

Humanities & Social Sciences Case Study: “Whose Idea Is It, Really?”

Step 1: Read your assigned case:

- HUMANITIES odd numbered groups: “Of Course I Have Favorites”
- HUMANITIES even numbered groups: “Whose Idea Is It, Really?”

Step 2: Discuss your case.

Step 3: Be ready to share one key insight of your own.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a framework for creating psychological safety.
- Clarify roles as teacher and role model in education mentees about ethics.
- Manage the power dynamic inherent in the mentoring relationship.
- Articulate ethical issues that need to be discussed with mentees.

CASE NARRATIVE:

You are Grey’s primary mentor. At last year’s international conference you introduced Grey to Jordan, a colleague at a different university whose research overlaps with Grey’s work. Since then, Grey has told you how helpful Jordan has been and that Jordan even recommended new ideas that will now be central to Grey’s project. The idea made sense to you because it seemed like observations Jordan would make, even though they are not from your own primary area of interest.

Jordan and you are catching up over lunch at this year’s conference. Jordan describes their latest project, talking about how much time it has taken to develop these ideas and how it will be transformational for the field. As you listen more, you come to understand Grey’s project is identical to Jordan’s.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What is the power dynamic in the relationship? What factors create it?
- How might power issues affect everyone’s choices?
- Even assuming Grey and Jordan have a trusting relationship, what are the ethical issues raised by this case?
- How might you handle this situation? In what situations, if any, is it acceptable for mentors to share their primary, current work with mentees?
- How might you train your students, including modeling proper citation practices, so that they avoid these types of circumstances?