed envelope. This envelope will be collected and stored by the RA until the semester is over and grades have been submitted. At that point, the investigator will "break the blind" by opening the envelopes

and determining whose data can be used for research purposes.

15. PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION: If collecting protected health information (PHI), describe the PHI being collected, the purpose for which it will be used, the entity from which the PHI will be collected and whether or not the entity is a HIPAA covered entity. If not applicable, insert NA below and skip item 15.

NA

16. METHOD OF COLLECTING PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION AND AUTHORIZATION: *Check all that apply.*

☐ **Prospective Chart Review** ☐ **Retrospective Chart Review** ☐ **Other:**

☐ **Authorization to be obtained** ☐ **Request Authorization Waiver** *(Please complete appropriate form)*

17. RESEARCH TOOLS: *Please provide copies for all marked.*

☒	**Surveys or Questionnaires (e.g. online surveys, mailed surveys, personal or medical history)**	
☐	**Measurement Instruments (e.g. psychological tests, IQ tests, diagnostic tools)**	
☐	**Interviews ☐ In Person ☐ Phone ☐ Other:**	**Recorded: ☐ Audio ☐ Video**
☐	**Focus Groups ☐ In Person ☐ Phone ☐ Other:**	**Recorded: ☐ Audio ☐ Video**
☐	**Record Review (e.g. chart review, public school records, medical records, agency records)**	
☐	**Other:**	

18. RESEARCH PROCEDURES: Describe the study procedures that a research participant should expect during the protocol. Define the type, frequency, duration of participation (e.g., what is done and when). When applicable, describe which procedures are experimental and which are routine. Does the study involve the use of deception? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If deception is to be used, the study does not meet criteria for exemption.

This study has a quasi-experimental design in that we will be examining the impact of two approaches to encouraging classroom community and professional development, but students will not be randomly assigned to conditions. Instead, students in Section A will be taught using a new guided small group discussion method in addition to less frequent traditional journal writing assignments while students in Section B will be assigned the usual frequency of traditional journal assignments (responses to prompts tying together readings and internship placement experiences that are shared between the instructor and single student).

On the last day of class, students will be asked to complete the Classroom Community Scale (Rovai, 2002). The CCS (see Appendix B) is a self-report questionnaire with demonstrated psychometric properties that consists of 20 items that examine perceived sense of social and learning community in a classroom setting. Participants rate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) Likert scale.

Additionally a randomly selected sample of student writing (from journals and discussion board posts) will be selected for analysis. The research assistant, who will be blind to the hypotheses of the study as well as the condition of different participants, will code de-identified writing samples, derived from the student journal. Consistent with general practices in qualitative research:

(1) 20% of the writing samples will be used for open coding/codebook development
(2) 20% will be used to refine the codes
(3) After applying a completed codebook to 20% of the cases, the codebook will be examined for redundant codes (that can be condensed) and general codes (that can be further split and defined)
(4) The remaining 40% of the samples will be coded

19. COMPENSATION METHOD: If participants will not be compensated check this box ☒ N/A; skip to section 20.

Amount/value of total compensation? | Type: ☐Gift Card; ☐ Cash; ☐ Raffle; ☐Other:

If students are participating in research will they receive course credit? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, describe criteria for awarding credit, i.e. amount of credit awarded and alternatives for receiving equivalent credit in lieu of participating in a study as a research subject.

Is compensation pro-rated? ☐ Yes ☐ No; If yes, how:

20. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: Describe any known or potential risks and/or discomforts (physical, psychological, social, legal or other) and assess their likelihood, seriousness and potential reversibility. Describe procedures for protecting against these risks and assess their likely effectiveness. Describe any alternative procedures that may be available to subjects including the choice not to participate.

There are no known risks to this project. The alternative is to not participate in the research.

21. BENEFITS: Describe any potential benefits to the individual subjects and/or to society in general that may be expected from the research. Describe the importance of knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result from the study. If no direct benefits are anticipated, please state so.

There are no known benefits to participating in this study. It is possible that others will benefit from students participation in that the information will be used to improve the Psychology Internship class

22. RISK/BENEFIT ANALYSIS: Discuss why risks are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to subjects and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

As there are no known risks and there is some potential benefit to learning the efficacy of teaching practices, the risk/benefit ratio seems reasonable.

23. RESEARCH DATA

Will personally identifiable or protected health information be recorded? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If so, please check all that apply:

☒ Names (First and Last)	☐ Date of Birth	☐ Telephone/Fax Number
☐ Email Address	☐ Social Security Number	☒ Student ID
☐ Street address, city, five digit zip code, county	☐ Internet IP Address	☐ Other:

Will you be sharing any research data with anyone outside of Suffolk? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, with whom and for what purpose? We will present statistics from the entire group of research participants. For example, we will look at the mean scores of community in each class. The general results of the study may be shared with faculty and administrators at Suffolk University. We may present them at a scientific conference. We might publish them in a scientific journal. However, these results will not contain any identifiable information. Only averages and totals for groups of participants will be included. We would not share the personal data of any one individual.

Will the research data be coded? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

If yes, will a link between code and person's identifiable information be retained? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, for how long? The code will be destroyed once all data analysis is completed.

24. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY: Describe procedures for protecting privacy and maintaining confidentiality including procedures for collection, storage and future use of data. Describe whether codes will substitute names and/or identifiable records, who will have access to study data, whether database will be password-protected or encrypted for online data collection. Describe how long written records, tapes, or recordings will be maintained and in what manner they will be kept or destroyed (the retention period for IRB records not containing protected health information is a minimum of three years; the retention period for protected health information is six years).

We will do our best to protect participants' privacy during this study. Participants will be asked to sign their name on the consent and place it in a sealed envelope. The sealed envelope will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal Investigators (PI) research lab and will not be opened until the class is complete and grades have been submitted.

Once the envelopes are opened, the PI will assign all students who are participating in the research a code number, which will be used to identify data. The list of names and code numbers will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the PI's research lab. The answers to the questionnaire will be entered into a spreadsheet on a password-protected computer in a locked office and identified by code number only. A research assistant will code a sample of the writing assignments. However, the PI will remove names from the writing assignments and identify them by code only. No personal, individual data will be released to any of the other faculty, staff or administrators of Suffolk University

Consistent with the guidelines that govern research conducted by a psychologist, the data obtained in this study will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study.

25. FINANCIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

☒ The investigator and key study team personnel have no financial or other conflicts of interest related to this study.

☐ The investigator or other key study team personnel have conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest related to this study. (*Identify specifically who on the study team has a conflict of interest. Identify the precise nature of the conflict(s) of interest to include financial conflicts of interest or other and how these conflicts will be eliminated or managed.* ***Conflicts of interest must be disclosed to participants during the informed consent process).***

☐ This project includes an investigator or key personnel from another institution who will comply with his or her own institution's COI policies.

☐ This project involves an investigator or key personnel from another institution who will comply with Suffolk University COI policies (completed Suffolk University COI disclosure form attached).

26. *PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S CERTIFICATION (E-SIGNATURE)

I certify that the information contained in this application is true. I understand that IRB approval of this application must be received prior to beginning any subject recruitment. I also understand that the IRB must be notified in writing of any modifications made to the study subsequent to approval of this application. I acknowledge and accept my responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants as discussed in the Common Rule (45 CFR 46) and Belmont Report. I certify that I will comply with all applicable regulations and directions of the Institutional Review Board, which may include:

1. Conducting this research study as approved by the IRB.
2. Submitting any changes to the protocol to the IRB for review and approval prior to implementation.
3. Monitoring and supervising research staff in the conduct of the research.
4. Maintaining accurate, current and complete records of all study materials including all IRB correspondence.
5. Complying with all state and federal laws as well as Suffolk University's institutional policies regarding the conduct of research with human subjects.
6. Promptly reporting adverse and unanticipated events related to the study to the IRB.

*E-SIGNATURES ARE ***REQUIRED PRIOR TO SUBMISSION*** from the following:

Department Chair or Dean
Principle Investigator
Co-Investigator(s) (if applicable)
Faculty Advisor (for students only if different from PI)

Please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs if you need assistance with setting up an account on www.irbnet.org.