



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

# A Lie or Just "a Way of Speaking?"

## Author(s)

Caroline Whitbeck

## Year

2000

## Description

A scenario meant to stimulate discussion about the phrasing of key pieces of information.

## Body

You and Conscientious, your first-year graduate student research assistant, are preparing a paper describing your research. The abstract for this paper was accepted for the Major Conference that is to happen next week. Reading over the paper, Conscientious points out that you have described a certain data set as "a typical data set" and says, somewhat hesitantly, "I thought that was our best data set." You tell Conscientious that calling the data set a typical data set is just a way of speaking, but Conscientious looks at you with doubt and consternation.

What do you say or do now?

## 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 Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item.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)**

Caroline Whitbeck

### **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

### **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

### **Parent Collection**

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

### **Topics**

Authorship

Collaboration

Data Management

Publication Ethics

### **Discipline(s)**

Research Ethics

### **Publisher**

Online Ethics Center