

Mentoring and Mentoring Up:

Workshop #2: Aligning Goals and Expectations between Mentors & Mentees

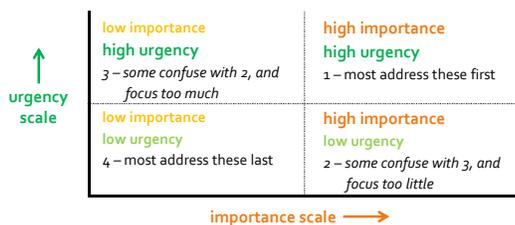


Steve Lee
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Let's read and discuss
the case studies

A common mistake is to confuse *importance with urgency*



Due to this common confusion, an *explicit* discussion of importance and priorities is essential.

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When discussing priorities, work to align goals and expectations

- Discuss and apply **SMART** goals
 - S**pecific – what are the specific details?
 - M**easurable – how will we know when it's done?
 - A**ssignable – who's in charge of what?
 - R**easonable – can we actually do this?
 - T**imely – when does it need to be done?
- Review the sample mentor/mentee contract

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Workshop Exercise:

Define success for you and your mentor/mentee
and determine how you will succeed

1. To succeed, my mentor/mentee needs ____ from me.
2. To succeed, I need ____ from my mentor/mentee.
3. Create a plan for moving forward:
 - I am going to __[goal]__ by __[date]__.
 - I am going to __[goal]__ by __[date]__.

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Mentoring and Mentoring Up – Case Studies Workshop #2: Aligning Goals and Expectations

Case Study #1: Multiple mentoring layers (from *Entering Mentoring*, pp 35-36)

My adviser accepted a student for an undergraduate research experience without asking any of us graduate students if we had time for her. She was assigned to the most senior graduate student for mentoring, but he was in the process of writing his dissertation and had no time to help her with a project. He asked me if I would take her on and have her help me with my research project. I agreed, assuming that I was now her mentor and not understanding that she was expected to produce a paper and give a presentation on her research at the end of the summer.

We worked together well initially as I explained what I was doing and gave her tasks that taught her the techniques. She didn't ask many questions, nodded when I asked if she understood, and gave fairly astute answers when asked to explain the reason for a particular method.

However, I became frustrated as the summer progressed. Instead of asking me questions, she went to the senior graduate student for help on my project. He did not know exactly what I was doing, but didn't let me know when he and she were meeting. He even took her in to our adviser to discuss the project, but didn't ask me to be involved. As more of this occurred, the student became quieter around me, didn't want to share what she had done while I was out of the lab, and acted as though there was a competition with me for obtaining the sequence, rather than it being a collaborative effort.

I didn't think too much about this and didn't recognize the conflict. She obviously didn't like sharing the project with me, which was even more evident when she wrote the paper about our research without including my name. She didn't want to give me a copy of the draft to review and I only obtained a copy by cornering the senior graduate student after I overheard them discussing the methods section and asked for a copy. I wasn't provided a final version of the paper nor was I informed of when or where she was presenting the research until two days before her presentation when I happened to see her practicing it with the senior student.

I felt very used throughout the process and disappointed that I didn't see what was occurring and address it sooner. In fact, I am not sure if addressing it would have solved the problems I had—being stuck in between a student and the person she saw as her mentor. The difficult thing, for me at least, is identifying that there is a problem before it is too late to bow out or to bring all parties to the table to discuss a different approach to the mentoring. Do you have any suggestions for me? I don't ever want to encounter this again and would like to head it off as soon as I can recognize that it is occurring."

- *If you were the student in this case, how would you feel?*
- *What were some of the hidden goals and expectations for each person in this case? Underline the specific hidden goals and expectations in the text above.*
- *What could realistically have been done differently to have avoided the problems?*

Case Study #2: Ethics (from *Entering Mentoring*, pp 37-38)

Your mentee, James, is a high school student who has grand aspirations of one day becoming a doctor. He has participated in science fair opportunities since the seventh grade. He has taken the advice of educational professionals to gain lab experience in order to make his college entrance application look distinguished. He worked with you this past summer and recently has asked if he can do a science fair project in your lab. You are asked to sign the abstract of the project. Because of divergent school and project deadlines, the abstract is due before the experiment is completed.

One month prior to the fair, you notice that he has not really been in the lab doing the work. When you question him, he is vague about what he is doing. It is unclear that he is doing anything at all. On the day of the fair, you are surprised to see him there. His project's results win him a first-place award, giving him the opportunity to go to the state competition. You have the uncomfortable feeling that he has not done the work.

How do you feel toward this student?

What would/could you do next?

When do you need to do these actions?

What are your objectives and goals in this situation?

A few days later, you ask to meet with James and his teacher (explaining to the teacher your reservations, but still making no accusations). At that interview, James is very uncomfortable, but rather vaguely answers all of your questions. He brings his overheads from the presentation to that meeting for review, but he does not bring his notebook (which is technically property of the lab). You leave that meeting with stronger suspicions, but no proof. You request that he return his notebook to the lab. He signs a statement that the results of the project were his work and reported accurately.

What would/could you do next?

How much time can you/should you legitimately spend on this matter?

What are legitimate actions you can take when you have unsubstantiated suspicions? Is it OK to act on them? Why or why not?

How do you combat the thought: "but I know lots of others who do the same thing, or have done worse?"

Through James' teacher, you request the notebook and results again in order to "confirm" his results before they are presented at the statewide competition. Two days later, James comes into your office, and nervously asks to talk to you about the project. He says there was a lot of pressure on him, and he ran out of time, and he is ashamed, but he "twisted" the data. He apologizes, says his teacher is withdrawing his first place award, and he wants to redeem himself in some way; he knows what he did is wrong.

How do you feel toward this student?

What would/could you do next?

When do you need to do these actions?

What are your objectives and goals in this situation?