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# Understanding Science Project Teacher Consent Form Force and Motion 2008-09

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## **Purpose of the *Understanding Force and Motion* Study**

The following conditions apply to your participation in a research study conducted by Heller Research Associates to evaluate the impact of a WestEd staff development course, *Understanding Force and Motion*, for teachers of grades 6-8. The study is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences. The research will compare outcomes of the WestEd course with those that ordinarily occur from staff development for middle-school physical science teachers.

## **What It Means to Participate**

If you decide to participate in the study, you will:

- Be randomly assigned to either the treatment group, to attend an *Understanding Force and Motion* course in August 2008, or to the delayed-staff-development control group, to attend the course in August 2009.
- Teach a classroom force and motion unit by March 31, 2009.
- Provide data for the course evaluation.

A more detailed description of what it means to participate follows.

## **Attend one staff development course**

The *Understanding Science* staff development dates for your site are **August 2008** and **August 2009**. The 32-hour course is comprised of eight four-hour sessions during a five-day period.

## **Teach force and motion by March 31, 2009**

You will be asked to teach whatever force and motion unit you normally teach, and to complete the unit no later than March 31, 2009.



## **Provide data for the evaluation of the course**

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to complete the following instruments:

- Two surveys (30 minutes each), one each during project meetings at your site in Spring 2008 and Spring 2009.
- Two science quizzes (30-40 minutes each), one each during project meetings at your site in Spring 2008 and Spring 2009.

If you are randomly selected to be a part of a classroom substudy, you will also participate in:

- Interviews by research staff (60 minutes) in Spring 2008 and Spring 2009 relating to your experience teaching force and motion.
- Classroom observations and audio-recording of two lessons during the 2008-09 force and motion unit, and an interview (60 minutes) before and after the observed lessons.

You will also be asked to assist in collecting the following student data by March 31, 2009:

- Work with a district staff person who is responsible for proctoring student science quizzes (30 minutes each) provided by the project—the quizzes must be administered to students in two class sections, within two weeks before and after your 2008-09 classroom unit on force and motion.
- A short survey (15 minutes) on the student population in the class and your classroom force and motion curriculum.

## **Compensation for Participation**

You will receive \$1,000 for your participation in this study upon completion of the data collection requirements and the staff development course. If you are chosen to participate in the classroom study, you will receive an additional stipend of \$100. If you are assigned to the delayed-staff-development control group and opt out of the 24-hour staff development course offered the



summer following the study, you will receive \$200 upon completion of the data collection requirements.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your decision to participate in the study is voluntary. However, the value of the research results depends upon your completing all research activities described in this form, over the full term of the project (May 2008-May 2009). Your receipt of a full stipend is contingent upon your completing all data collection activities.

## **Benefits**

This study is intentionally designed to provide maximum benefit to you. More specifically, your staff development course is designed to help you:

- Deepen your understanding of core science concepts.
- Examine how students make sense of those concepts and commonly misunderstand them.
- Analyze and improve your science teaching.

The ultimate long-term contribution of this study is greater potential for nation-wide gains in middle school students' science achievement, resulting from widely available, low-cost staff development courses that enhance middle school teachers' science content knowledge and improve their teaching practices.

## **Risks**

We foresee no risks to you or your students from participation in this study. The classroom audiotapes will focus on academic instruction in science. All interactions are those that normally are part of regular classroom activity. The interviews also pose very little risk to teachers or students. The questions we will ask about students' science ideas are those that the students typically are asked in classrooms or homework about force and motion, and there will be no grading or evaluation of the students' answers. If a teacher or student experiences any discomfort answering the questions, the interview may be stopped at any time.



## Confidentiality

The information we collect will be kept entirely confidential. Your name (and the names of students at your site) will not appear with any quiz, survey, transcript of interview or observation, report, or other publication. We will use a participant ID number in place of your name. Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for this study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. All identifying information will be stored in a locked cabinet or password-protected computer file to which only the research staff will have access.

## Whom to Contact

For more information about the research, or your rights as a research participant, please contact Joan Heller or Erica Heath.

### **Research and Evaluation**

Joan I. Heller, PhD  
Director  
Heller Research Associates  
510-873-0808  
jheller@edservices.org

### **Your Rights**

**Independent Review Board**  
Erica Heath, CIP, MBA  
President  
Independent Review Consulting  
415-485-0717



## Teacher's Consent to Participate in Force & Motion Research Project

I have carefully read the information above. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study and will do my part to make it a success.

- I agree to be randomly assigned to either a staff development course in August 2008, or to a delayed-staff-development control group assigned to a staff development course in 2009.
- I will finish teaching a force and motion unit by March 31, 2009.
- I will complete all data collection activities on time, including surveys and science quizzes, and, if randomly assigned to the classroom substudy, classroom observations and audio recordings, and recorded interviews with research staff. I give you my consent to use these data for research and educational purposes.

I have been informed that my participation in the study is voluntary, and I am agreeing to participate for the full term of the project (May 2008-May 2009). My receipt of a full stipend is contingent upon my completing all data collection activities.

Finally, all of the information I provide will be anonymous and confidential. My name (and the names of my students) will not appear with any quiz, survey, transcript of interview, report, or other publication. The project will use an ID number in place of my name. All identifying information will be stored in a locked cabinet or password-protected computer file to which only the research staff will have access.

- Yes, I consent to participate in this evaluation study under the above conditions.
- No, I do not consent to participate in this evaluation study.

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Name (please print clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Work phone

Email Address

