

Humanities & Social Sciences Case Study: "You're Happy With My Work"

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Focus: How to establish a common understanding between you and your mentee of the boundaries, terms, structure and goals of the mentoring relationships.

- Recognize the expectations of the mentee in the mentoring relationship.
- Clearly communicate expectations for the mentoring relationships.
- Align (re-align) mentee and mentor expectations.

CASE NARRATIVE:

One of my graduate students started writing their dissertation nine months ago. When the first chapter was submitted, we met to discuss my feedback. While generally positive, I recommended the student read two recent articles and a monograph from scholars in this specific field to help situate the research. I asked the students to reflect on those readings while working on chapter revisions.

At our next meeting, we discussed the revisions, and the student said, "I feel like I'm making progress". I said I agreed except, "After reviewing what you sent to me, I did not see any additional work on the texts I recommended. These sources will provide important insight to your research, and I think will be very helpful as you work on future chapters."

We're meeting to discuss the next chapter now. In reviewing the material, it's clear the student has not engaged with the texts I recommended.

As the meeting starts, the student says, "This is a great place for me. I feel I'm making progress and I'm really happy with my work because I can focus on the most important ideas we've discussed. I just feel like I'm right on track."

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What are the main themes raised in this case study?

What kind of conversations regarding expectations might have been more helpful in this relationship?

What kind of conversations would be helpful to understand whether the student will be successful?

Who should be involved in these conversations?