

## **I-Sensitivity.** Co-constructing Scholarship: Role Play *What ethical standards will you and your peers set?*



New writers may focus primarily on their individual roles in the scholarship process and fail to identify with other stakeholders. This inexperience may place them at risk for breaking the social contract implicit in writing for publication. Role play can help sensitize us to how our actions can negatively affect others.

**Instructions:** Read the following descriptions and situations facing key stakeholders in the publication process. Get into pairs, or small groups, and advocate for one role. Discuss the most important assumptions you would make about the quality of a written research product for that role. Do your assumptions conflict with the needs and assumptions of others? List the 3 most important assumptions and explain why.

- 1) **Reader/Consumer of Research:** You have just paid to obtain a copy of a dissertation through interlibrary loan and it's an important source for your thesis; you also pay \$300 to subscribe to a top-tier journal. What are your assumptions about the integrity of the authors publishing?
- 2) **Mentor/Advisor:** You are the chair of a thesis committee, and one of your student mentees has just emailed you a rough draft of his/her literature review. What are your assumptions about the student's work? Does it reflect on you?
- 3) **Journal Editor:** You are the editor of a prestigious journal and you review hundreds of manuscripts every year. You have just received a submission from a team of researchers at a leading, research-intensive university. What are your assumptions about the article/authors?
- 4) **Original Source:** You are a leading researcher in the field, and you read an article in which your research has been used. What are your assumptions about the ethics of the author in the treatment of your work?
- 5) **First author/Co-author(s):** You are collaborating on an article for publication. You have invested 3 years in the work, and you need it to get your PhD. You are the first author. What are your assumptions about your colleagues, their writing and citing processes?

**Follow-Up:** Search the academic press, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Science* or *Nature*, for a real case study in plagiarism (such as the one on the back side of this handout), or another authorship ethics issue (hyping results, manipulating images, coercive citation, gratuitous authorship, etc.). Share it with your group, and reexamine your roles (above) to discover where the breakdown occurred in the process and why.