

AN EVALUATION OF THE STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

Student success, access to higher education and accountability are concerns of universities and communities worldwide. Universities are now implementing interventions such as mentor programmes, Supplemental Instruction and resident advisors in order to keep abreast of a changing higher education environment, and to provide broader access and support for a wider range of students. The Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP) was designed and implemented in 2003 as an intervention to address some of the problems encountered by first-year students at the institution. The monitoring and realising of the outcomes of the programme necessitated a comprehensive evaluation.

The discussion of various theoretical paradigms forms a backdrop against which the multiple meanings of the concept of mentoring and its many practices can be understood. It is emphasised that there is no meta-narrative or grand structure that fulfils all the purposes and objectives of mentoring. The most obvious theories in the mentoring process are played out in the functionalist and the radical humanist paradigms, with the constructivists as an important catalyst in the realising of certain processes, procedures and actions. No single study has yet offered a full analysis of mentor programmes in the various paradigms, and the analysis that I present is likewise not a “final answer”, only a pliable structure to enhance the understanding of the underlying social theories as they utilise mentoring.

An evaluation study on the SMP was conducted during 2005. Questionnaires and interviews were used to establish the effectiveness of programme delivery and the resulting levels of satisfaction. The evaluation was conducted with both programme monitoring and programme outcomes in mind. The programme is highly structured and managed according to the key categories of a logic model, which also provides the relevant delivery and evaluative steps. The programme has two target groups, namely the mentors (senior students) and the mentees (mainly first-year students), organised into small groups, each with a peer mentor.

The monitoring and evaluation of the SMP highlights the benefits of group interaction among students, and shows the positive academic as well as psychosocial outcomes for students who attend the mentor sessions regularly. The short-term outcomes give an indication not only of the positive academic effects of the programme, but also of student experience and performance. As seen in the current study, the group in a mentoring situation fulfils an important developmental, synergistic role. Although the main aim of the design, implementation and evaluation of the SMP was to address the high dropout and failure rates of first-year students, many other advantages became apparent, and the outcomes of the programme indicate a positive effect on more than one terrain, such as unexpected growth and development for the mentors. The success of the programme can be seen as an important value-adding strategy to the university's teaching and learning environment, as well as a cost-effective intervention to retain students.

OPSOMMING

Wêreldwyd het studente-sukses, toegang tot hoër onderrig en aanspreeklikheid van universiteite in gemeenskappe belangrik geword. Ten einde te voldoen aan die eise van 'n veranderende opvoedingsomgewing, het universiteite begin om intervensies soos mentorprogramme, addisionele onderrig en raadgewing te implementeer om oor 'n breë front ondersteuning aan studente te bied. Die Universiteit van Stellenbosch se Studente-mentorprogram (SMP) is in 2003 ontwerp en geïmplementeer om van die probleme wat eerstejaars ervaar aan te spreek. Die monitering van die program met die gepaardgaande uitkomstes het 'n omvattende evaluering daarvan genoodsaak.

Die bespreking van verskeie teoretiese paradigmas vorm die agtergrond waarteen die meervoudige betekenis van die konsep mentorskap en die vele toepassings daarvan verstaan kan word. Dit word benadruk dat daar nie 'n metanarratief of grootse struktuur bestaan wat al die doelstellinge en kontekste van mentorskap omvat nie. Die mees ooglopende teorieë waarin mentorskap pas, is die funksionalistiese en die radikale humanistiese paradigmas, met die konstruktivisme as belangrike katalis wat die prosesse, prosedures en aksies betref. Die huidige bespreking daarvan is ook nie 'n poging om 'n finale antwoord oor die "plek" van mentorskap in sosiale teorie te verskaf nie, maar is bloot die daarstel van 'n plooibare struktuur waarin hierdie aksies kan plaasvind.

Die evaluering van die Studente-mentorprogram het gedurende 2005 plaasgevind. Vraelyste en onderhoude is gebruik om die effektiwiteit van die program te bepaal ten opsigte van beide operasionalisering en uitkomstes. Die program is hoogs gestruktureerd, en word bestuur aan die hand van die stappe uiteengesit in 'n logiese model. Die logiese model dien ook as die evalueringsraamwerk. Daar is twee teikengroepe in die program, naamlik die mentors (senior studente) en die mentees (hoofsaaklik eerstejaars), georganiseer in klein groepe elk met 'n portuurmentor.

Die monitering en evaluering van die SMP toon duidelik die voordele van groep-interaksie tussen studente, met beduidende positiewe akademiese en psigososiale resultate vir diegene wat die groepsessies gereeld bywoon. Die korttermyn-uitkomstes dui nie slegs op die positiewe akademiese effek van die program nie, maar ook op positiewe studente-ervaring en –prestasie. Dit blyk duidelik dat die groep in die mentorsituasie 'n belangrike ontwikkelende en sinergistiese rol vervul. Hoewel die hoofdoel van die ontwerp, implementering en evaluering van die program die aanspreek van die hoë druipe- en uitvalsyfers onder eerstejaars was, het dit baie ander positiewe uitkomstes op vele vlakke gehad, byvoorbeeld die ontwikkeling van die mentors self. Die sukses van die program kan gesien word as 'n strategie van waarde-toevoeging tot die universiteit se leer- en onderrigomgewing, sowel as 'n koste-effektiewe intervensie om studente in hoër onderrig te behou.

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CHAPTER 1 MOTIVATION

1.1 Introduction

Higher Education (HE) in South Africa, as in other parts of the world such as the UK, United States, Australia and Canada, is currently acknowledged as an important arena of educational change. The establishment of quality assurance bodies worldwide bears witness to the drive towards change and for being accountable towards communities (Brew, 2002). There are various reasons for the demand for change, amongst others, greater access to HE, and "the explosion of knowledge, the search for ways to increase economic competitiveness and new approaches to student learning" (Murphy, 2003:58). Dismal retention and pass rates in HE are increasingly becoming cause for concern, contributing to the demand for change.

Many universities provide alternative access and support mechanisms or programmes that facilitate the process for disadvantaged students to get admission and to study successfully. Examples are bridging programmes (Hay & Marais, 2004), academic introductory courses (Warren, 1998) and extended degree programmes (in various faculties at Stellenbosch University). In the case of extended degree programmes, students are provided with more time to complete their first year and the resulting additional curriculum space is used to provide free, supplemental, general and preparatory credit bearing modules to assist them academically during their first academic year. The Supplemental Instruction model developed in 1973 at the University of Missouri, Kansas, by Deanna Martin in response to the high dropout rate at the university, has been replicated in many institutions locally and abroad, and has been hailed as a very successful academic development initiative. Though psychosocial peer support takes place indirectly in Supplemental Instruction, the main focus is on academic content, especially in specific, "difficult" courses such as mathematics and the sciences. In South Africa, universities such as the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Vaal University of Technology, University of Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu University of Technology and Science, Central University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg utilise Supplemental Instruction programmes.

Langer (2001:53-54) states that among the support factors, academic activities are of the utmost importance, and are regarded as such by both mentors and mentees at the Empire State College in New York: "Integrating academic activities with student's interests and purposes is key to successful mentoring". Fraser and Killen (2005:37) make recommendations for higher education institutions about practices that may enhance student academic performance. They focus on three issues:

- changes to teaching practices that could enhance the effect of positive factors on student learning and minimise that of negative factors;
- guidelines to help students approach university studies in a way that would increase their chances of success; and
- changes to administrative practices that could result in a more supportive learning environment for students.

A publication of the International Academy of Education (IAE), edited by Brophy (1999) (<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/publications/practices.htm>) offers another set of guidelines in support of “universally applicable” effective teaching practices identified by research and scholarship. Three of these are specifically appropriate for higher education:

- Guideline 1: A supportive learning climate (Students learn best within cohesive and caring learning communities.) (Compare Wenger’s [2000] theory.);
- Guideline 6: Thoughtful discourse (not only in class rooms and lecture halls, but as a structured academic activity); and
- Guideline 9: Cooperative learning (Students benefit from working in pairs or small groups to construct understandings and help each other to master skills.) (See also Bitzer, 1999).

Beaty and Cousin (2003:141) point out that the imperative to educate more people to the highest level has also impacted on university funding. In South Africa the merging of many higher education institutions and the ending of the divide between technikons and universities have resulted in new competition for research funding. Statistics indicating student throughput are essential for government subsidies. It has become necessary for academic developers to find more ways to support staff and students, and create an environment conducive to successful study.

1.2 South African institutional context

According to the South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association’s (SAUVCA) National Quality Assurance Forum of April 2002, the teaching and learning interface is currently the highest priority for quality assurance at South African universities. The eight key points that have been identified focus on staff and student support to facilitate success, access and equity. In April 2004 the Council on Higher Education (CHE) published its latest revised and condensed 19 Criteria for Institutional Audits (2004), of which Criteria 2, 3 and 4 have particular direct relevance to the core activities of teaching and learning:

CRITERION 2: Objectives and mechanisms for quality management are integrated into institutional planning. Financial planning ensures adequate resource allocation for the development, improvement and monitoring of quality in the core activities of teaching and learning, research and community engagement (CHE, 2004:7).

Criterion 2 stresses the importance of goal-setting and the allocation of responsibilities for specifically developmental issues, which includes support to students with inadequate schooling. A further two categories pertaining to the support and the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning are also stipulated:

- (i) General quality related arrangements for teaching and learning; and
- (ii) Programme development, management and review; and student assessment and success (CHE, 2004:7).

CRITERION 3: The arrangements for the quality assurance of and support for teaching and learning enhance quality and allow for its continuous monitoring (CHE, 2004:8).

Criterion 3 emphasises the continuous monitoring of the support systems which provides the rationale for implementing a well-monitored and evaluated mentor programme. It further stipulates that discussions and initiatives on new approaches and innovations in teaching and learning should be ongoing.

CRITERION 4: Academic support services (e.g. library and learning materials, computer support services, etc.) adequately support teaching and learning needs and help give effect to teaching and learning objectives (CHE, 2004:9).

In order to meet the criterion, the following are examples of what would be expected:

- (i) Academic support services which adequately provide for the needs of teaching and learning, research and community engagement and help give effect to teaching and learning objectives. *Efficient structures and procedures facilitate the interaction between academic provision and academic support (my emphasis).*
- (ii) Academic support services that are adequately staffed and resourced and have the necessary infrastructure in place. The institution provides development opportunities for support staff to enhance their expertise and to enable them to keep abreast of developments in their field.
- (iii) *Regular review of the effectiveness of academic support services (my emphasis) for the core functions of the institution (CHE, 2004:9).*

From the above criteria and statements it is clear that it is not sufficient to have an institutional mission and vision without a clear indication of how the specifications and the ideals can be honoured and executed in practice. "Institutions of higher education have found it increasingly important to articulate their mission and to have a strategy to manage change" (Beaty & Cousin, 2003:141).

At a Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Seminar held on 3 September 2004, Dr Mala Singh argued that there is a need to focus on aspects of teaching and learning:

A number of institutions which liked to think of themselves as research institutions are now paying much more attention to issues of teaching and learning, and as such are focusing on plans and strategies to promote teaching and learning in a more cohesive fashion. There are also throughput rates stipulated in the national plan that has caused institutions to think about how these targets are to be achieved (Singh, 2004:2).

Universities are thus forced to qualify and implement their mission statements. The management of change also implies a broader access to university, support for the students who are admitted, and an evaluation of the programmes offered.

1.3 The problem

In South Africa, the rush for access to university education and the bid for government subsidies have had another consequence. Government has taken note of the alarming statistics of failure, and in a discussion document published in the *City Press* on 8 May 2005, expressed concern that the enrolment of students had grown more rapidly than the available resources, which has resulted in a shortfall in funding. "It seems possible that this first-time entering cohort of the 2000 academic year may not achieve an overall graduation rate of even 40%" (Mkhabela, 2005).

The discussion document states that the prevailing situation has put "severe pressure on infrastructure and personnel, compromising the ability of institutions to discharge their teaching and research mandate". It quotes the following statistics:

By the 2003 academic year, 60 000 (or 50%) of the "group" [of 2000] have dropped out. Only 26 500 (22%) have graduated by the end of their third or fourth years of study. The remaining 33 500 have been studying in 2003 but have not completed that year. ... This would involve institutions ensuring that failing students are not permitted to renew their registrations in any automatic way, but more importantly ensuring that larger proportions of their students complete their qualifications in the shortest possible time (Mkhabela, 2005).

The document has been met with mixed reaction¹, but government maintains that there is a need to show commitment to their objective of increasing participation rates to meet human resources needs. Increased participation poses many challenges for Higher Education, as will be seen in the following sections.

¹ University of Pretoria educationalist Jonathan Jansen said: "The department of education's proposal is politically and morally outrageous. It goes against government's earlier policies of opening the doors of learning for all. Government must increase funding." (Mkhabela, in *City Press*, 8 May 2005)

1.3.1 The challenge of retention

The challenges that the Higher Education Sector is currently facing are not new, nor are the problems of student attrition and the dropout rates. In a *Sunday Times* article Anstey (2003) comments on the fact that South Africa has the highest number of tertiary students in sub-Saharan Africa, but that less than two in every 10 students actually graduate. A survey of the South African Institute of Race Relations reveals that the average graduation rate for university and technikon students is a mere 15%, which is less than half the ideal average of 33%.

About one in five undergraduates and postgraduates also drop out every year. No reasons were provided for the dropout rate, but [then] Education Minister Kader Asmal said the dropouts cost South Africa R1.3-billion in subsidies (Anstey, 2003).

At a seminar of the HEQC in 2004, Scott (2004:10) emphasised the serious wastage within the education system, “estimated in the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) at over R1 billion a year. It is fair to say that the performance of the sector is poorest where growth is most needed, and that this constitutes an obstacle to national development”.

Some more alarming statistics were offered at the recent annual conference of the South African Academic Development Association in November 2005. Various delegates expressed their concern about matters that impact negatively on the throughput rate of students.

A study by the association found that out of 120 000 students who registered in 2000 for various three-year higher education qualifications, only 22% graduated, 50% dropped out and just 28% are still in the system five years later (The Mercury, 29 November 2005).

The phenomenon of student dropouts is not unique to South Africa, though. Marcus (2004) reports in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* that American university students are dropping out at ever higher levels and that universities are doing little to keep disadvantaged students, in particular, from failing to graduate.

Nearly 40 per cent of all degree-seeking students fail to graduate within six years, according to a report by a non-partisan advocacy group, The Education Trust. This is the first time graduation rates have been analysed by race. About half of black and Hispanic students drop out within six years (Marcus, 4 June 2004. <http://www.tsleducation.com>).

1.3.2 Factors that influence retention

The *Education Trust Report* (Marcus, 2004) cites several reasons for the problem in the United States, including spiralling tuition costs and poor preparation at primary education level, a problem that is also evident in the South African context. Many students also study

with bursaries that are not nearly adequate, and are compelled to take part-time jobs to make ends meet, which leaves even less time for studies. Others just leave the system.

...[F]our out of five American students of university age enrol in some form of higher education, but graduation rates have not kept pace. At some institutions studied by the Trust, one in every four students drops out in the first year alone. Sixty-three per cent of all students graduate within six years. That number falls to 54 per cent among low-income students, 47 per cent among Hispanics and 46 per cent among blacks (Marcus, 2004. <http://www.tsleducation.com>).

In order to address the problems of retention, it is essential to understand the factors impacting on student success. From the literature it is clear that success can be understood in terms of social *competence* and personal *experience*. I broadly summarise these factors in two broad categories of pre-enrolment factors (student input characteristics, lack of academic preparedness, commitment, expectations and perceptions, and background), and post-enrolment factors (such as modes of belonging, involvement or social integration, and environmental factors).

Pre-enrolment factors

1. Student input characteristics

Astin (1993) discusses student input characteristics - also called “pre-entry attributes” by Tinto (Draper, 2005), and “cultural capital” by Bourdieu (1991, 1994) and Yosso (2005) - as an indicator of students’ ability to cope in higher education, or as an “outcome measure for performance”:

Since many of these input characteristics are also related to the kinds of environments to which students are exposed, the possibility remains that any observed correlation between an environment and an outcome measure may reflect the effect of some input characteristic rather than the effect of the college environment. In other words, our assessments of how outcomes are affected by environments will be biased unless we measure and control for as many student input characteristics as possible (Astin, 1993:13-14).

Bourdieu (1991; 1994) describes “cultural capital” as the essence of student resources that they bring from their homes, communities or schools. Yosso (2005:77-78) stresses further characteristics as a resource that students bring to higher education, namely:

- aspirational capital – the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers (resilience);
- linguistic capital – intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences (compare with Wenger’s [2000] theory of community of practice, and Northedge’s [2003b] theory on academic discourse);
- familial capital – cultural knowledge and a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition (see also Contu & Willmott, 2003);

- social capital – networks of people and community resources that can provide instrumental and emotional support;
- navigational capital – the skill of manoeuvring through social institutions, and strategies to sustain high levels of performance in the face of hostility; and
- resistant capital – knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality (compare to Freire's [1973] theories on social justice).

As seen above, these resources include access to the institutional language and access to the academic discourses (Gee, 1990, Yosso, 2005), familiarity with resources such as printed matter and technology, often only acquired in affluent school settings (Street, 1995; Barton, 1994).

2. Lack of academic preparedness

The factors of student input, such as personal characteristics and cultural knowledge, play important roles in student retention, but access to language and academic discourse is arguably the single most important determinant in a student's ability to achieve academic success. The academic skills acquired during schooling should enable a student to engage in academic enquiry, when writing and participating in academic discussion. Wenger (2000) and Northedge (2003b) describe how identities are shaped by participation in various systems of learning. Heath (1983) and Gee (1990) demonstrate how the acquisition of middle-class discourse is an important precursor to academic discourse on entering an institution such as a university. Though Astin (1993) describes academic preparation, values and attitudes as environmental factors, the schooling background does influence, even determine, the values and attitudes (the culture of "not learning" and lack of vision) students bring with them to higher education. These values have a profound effect on their focus while studying.

South Africa has a history of poor schooling for the working classes, and this is compounded by poverty and the unemployment of parents, which impact negatively on children. Zola Vakalisa, a professor of Curriculum Studies at Unisa, calls this situation "a culture of not learning" (*The Mercury*, 29 November 2005). The lack of devoted and well-qualified teachers is still a problem in many sectors of the community, and the effect of this is evident in first-year performance. A further stumbling block related to poor schooling, as discussed above and highlighted by Vakalisa, is the language barrier that the academy poses:

Many students can hardly construct a paragraph, so there are extreme language barriers. Students struggle while reading library books because that language (English) is way beyond them. It is heart wrenching to see what some of my students write (Zola Vakalisa, quoted in The Mercury, 29 November 2005).

Apart from student input characteristics and academic preparedness, Tinto's 1993 theory of Individual Departure (Draper, 2005) stresses the relationship between all aspects of an institution, and the impact it has on student commitment. Tinto's theory also highlights the interrelationships between situations or events within an institution (also called "environmental factors" by Astin, 1993) and its impact on a student's life outside the institution.

3. Commitment

Tinto's model (Draper, 2005) shows the interaction between a student's "pre-entry attributes" and consequent goals and commitments, and the student's institutional experiences. Draper maintains that Tinto's model is "a very personal view, not well researched, and possibly severely flawed". Yet, he shows that this interaction, or lack thereof, influences the degree of academic and social integration, which in turn will determine students' choice to remain at the institution or their commitment to succeed. His ideas are in accordance with research in this field: social integration or involvement (Jacobi, 1991; Astin, 1993; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Guerazzi, 2002) plays an integral role in student retention and commitment.

Guerazzi (2002:56) shows in an extensive study that commitment is enhanced by participation in academic and social activities, in a programme called "Success Challenge".

The first to second year retention of Success Challenge participants increased as their level of involvement with Success Challenge increased. For example, the retention rate for those involved in 2-5 Success Challenge programs (2101) was 76% and the rate for those involved in 6-10 programs (84) was 93%. On the other hand, only 53% of those students in the 2000-2001-cohort group who were not involved in Success Challenge re-enrolled (Guerazzi, 2002:56).

Variables that indicate a tendency toward increasing the likelihood of retention are gender, ethnicity, residence status and a declared major (Guerazzi, 2002:55). In essence, white females who are involved in multiple academic and social activities, with a strong high school grade point average, who live in a university residence and have declared a major are likely to be retained. The "declared major" may indicate focus and career orientation, which in turn may enhance commitment.

4. Expectations and perceptions

Bitzer and Troskie-de Bruin (2004) state that entrance into and expectations of university programmes are still determined by students' perceptions of their academic competence based on their Grade 12 results, with the assumption that these results are adequate indicators of academic success. Their study indicates that such an assumption is problematic, and that it leads to a high failure and dropout rate, a phenomenon that is rife at

(but not unique to) South African Universities. School leavers should be prepared to have more realistic expectations of higher education programmes, and lower-level achievers should be supported more effectively.

Studies by Fraser and Killen (2003) and Eiselen and Geysers (2003) on student performance at university have found vast differences linked to the social and cultural backgrounds of the students. These different backgrounds often give them "very different life experiences, different educational opportunities and a great variety of expectations, needs and academic potential" (Chikte & Brand, 1996, quoted in Fraser & Killen, 2003:254). Different backgrounds, preparedness and needs necessitate new approaches to teaching, learning and administration of interventional programmes such as mentoring. It seems that a different focus is starting to form in countries all over the world, where the emphasis is shifting from elitism to mass education, and "developers have to balance the concerns and considerations of different groups within the higher education spectrum" (Brew, 2003:181).

5. Background

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, background influences students' expectations and determines their degree of preparedness. A preliminary reading of the literature indicates that an important purpose of undergraduate mentoring is to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are considered to be "at risk". Many of the mentoring programmes at higher education institutions (in South Africa and elsewhere) therefore target students considered to be at risk, such as "African Americans, Latinos and women [in the United States]" (Marcus, 2004). In South Africa "at risk" students are considered to be those who have not had access to proper schooling, as well as those who are first generation students.

With regard to first generation students, Lohfink and Paulsen say that:

... being the first in one's family to experience the culture of college and lacking the intergenerational benefits of information about college also make participation in college a particularly formidable task for first generation students ... both academically and culturally (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005:409).

Considering the educational background of the students coming to higher education institutions for the first time, and considering the enormous demands of academic and social culture, many students are not sufficiently prepared to handle the pressures. Programmes to support students in their adjustment to a new environment from academic and cultural perspective are reported by Australian institutions (Austin, Covalea & Weal, 2003; Chang 2003). These programmes include a holistic approach to student transition to university culture for both local and international students.

Post enrolment factors

1. "Modes of belonging"

"Modes of belonging" (Wenger, 2000:227) provides a conceptual framework of social integration or involvement, and has a profound effect on participants in social learning systems. Wenger distinguishes between three modes of belonging:

- engagement - doing things together, talking, producing artefacts or participating in a meeting, ways in which we engage with each other and with the world and which profoundly shape our experience of who we are;
- imagination - constructing an image of ourselves, of our communities, and of the world, in order to orient ourselves, to reflect on our situation, and to explore possibilities; and
- alignment - making sure that our local activities are sufficiently aligned with other processes so that they can be effective beyond our own (ibid).

Wenger (2000:227) maintains that the idea of modes of belonging is useful for two reasons:

First, analytically, each mode contributes a different aspect to the formation of social learning systems and personal identities. Engagement, imagination, and alignment usually coexist and every social learning system involves each to some degree and in some combination.

Wenger points out that the domination of one of these modes over the other could give a different quality to a social structure, but combined they provide the main drive towards enabling enculturation in a new system, such as the domain of higher education.

2. Involvement/Social integration

Academic and social adjustment to higher education seems to be a recurring theme when addressing attrition and drop out rates. Almost as a summary of many authors' statements and findings (Jacobi, 1991; Astin, 1993; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Langer, 2001; Guerazzi, 2002; Bitzer & Troskie-de Bruyn, 2004), Milem and Berger (1997:397) maintains, "Social integration may have a more influential role in predicting student persistence than academic integration".

Guerazzi's (2002) in-depth study of involvement effects on student performance provides strong support for the argument that being involved in the activities of the institution enhances the student's academic and personal development. She built her hypothesis on Astin's claim that

[s]tudent development seems to be facilitated if the student spends a considerable amount of time studying, attending classes, and using a personal computer, as well as engaging in academically related activities that would be inclined to elicit a high degree of student involvement (Astin, 1993:382).

Lohfink and Paulsen support both academic and social integration as a means of retaining students in higher education:

In-college experiences related to social and academic integration play an important role in the persistence decisions of both FGS [first generation students] and CGS [continuing generation students] (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005:420).

In spite of the problems of first-year attrition from higher education highlighted by researchers, Lohfink and Paulsen state that “there has been minimal research on the first – to-second-year persistence of first-generation college students at four-year institutions” (2005:409). They find in their study that “students’ satisfaction with their social life was positively related to persistence” even though the “potential causal role of this factor is problematic” (Lohfink and Paulsen, 2005:422).

3. Environmental effects

Environmental measures discussed by Astin (1993:15) include institutional characteristics (type, control and size), peer group characteristics (socio-economic status, academic preparation, values and attitudes), faculty characteristics, financial aid and student involvement (activities including studying).

In particular, it is enlightening to see how the effects of “environmental variables”, such as institutional size may be mediated by “involvement” variables, such as student-faculty interaction (Astin, 1993:xiv).

Student accommodation *per se*, as well as its distance from university, plays an important role in the overall experience of students in higher education. Retention is enhanced by living in a campus residence hall, a finding that has been reported in many earlier studies (Astin, 1984, 1993; Guerazzi, 2002). Living in a private room, interestingly enough, has a small but significantly negative effect on retention, probably because the student is alone, and not able to discuss academic matters with a roommate, have social interaction or a friendship (sharing) with a roommate. Emphasising social integration, Astin states:

Some of the strongest effects are associated with the student peer group (Astin, 1993:195).

There are many post-enrolment factors that influence student success, such as the peer group, financial support, religion or affiliation with a church (Astin, 1993), self-esteem and time management (Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004). The literature also suggests that students and lecturers perceive different factors as having an influence on success or failure (Fraser & Killen, 2005:27). Fraser and Killen (2005) quote McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001) who investigated 13 correlations between such factors and actual academic success as reflected in examination results. In the Fraser and Killen study, responses obtained from

students and lecturers on factors influencing student success were used to create a set of 52 statements, and another set of 55 statements was created to postulate student failure.

It is interesting to note that though there are some similarities with the Bitzer-Troskie-De Bruin study, the Fraser and Killen study shows a strong tendency for lecturers to “blame” students for failure. Both lecturers and students display a strong correlation for other failure factors, such as time management, but students indicate “lecturers/tutors with unrealistically high expectations of students” (also blaming) as a definite contributing factor to failure (Fraser & Killen, 2005:35).

As indicated before, another important stumbling block to students is time management. Astin (1993) reports ‘time stress’ as a negative influence on retention. Case and Gunstone (2003) demonstrate in a study of retention factors and integration in a second year Engineering course at the University of Cape Town that students who feel stressed by time pressure and not in control of their own time, demonstrate more superficial learning approaches than those who are able to manage their time appropriately.

Further problems include financial difficulties, travel arrangements, accommodation, the impact of HIV Aids on relationships (including death of parents and partners) and personal health (The Mercury, 2005).

1.4 Rationale for this study

The importance of access to higher education and the many factors influencing retention and academic achievement necessitate new approaches in teaching, learning and administrating support systems. Where learning resources are lacking, the university can play a vital role in enhancing retention by supporting individual students or groups of students by support structures such as bridging programmes, a foundation year or tutoring and mentoring programmes. Astin’s (and Guerazzi’s) findings on social integration effects and need-based aid provide a strong motivation for implementing and evaluating an intervention such as the Student Mentor Programme at Stellenbosch University.

One of the main purposes of higher education (apart from research and community involvement) is to support and develop students.

Many educators and policy makers will argue that the principal purposes of higher education are to develop students’ academic and intellectual skills and to prepare them for the world of work. Indeed, of all the possible outcomes of higher education, cognitive development and educational credentialing are probably given the most weight by students, parents, educators, and policy makers alike (Astin, 1993:186).

The purpose or outcome described by Astin above is reflected in the many studies in which the outcome measures emphasise cognitive outcomes, either with regard to student retention or average results (Langer, 2001; Capel, 2003; Eiselen & Geysler, 2003). An increasingly popular method from the United States to facilitate student achievement in high-risk modules is Supplemental Instruction (SI). Not unlike tutoring or mentoring programmes, a senior student or teaching assistant provides extra course information additional to the lecture and facilitates learning in small groups or cooperative learning. While a mentor programme may fulfil the same function as Supplemental Instruction where the mentors are utilised in module specific interactions, mentoring has the added advantage of concentrating on the student's affective needs and behaviour. Astin (1993) provides a classification of outcomes that encompass both the cognitive and affective needs of students (Table 1.1):

Behavioural scientists have traditionally classified human performance into two broad domains: cognitive (sometimes called intellectual) and non-cognitive (sometimes called affective). Since cognitive outcomes involve the use of higher-order mental processes such as reasoning and logic, they are clearly relevant to the educational objectives of most students, faculty, administrators, trustees, parents, and others concerned with higher education. Non-cognitive, or affective, outcomes refer to the student's attitudes, values, self-concept, aspirations and everyday behaviour and are important to students as well as to many educators (Astin, 1993:9).

According to Astin, two types of information are needed to assess the cognitive and affective outcomes, namely "psychological data, relating to the internal states or traits of the individual, and behavioural data, relating to directly observable activities". Astin (1993:10) maintains that the behavioural measures (which he also calls "sociological") "directly reflect transactions between the student and the environment and are usually of intrinsic interest".

Table 1.1 Classification of Student Outcomes by Type of Outcome and Type of Data (Astin, 1993:10)

Outcome		
Data	Affective	Cognitive
Psychological	Self-concept Values Attitudes Beliefs Drive for achievement Satisfaction with college	Knowledge Critical thinking ability Basic skills Special aptitudes Academic achievement
Behavioural	Personal habits Avocations Mental health Citizenship Interpersonal relations	Career development Level of educational attainment Vocational achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of responsibility • Income • Awards or special recognition

The essence of Astin's theory is that the greater the students' involvement in the higher education environment, the greater the amount of student learning and personal development will be. Staddon also emphasises the idea of a more holistic support:

It seems to me that the aim of a retention strategy should be to bridge the gap between what students can already do and what they must do to succeed, and of course this might include support of an academic, personal or social nature. Many universities have already rallied to the cause, introducing extra facilities along the lines of study support, comprehensive induction programmes and retention officer posts, and by extending and changing curricula to include foundation programmes (Staddon, 2002:29).

Mentoring as an intervention often forms part of the strategy of retaining students at higher education institutions: "Whereas mentoring has long been associated with the apprentice model of graduate education, it is increasingly looked at today as a retention and enrichment strategy for undergraduate education" (Jacobi, 1991:505), and can benefit students who underestimate the academic demands. The problem of retention and student success in higher education is a complex one, and it is clear that students who are admitted to universities should have access to support programmes, be they cultural and/or academic, by means of measurable interventions. A mentor programme seems to be able to provide the academic and the psychosocial support required, and may provide the active learning that "may directly influence social integration and indirectly affect subsequent institutional commitment and student departure decisions" (Braxton, 2000: 572).

The studies discussed in this section indicate that student integration in, and their expectations and perceptions of, higher education need to be addressed. These can indeed be addressed by providing programmes rooted in thorough theoretical knowledge about social learning systems and factors influencing academic and social adjustment. A mentor, and preferably a peer in a formal programme, could play an invaluable role imparting institutional knowledge and a general culture of learning to first-entry students.

Universities and academics have a responsibility to respond to the problematic nature of the transition process, especially in the face of the wider range of student abilities and experiences following the rapid expansion of the higher education system (McInnes & James, 1994:3).

Mentoring students who come to university for the first time seems to be an appropriate way to provide such support.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The focus of the current study is informed by the complex and compound problems of students in higher education, especially first-years. This study is an in-depth evaluation

study of an undergraduate mentor programme aimed at addressing the retention and throughput rates of students at Stellenbosch University.

Against the background of the needs of students in higher education, and the lack of specific evaluation studies of mentor programmes, the current study proposes to add to the evaluation literature. The purpose of the study is twofold: firstly, to evaluate the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP) according to the principles of outcome evaluation and, secondly, to monitor the programme delivery and reach. The purpose of the proposed evaluation study is improvement oriented, and is therefore formative. Information will be gathered on the programme outputs (number of mentees in programme, attendance of groups, workshops, interviews and report schedules) and outcomes (mentee and mentor experience, actual test and examination results).

A study of the knowledge base in this area [mentoring] suggests that protégés essentially become empowered. They begin to increase their self-confidence and trust in the self. Protégés who are supported by effective mentors increase their capacities to make thoughtful decisions, to work through problem resolution, weighing potential consequences of actions, and consequently to make better value choices. Thus, they become more inner-driven and self-reliant. Protégés essentially want their Yes-affirmation that they belong and are connected. They learn about Hope and the power of envisioning possible futures. This is the essence of mentoring. (Pascarelli, 2001:<http://www.mentoring-association.org/MembersOnly/ParadigmShift.html>).

The quote above highlights the aspects that will be focused on in the proposed study:

- the reach, quality and effect of the support for the mentees (first-years);
- the outcomes of mentee performance and experience; as well as
- the equipping of the mentors and organisers of the programme with more appropriate skills.

1.6 Defining mentoring

Many authors (such as Jacobi, 1991; Roberts, 2000; Langer, 2001; Miller, 2002) offer various definitions of the notion of mentoring, noting the diversity in some of the definitions.

They conclude that

... descriptions of mentoring programs are so diverse that one wonders if they have anything at all in common beyond a sincere desire to help students succeed. The result of this definitional vagueness is a continued lack of clarity about the antecedents, outcomes, characteristics and mediators of mentoring relationships despite a growing body of empirical research (Jacobi, 1991:505).

Though the “definitional vagueness” or “lack of clarity” is a common lament from authors in mentor literature, it actually shows a welcome tendency of a postmodern, local, pragmatic approach, where “mentoring” is taken to have multiple meanings. There is no metaparadigm

in which all programmes and interventions should fit. Thus, the contextual diversity and application of mentoring should be celebrated.

Considering the many contexts in which mentoring functions, it is a complex social and psychological activity. Depending on the *context* and the paradigm of the stakeholders, the application of mentoring will differ, as is obvious in the next chapter (Chapter 2). The essential attributes of mentoring, however, are broadly the same in the literature. Basically it is a process, whether in a supporting relationship, a teaching-learning relationship, or a career development process (Brew, 2000:162). It can also be a reflective process, making teachers and managers reflect on academic support and programme efficiency.

1.7 A brief history of the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP)

The SMP in its current form was designed and implemented in 2003. The programme was managed in 2004 as a pilot project, and after some refinements continued in 2005. The 2005 data is used for the evaluation study. The original rationale for designing and implementing the Stellenbosch Mentor Programme was primarily to address the high attrition and dropout rate of first-year students. However, many broader functions of the programme have become apparent. These wider functions are recognised by the programme managers as equally important outcomes to strive for. These include:

- helping first-year students to adjust to academic culture;
- enabling mentees to acquire the subject discourse;
- fostering a sense of belonging (involvement) in the social culture;
- enhancing understanding of higher education environment;
- playing a supportive role in the teaching and learning context;
- providing a “face” for first-year students to identify with (because the mentor is a fellow student or peer, and not a lecturer or much older person); and
- the formation of small support groups that result in supportive friendships.

The objectives for the study are in line with the literature on the subject of mentoring, not only for academic and social enhancement, but also for the character building of graduates. Scott (2004) calls for the ideal of delivering a well-prepared, well-adjusted and competent student. He uses the term “graduateness” to indicate the calibre of educated person that would play a role in society. Linking to the concept of “graduateness”, Chipman, Vice Chancellor of Central Queensland University, states the following:

From time immemorial universities ... were not only concerned with what their students managed to learn, but also with what sorts of people they should become. Universities were frankly and expressly in the business of character formation. It was only when you had determined what sorts of people you want your graduates to be that you could work out what they should be taught I believe universities will once again be judged not only by the quality of their research and the breadth of their

curriculum, but on the sorts of people their graduates become (Pope & Van Dyke, 1998:3).

By supporting students through a well-managed mentor programme, stating clear outcomes, these broad aims mentioned above could be realised and the outcomes evaluated. The question remains, however, whether a link between mentoring and academic success exists (a concern also raised by Jacobi, 1991) though some authors indicate that the “involvement” in academic life (Beasley, 1997; Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004; Wilcox, Wynn & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005) favourably impacts on social adjustment and therefore on academic performance. This study explores this area further by means of outcome evaluation.

1.8 Design and methodology

The study is conceptualised as an outcome evaluation study, aiming to answer the question of whether the intervention has been effective and to establish whether the envisioned outcomes have been realised. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been utilised in the study.

It is a complex task to establish whether the outcomes (academic success – if any) can be linked to mentoring (as many other variables may also determine performance), but general trends in mentee performance were investigated, taking test and examination results together with oral communication (interviews) into account. The question remains whether support *per se* can be quantified. The delivery of the programme (the activities, inputs and outputs) was evaluated according to a programme logic model. Of special significance is the qualitative data obtained from the programme participants about the value of the programme for providing both academic and psychosocial support, which were used to provide triangulation with the quantitative results. Qualitative information was obtained through interviewing individuals, conducting focus groups discussions, and from the open-ended feedback in questionnaires.

Though the research design is according to outcome evaluation guidelines, it is important to determine whether the programme has been delivered properly as well. Programme monitoring takes place when a programme has already been implemented. It can therefore be defined as a "continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results" (Malik, 2002:6). Programme monitoring is part of evaluation research that is aimed at assessing whether interventions are properly implemented and delivering what they were intended to. Evaluative questions are asked, and according to Hedrick, Bickman and Rog (1993:48), the strength of this kind of research is that the questions can be answered within a relative short period of time, though it

sometimes needs some intensive measurement efforts. Based on Babbie and Mouton's (2003:341) description of process evaluation, the kind of questions (which are refined in Chapters 4 and 5) to keep in mind for programme monitoring include

- Do all the members of the target group - mentees who volunteered for the programme - receive the intervention (adequate mentoring – both academic and psychosocial)?
- Is the standard of mentoring of all the mentors good enough to enhance student achievement?
- Is there any indication that mentees find the programme helpful, either in their academic work, or in other areas?
- Is there an unexpected benefit - or problem – for the mentees, the mentors or the institution?

And for outcome evaluation:

- Has the introduction of the Stellenbosch University Mentor Programme brought about a decrease in the failure rates in some modules?
- What was the general trend in student performance after joining the mentor programme?
- What are the mentors' and mentees' (qualitative) experience of the programme?

The methodology of the study is a hybrid of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data include biographic profiles, attendance of groups, numbers of mentees, mentors, modules and test results. Qualitative data explore mentee and mentor experiences of the programme.

1.9 Conclusion

When considering each of the factors mentioned in the Fraser and Killen study, as well as other factors (highlighted by Langer, 2001; Astin, 1993; Guerazzi, 2002; Gresham, 2003; Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004) such as expectations that are too high, the work load, cultural alienation, poor examination preparation and a lack of time management, it is clear that a mentor programme run by peer mentors could fulfil many of these requirements. As senior students have already “been through the mill”, and understand the context of academic discipline and realise the role that support can play, they are the ideal mentors (Goodlad, 1998, Miller, 2002). Studies such as those of Jacobi (1991), Boud (1999) and Little (2005) underline the valuable input that peers could make. The positive factors mentioned in the Fraser and Killen study (factors that students believe contribute to success, such as the positive influence of friends and clear goal formulation) are also available within a mentor programme.

What is important for the proposed study is how students feel about support, and what they actually gain from participating in such a programme. Fraser and Killen (2005:33) indicate that students rate certain support factors much higher than lecturers do (e.g. “family support” and the “positive influences of friends”). The success factors paint a picture of a motivated, self-disciplined student, who is well-prepared for examinations and satisfied with his or her choice of study. It seems that the higher the student’s commitment to completing their studies, the less likely it is that a student will drop out. (Support includes dedication to a career goal.) These findings about support factors correlate with the findings of a study conducted by Gresham (2003) that reveals some important information about the needs of international students, the support they require, the cultural experiences they value and the quality of personal relationships they hope to establish. Wilcox *et al.* (2005:707) offer a poignant quote from a student, about social support for first-year students:

“It was nothing to do with the university, it was just the people.”

While academic achievement can never be guaranteed (and the causal link between academic success and mentoring is debatable), the assumption can be made that if students are supported in their adjustment to a higher education institution, they will be better able to handle the academic workload. On the other hand, if they feel secure in their academic accomplishments, their adjustment at university will also be enhanced as they gain confidence in their own abilities. The outcome of mentoring is related to the degree of competence a student obtains from an institution or a learning system. According to Wenger (2000) all knowledge and experience is socially and historically defined, and it differs between communities:

Our experience of life and the social standards of competence of our communities are not necessarily, or even usually, congruent. We each experience knowing in our own ways. Socially defined competence is always in interplay with our experience (Wenger, 2000:226).

Therefore, it makes educational sense to include and involve undergraduate students into the community of practice of academia, by means of mentoring.

1.10 General outline of the study

The first chapter of this thesis situates the study in the problems of retention in higher education, and provides the motivation for the study and evaluation of a mentor programme for students. *Chapter 2* of the study comprises a literature review of mentoring. The concept of mentoring is discussed with reference to various theoretical paradigms (functionalist, radical humanist, and constructivist), depending on the function envisaged for the programme (career oriented, developmental, social justice, or the making of meaning through narratives to enhance mutual understanding and integration in a new environment).

The literature on mentoring is compared with the actual practice of mentoring, and the ensuing definitional variations are unpacked. The concepts and contexts of mentoring are explored, and several definitions and implementations are offered as they function in the various paradigms. A typology of the various programmes is also offered, for example peer mentoring or tutoring, which is broadly defined as the more-experienced or able peer helping less-experienced counterparts to adjust and cope successfully with a new environment or field of study.

South African mentor programmes are discussed in *Chapter 3*. It is important to note that support in some form or other is not unknown at South African higher education institutions. In a peer mentor programme such as the SMP of Stellenbosch University, the emphasis during the training of the mentors is on the support for students from different cultures, different languages and different backgrounds, and problems that manifest in substance abuse and depression are highlighted. In a multi-faceted environment the implementation of a mentor programme seems to be able to provide some answers to student failure rates. Such a mentor programme operating across five faculties was designed and implemented in 2003, and it has now become imperative to evaluate the delivery, reach and outcomes of this programme.

Chapter 4 presents the theory behind the Student Mentor Programme, and offers the logic model with its key outcomes as a management tool and an instrument to clarify evaluative aims and activities. *Chapter 5* outlines the research design and the methodology, according to programme evaluation research. The data collection methods and measurements are discussed. The data analysis (of both quantitative and qualitative results) is presented in three separate chapters. *Chapter 6* deals with the profiles of the target groups (mentors and mentees) in the study. Their demographic and background information, as well as their needs and expectations are presented. *Chapter 7* outlines the implementation theory and the programme monitoring, while the programme outcomes are analysed in *Chapter 8*. *Chapter 9* provides conclusions and looks at the recommendations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature on mentoring and what the concept entails. The main body of the published literature centres on the complexity of the term mentoring, namely the key concepts of context, functions, attributes and outcomes. I endeavour to provide a theoretical framework against which the many meanings of the concept can be understood. This chapter also offers a typology of the many different types of programmes, together with the paradigms in which they operate. As the chapter unfolds, it will become clear that the concept of mentoring is always applied according to the paradigm of the stakeholders, and that an understanding of the underlying theories clarify the “definitional vagueness” that is lamented by so many authors in the field of mentoring.

The literature on mentoring has increased over the past thirty years at a steady rate. Whereas before 1980 only a few studies were available, so much has been published over the last twenty to thirty years that authors (Jacobi, 1991; Roberts, 2000; Miller, 2002) venture into literature reviews, and many (Langer, 2001; Goodlad, 1998; Frierson, 1998 and Mullen, Whatley & Kealy, 2000) question the narrow definitions of mentoring and have thus offered their own. One does not need to go deep into the literature before realising that the evolving of the concept and practice of mentoring fits into the “grand” sociological paradigms of the past sixty to seventy years. At the one end of the paradigmatic scope are the authors (and programmes) that call for structure and clarification, and on the other extreme those authors who do not dwell on the problems of definitions, but enthusiastically embrace the concept as one that is supportive, interventionist and developmental. This group explores and applies mentoring to many programmes and across many institutions (Mullen & Lick, 1999; Mullen *et al.*, 2000; Buckley & Zimmermann, 2003), and even “celebrates the looseness of the term mentoring” and stretches the meaning beyond traditional boundaries (Rix & Gold, 2000:59).

Apart from the concept of mentoring used in business or large organisations to develop human resources (Sosik & Godshalk, 2005:39) the use of mentoring is rapidly gaining popularity in graduate and undergraduate education (Jacobi, 1991, Goodlad, 1998), and depending on the specific needs and distinct practices of the institution, a unique model is often developed. Haring underlines the notion of need and context by urging that there is

...a pressing need for mentoring models that depart radically from the assumptions of the traditional model... characterized by practice that is dynamic and has no agenda to preserve hierarchies, power imbalances, or institutions as we know them (Haring, 1999: xi).

The different fields of mentoring, namely education, the corporate environment and psychology, each offer different theories, applications and models, but for this study the focus is on education, specifically undergraduate education. The field of education provides a further myriad of applications or *typologies* (one-on-one, hierarchical, groups, and peer mentoring), *issues* (formal/informal programmes, mentoring serving career advancement versus addressing social problems) and *theories* (paradigms).

The “looseness” of the definition of mentoring is a welcome development in institutional practice, and fits well within a postmodern paradigm. In the first place mentoring no longer seems shackled to the traditional concepts of older, experienced mentors and younger, inexperienced novices, but the “idea” of mentoring is now applied in many forms and in many contexts to fulfil a supportive function. Secondly, mentoring is no longer used to maintain the status quo of a traditional, male dominated workplace, but rather to facilitate change, which in the current climate of diversity awareness and major social changes serves as an important vehicle of transformation and empowerment. Thirdly, heated debates exist about the value, validity and even the desirability of formal mentoring schemes (Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992; Gibb, 1994:48; Blake-Beard, 2001; Smith, Howard & Harrington, 2005).

The different practices of mentoring highlight the contrasting theoretical perspectives (discussed in Section 2.3 of this chapter) such as the functionalist conception of mentoring (a rational and hierarchical process) and the radical humanist conception (concentrating on power relations) (Darwin, 2000). There is a clear need in the mentoring literature to provide a conceptual framework against which to understand and analyse the many different paradigms and typologies, in order to stimulate debate and critical thinking about organisational/educational change and mentee (more often called ‘protégé’) empowerment. This chapter provides various definitions and descriptions of mentoring found in the literature, as they are applied in the different paradigms, and describe the typologies of mentoring (e.g. one to one, group mentoring, co-mentoring) according to their desired outcomes. The chapter also looks at the functions or roles and expectations of the mentor and protégé and the various relationships found in mentoring.

2.2 Definitions of mentoring

From the outset it must be made clear that the literature on mentoring, including the quest for a descriptive definition, is pervaded by mainly three “defining fields” from which the various authors create platforms for their theories. These “fields” are the *functions* (apparent in the functionalist paradigm), the *relationships* (prevalent in humanist and feminist theory) and *attributes* of mentoring. These three “fields” are again interrelated, informing the programmes in different contexts.

2.2.1 History

From the history of mentoring it is clear that traditional mentoring fulfils the dual function of helping protégés with their work and advancing their careers, as well as providing psychological support. This concept of mentoring as a career advancing strategy is typical of the functionalist approach to mentoring. Darwin (2000:201) states that “the more functions present in the relationship, the more it resembles traditional mentorship”. Mentoring is supposed to enhance not only career success but also lead to higher salaries (Chao et al., 1992; Darwin, 2000). Especially in corporate institutions, mentor-protégé relationships among the business elite have become socially desirable (Darwin, 2000:201).

In the history of mentoring its inherent value as a tool to help with the adjustment and retention of new participants in business, industry, government and education, has long been recognised. According to Daloz (1999:20) the original Mentor appeared in Homer’s “Odyssey” as an old friend of Odysseus who was entrusted with the care of his son, Telemachus. The “Mentor” also appeared in the form of Athena (and thus could be either male or female), the goddess of wisdom, who guided him during critical phases in the epic. Roberts (2000:162) differs from this popular view and ascribes the origin of the modern day mentor to the story *Les Aventures de Telemaque*, by Fenelon, dated 1699. The word itself apparently did not enter common usage until about 1750. Buckley and Zimmermann (2003:292-298) chronicle the developments in the field of mentoring since the late 1800s, through the voluntary supportive acts of individuals and small groups, to the first official federation of Big Brothers Big Sisters in 1921. A myriad of organisations and programmes, as diverse as they are numerous, are founded to this day. Research since the 1970s shows mentoring has been an ever-increasing activity in mainly the three fields of education, business or management, and psychology (Jacobi, 1991:506).

Though the value of mentoring as a tool to introduce novices to new environments has been recognised throughout history, Darwin (2000) warns about the implicit and unchallenged assumptions about knowledge and power in traditional mentoring practices.

Learning was a means of transmitting knowledge to protégés, and the mentors’ primary role was to maintain culture. The mentor was a protective teacher, guide or sponsor. This is not surprising, as the etymological meaning of the term comes from the root ‘men’, which means to remember, think, counsel. The word ‘protégé’ comes from the French verb, ‘proteger’, to protect. Thus, traditionally, the mentoring relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependency and stems from a power-dependent, hierarchical relationship, aimed at maintaining the status quo (Darwin, 2000:198).

Freire (1983:83) highlights the situation when knowledge is passed only from one direction (the educator, or mentor in the current context) without a reciprocal relationship:

For the truly humanist educator ... the object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together with other men – not other men themselves. The oppressors are the ones who act upon men to indoctrinate them and adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched (Freire, 1983:83).

The “untouched reality”, or status quo inherited from history, is the domain that is problematic in current mentoring practices and programme evaluation studies.

2.2.2 Contexts of mentoring

The literature on mentoring is clear about one thing only, namely the so-called problematic definition of the concept and action of mentoring. This constitutes actually a welcome development, as the lack of definitional ‘exactness’ is an indication that the concept has multiple meanings. It is indeed applied in many theoretical paradigms, though differently. The variously defined practices of mentoring will become clearer as this chapter unfolds, as the different “typologies” of mentoring are explained. The *context* of a mentoring programme and practice plays an important role in the way mentoring is defined, as it is according to the *need* the programme fulfils that the action is described. While I am highlighting the many contexts in this section, the paradigms that inform these contexts play an equally important role. These are discussed in the next section. Context and paradigm inform the typology and can thus not be separated from each other.

Darwin (2000:198-199) speculates that the lack of conceptual clarity might be due to the ambiguity in definitions of the term “mentor”. Traditionally, it was an older, powerful (male) member of an organisation who provided career- and psychosocial support to a younger, inexperienced member. “Definitions today are often less restrictive. How mentoring is defined and used appears to depend on one’s point of view.” According to Darwin two major changes have influenced the way mentoring is understood, applied and defined today, namely the advances in technology (causing even senior managers to seek guidance), as well as the introduction of electronic or e-mentoring, and the embracing of diversity (including developmental issues and social justice).

The lack of a widely accepted operational definition of mentoring is a major concern to some authors. Jacobi states the following:

The literature offers numerous definitions, some of which conflict, so that empirical research about mentoring subsumes several distinct kinds of interpersonal relationships. Further, descriptions of mentoring programmes are so diverse, that one wonders if they have anything at all in common beyond a sincere desire to help students succeed (Jacobi, 1991:505).

While the lack of definitional clarity is often a “major concern” to some authors, I am of the opinion that the time has passed for social practices to be defined according to precise

attributes and functions, and put into certain watertight categories. The focus of social practices has moved to include local contexts and narratives. A single overarching definition that encompasses all the attributes and functions and that is relevant to the context and needs of the participants may be considered arrogant, and will almost certainly be unsatisfactory for all circumstances. Roberts quotes different authors who endeavour to pin down a definition, using descriptions such as “elusive” and “confusing”: “...Attempts at such clarity are ephemeral; ... the concept is an ‘elusive’ one which resists simplistic labels”, and “the literature confuses the person, the process and the activities” (Roberts, 2000:148).

Roberts follows a phenomenological approach in trying to unveil the concept of mentoring. He quotes Haggerty’s [1986] phrase of mentoring as a ‘definitional quagmire’ and contends that the many different authors do not share the same perceptions of the mentoring phenomenon. Roberts strives to adopt a “presuppositionless stance – a phenomenological reduction“ when exploring how mentoring is “perceived and conceptualised by those who write about it, think about it, imagine it and conceive it” (Roberts, 2000:150). In the same vein, Gilles and Wilson (2004:90) come to the conclusion that “mentors cannot be defined by a set of predetermined characteristics, instead, mentoring, like good teaching, should be defined by those who will carry it out”.

The definition of mentoring offered by several authors links strongly to the historical concept described above. Chao et al. (1992:622) describe mentoring in terms of tasks and roles, insisting that the mentor “could be expected to facilitate the socialization process of the protégé”. This process comprises career-related and psychosocial functions, the guidance and protection of the protégé’s interests, while conveying the necessary knowledge and information about the organisation. While collecting the data for their study, they offered the participants the following definition of mentoring:

Mentorship is defined as an intense work relationship between senior (mentor) and junior (protégé) organizational members. The mentor has experience and power in the organization and personally advises, counsels, coaches and promotes career development of the protégé. Promotion of the protégé’s career may occur directly through actual promotions or indirectly through the mentor’s influence and power over other organizational members (Chao et al., 1992:624).

While the above definition offers a wide scope of support in general, and specifically in the field of business management (applicable also to faculty mentoring in higher education), the situation in mentoring for undergraduate students is different.

For the present study the focus is on (defining) mentoring in academic institutions, as it is the locus of the research. The increasing pressure on higher education institutions to improve the pass rates of students provides strong motivation for the practice of mentoring

and the implementation of programmes. "...The professional literature, the popular press and students themselves seem to agree that mentoring is a critical component of undergraduate education" (Jacobi, 1991:505). Jacobi's opinion is echoed by Boyle and Boice (1998:158), who state that the kind of "coaching that seems so crucial to undergraduate success is mentoring". Goodlad (1998) also promotes mentoring as an educational technique that can bolster academic success.

When reading the literature, it seems that very few authors (even in the narrower field of higher education) endeavour to pin down the mentoring concept in a single definition, and many prefer to describe it via its attributes or characteristics. The attributes of mentoring are elucidated [from Shandley, 1989, quoted in Jacobi, 1991:507] in the following definition:

First, it is an intentional process of interaction between at least two individuals... Second, mentoring is a nurturing process that fosters the growth and development of the protégé... Third, mentoring is an insightful process in which the wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the protégé... Fourth, mentoring is a supportive, often protective process. The mentor can serve as an important guide or reality checker in introducing the protégé to the environment he or she is preparing for. Finally... an essential component of serving as a mentor is role modeling (Jacobi, 1991:507).

Miller (2002:27) states that a "popular consensus" approach to mentoring (everyone is assumed to know what mentoring is about) is to define mentorship at an operational level, and he ascribes to it the following characteristics:

It is a deliberate, conscious relationship, which may have a time limit, sanctioned by an organization and occurring between an experienced employee and one or more novices. The outcomes are expected to benefit both parties, as well as the community, and typically focuses on interpersonal support, guidance, mutual exchange, sharing of wisdom, coaching and role modeling (Miller, 2002:27).

Miller (2002:46) admits to the difficulty of defining mentoring, but at the same time notes the undeniable popularity of the term, "with new forms arising all the time". His views place him in the pragmatic as well as the radical humanist paradigms. He espouses a more relaxed, practical approach to the concept: "Any attempt to be precise will inevitably face the accusation of an arbitrary drawing of the line between mentoring and other forms of support for students." However, he stresses that some form of clarity is necessary for stakeholders, and that there must be a clear relationship between the planned processes and the outcomes of mentoring.

The interest of the community, the benefits to both parties and the involvement of stakeholders give rise to the need for accountability from mentor programme coordinators and institutions, which in turn necessitate the evaluation of interventions and programmes. While the lack of rigorous evaluation of the mentoring processes is lamented (Jacobi, 1991;

Kreber & Brook, 2001), descriptions and methods of how to evaluate mentoring are offered (Miller, 2002), as well as ways of measuring outcomes, results and financial aspects of mentoring (Grossman, 1999). Examples of mentoring schemes (Goodlad, 1998, Page et al., 2005) are presented that

...should be integrated into the broader domain of student learning and development and will ... [have different] purposes in terms of student and community needs on the one hand and the demands of institutional and academic programmes on the other (Van Wyk & Daniels, 2004:359).

2.2.3 The concept of mentoring

Buckley and Zimmermann (2003:1) seem to adhere to the radical humanist paradigm when they argue that the concept of mentoring (in the broadest sense) should be applied to the “building of character and competence in the nation’s young people” (which links to Darwin’s [2000] social justice perspective). They offer a three-tiered definition of mentoring, namely achievement (including encouragement and career development), nurturance (caring and support) and “generativity”, which is described as reflecting “the concept of intergenerational responsibility and the idea that elder/mentor transmit knowledge, values and culture to the younger generation” (Buckley & Zimmermann, 2003:2). Though this view is less traditional than that of the proponents of a single definition for mentoring, it is still resonant of the traditional older/younger power-laden concept. Their view is also in contrast to that of Mullen et al. (1999; 2000) who feel that the constraints of traditional mentoring have severe implications for power relations, a point stressed by many other authors, such as Darwin (2000), Moberg & Velasquez (2004), and Sosik & Godshalk (2005).

However, Buckley and Zimmermann (concentrating on youth mentoring) make another point, often overlooked in the literature on undergraduate mentoring. They say that though mentoring is of special benefit for “at risk” or “vulnerable” students who are obvious candidates, “mentoring also offers benefits to talented, motivated and gifted youth, an often-overlooked group of students in need of support” (2003:2). Van Wyk and Daniels (2004:359) also agree with the idea of a broader mentoring reach. Instead of focusing on the limited notion of using mentoring strategies for vulnerable students only, they argue for the development of a thorough understanding of the nature and purpose of the learning context and its incumbent relationships, in which the student, institution and the community creatively develop and, consequently, re-invent themselves to optimise their capital and ongoing growth.

In accordance with Buckley and Zimmermann (2003), and Van Wyk and Daniels (2004), Mullen and Kealy (1999) also embrace new challenges and reinvent the mentoring concept to fit in with a changing institutional culture. They are of the opinion that “mentoring needs, abilities and resources can be combined in effective ways in various areas of our lives as

capacity-building networks that ensure learning, wellness and empowerment” (Mullen & Kealy, 1999:196). They are proponents of lifelong mentoring, and do not try to define mentoring in narrow terms. Instead they offer some assumptions, or a “manifesto of seven mentoring postulates”, briefly summarised as follows:

- *mentoring is for everybody;*
- *mentoring is a lifelong pursuit;*
- *mentoring involves a broad array of capabilities;*
- *different people have different needs shaped by particular life-situations (e.g. schooling, early career, retirement);*
- *different people have different needs, abilities and resources determining the need for or value of mentoring; and*
- *mentorship does not need to imply a hierarchical relationship, but could be a synergy;*
- *the potential for mentors to learn from mentees rises as mentors step back from traditional roles (Mullen & Kealy, 1999:196), a point stressed also by Cassim (2005).*

Roberts (2000:162) concludes that mentoring is a complex social and psychological activity, and that there is generally no consensus as to what the word or the action entails. Depending on the context, the definition will differ.

2.2.4 Attributes, functions and relationships

According to Roberts, too many authors attempt to focus on the definition, and not on the *attributes* of mentoring. “Contingent attributes” of mentoring consist of coaching, sponsoring, role modelling, assessing, and being an informal process (Miller, 2002:30). All of these attributes are described with more or less emphasis by different authors as part of the elusive definition of mentoring.

A “practical” set of attributes also contributes to the popularity of mentoring, according to Freedman (1992). Mentoring is simple (even complex social issues can be tackled by supporting an individual); it is direct (a mentor can give direct help to a protégé); it is a low-cost initiative; sympathetic (an “honour” that links to a noble tradition); and legitimate (a recognised, proper role to play in somebody’s life). However, authors caution that its effectiveness might be overrated, the only real effect being in anecdotal evidence (Freedman, 1992; Koch & Mallon, 1998; Miller, 2002:8).

The essential attributes of mentoring are broadly the same across the literature. Basically, mentoring is a process, whether in a supportive relationship, a teaching-learning relationship, or in a career development process (Brew, 2003:162). In the South African context in particular, Cassim (2005:14) states that the attributes or qualities of mentoring also “serve to build bridges of understanding, knowledge and mutual respect across diverse cultures and backgrounds. These attributes offer a unique developmental opportunity for the growth of the

mentor and the learner.” She describes the specific attributes in the ideal mentoring relationship as:

- *balance;*
- *interdependence;*
- *mutual respect;*
- *common vision;*
- *truth;*
- *trust;*
- *generosity;*
- *passion;*
- *courage;*
- *integrity; and*
- *valuing diversity* (Cassim, 2005:14).

Mentoring should also be a reflective process, making the teachers and managers reflect on academic support and programme efficiency (Brew, 2003:162). As a result of his inductive, phenomenological approach, Roberts locates and expresses (not defined) mentoring as:

A formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that person’s career and personal development (Roberts, 2000:162).

In the light of the multiple meanings of mentoring, most researchers opt to describe mentoring in terms of *functions* or roles in a specific context, and *attributes*. The functions of mentoring (such as coaching, role modelling, guidance, advocacy and providing visibility) and the roles of both mentors and protégés or mentees, play an important role in the mentoring process, and are discussed in full in the section on the functionalist paradigm (Section 2.3.1). The functions and roles differ widely between programmes and authors, but can be summarised in three broad categories - career enhancement, psychosocial support and role modelling. In higher education the main purpose of mentor support will include the achievement of academic success, or more specifically, passing an academic year, and eventually graduating.

As stated before, the strict boundaries of traditional mentor *relationships* are being redefined as needs keep changing. Kram (1985) designed an often-cited study to explore the nature of relationships between peers in organisational settings, and found that traditional mentorship provided critical developmental functions in the early stages of careers. However, “they [these relationships] endure only a few years” (Kram, 1985:265), whereas peer relationships with other significant peers also provide critical mentorship functions (and may last even longer). True mentors (in the traditional sense) are often unavailable to most people in organisations and institutions, while peers who are available may play the critical developmental role of offering psychosocial and career support. (Relationships, including power relations and dysfunctional relationships, are unpacked in Section 2.3.2.) Kram notes

the potent effects of personal characteristics and inter group forces not only in mentoring, but also on social science investigations in general.

The way in which the authors or programme organisers describe and manage their programmes provides valuable clues about the paradigm in which they operate. In the next section I endeavour to present the different paradigms and how these are reflected the different mentoring programmes.

2.3 Paradigms

The lack of a single precise definition of mentoring may be explained by considering the paradigms or frames of reference to which the programme participants adhere. Paradigms, however, do not provide the ultimate answer, as pointed out by Guba and Lincoln (2005), as the same set of facts or attributes may be used to support more than one theory. The many issues surrounding empowerment, voice and practice, are all value-laden, and are thus difficult to link to a specific theory.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:305) describe paradigms as different “emergent” schools of social inquiry, namely

... the neo-Marxist tradition of critical theory associated most closely with the work of Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse; the genealogical writings of Michel Foucault; the practices of poststructuralist deconstruction associated with Derrida; and postmodernist currents associated with Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Ebert, and others.

According to Kincheloe & McLaren, all these perspectives have influenced critical ethnography in different ways and to different degrees. Lyotard favours a local, pragmatic and ethical approach, “which underscores the specificity of the situation and the ability of the parties involved to develop agreed-upon, tentative, nongeneralizable social norms” (Seidman, 1994:207). Lyotard’s (1987) “postmodern condition” is characterised by the co-existence of a multiple discourses with no unifying metanarrative. Foucault presents the local and specific intellectual as opposed to the universal intellectual of modernity (Huysen, 1986). From Derrida, researchers are given a means of deconstructing objective truth, or what is referred to as “the metaphysics of presence” (Kincheloe & McLaren (2005:305).

The positivist and postpositivist paradigms form the backdrop to the interpretivist theories, but the “interactive nature of the inquiry” has rendered these paradigms less than adequate for addressing the ensuing cultural and social issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:184). Efforts to establish the primacy of science in social programmes, stems from a postpositivist paradigm (Greene, 1998) where programme managers, evaluators and institutional culture still place a high emphasis on theory, efficiency and accountability.

The most obvious paradigms in the field of mentoring are the two opposite extremes of the spectrum, namely the traditional, functionalist conception of mentoring, and the radical humanist conception with its emphasis on democracy, development and human rights. Contained in the humanist paradigm are the primacy of meaning in language and dialogue (constructivism), and an emphasis on gender and power relations (feminist theory). As the very nature of mentoring in higher education is aimed at development, diversity awareness and democracy, the proliferation of mentoring programmes and schemes reflect to a greater or lesser extent the values of radical humanist theory. However, a desired outcome of mentoring in the field of higher education is clearly also academic success, which places another emphasis on the function of the mentor, the programme and the process. A summary of the characteristics of the main paradigms and their foci in higher education is illustrated in the following table (Table 2.1). Each of the paradigms is discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

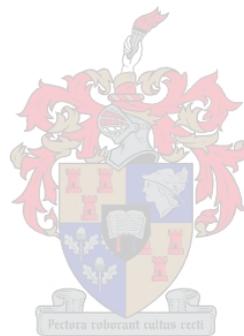


Table 2.1. Paradigms and issues in higher education mentoring

Paradigms	Main characteristics	Higher Education foci
Functionalist	<p>Retain status quo</p> <p>Structured matching</p> <p>Set functions of mentors and relationships</p> <p>Structured programme</p> <p>Organisation driven</p> <p>Outcomes stipulated within specified time span</p>	<p>Mentoring central to student academic success</p> <p>Structured and voluntary matching</p> <p>Roles and functions easily defined</p> <p>Formal programmes</p> <p>Participant or institution driven</p> <p>Assessable outcomes</p>
Radical humanist	<p>The right of the working class (mentee) not to be oppressed (Freire, 1983, 1998), but grow together with the mentor</p> <p>Developmental models of mentoring</p> <p>Career, skills as well as psychosocial support</p> <p>Role modelling for empowerment</p> <p>Voluntary matching</p> <p>Expectations from both sides</p> <p>Occasional meetings</p> <p>Outcomes assumed over longer period</p> <p>Social change</p>	<p>Mentoring is essential to empower the whole person</p> <p>Transformational learning</p> <p>Decision making and contributions from both mentor and mentee</p> <p>Career advancement and empowering</p> <p>Structured and voluntary matching</p> <p>Expose exploitive power relations</p> <p>Regular meetings</p> <p>Reciprocal outcomes: mentor also benefits from mentee</p> <p>Social and academic change</p>
Constructivist	<p>Make meaning through language</p> <p>Construct local world of mutual understanding, trust and support</p> <p>Free dialogue</p> <p>Formulation of goals</p> <p>Narrative makes set of points about events and communicates emotions, feelings and attitudes (Rix & Gold, 2000)</p>	<p>Action and interaction</p> <p>Construct academic discourse</p> <p>Critical knowledge of language and the dialectical interrelations of ideology, culture and education</p> <p>Formulation of goals and outcomes</p> <p>Communication is essential for academic growth</p>

2.3.1 Functionalist paradigm

The functionalist conception of mentoring frames the more traditional concept, usually involving an older mentor and younger, inexperienced protégé. In contrast, the radical humanist conception highlights and exposes “unequal and exploitative power relations” (Darwin, 2000:197).

Functionalism is based on

the assumption that the social traits existing in a society at a given time are interrelated in a systematic way and that ordered relationships can be discovered among ‘social facts’ or social institutions without necessarily bringing in psychological or historical factors (Sills, 1968:29).

This “guiding” assumption seems to be the crux of traditional mentoring schemes in organisations, concentrating on the elements that will sustain the structure by ‘showing the way’ to new employees or protégés, including the “distribution of authority and prestige”² (actually prescribing how the internal systems of an organisation should function).

According to the functionalist perspective, mentoring has mainly two functions: to help protégés to advance their careers and to help them gain knowledge and confidence – the psychosocial function. It is further assumed that mentoring has the specific outcome of promotion and higher salaries (usually for men) and that the status quo regarding leadership and organisational culture of an institution is maintained. In other words, from the functionalist perspective, mentoring is associated with the recycling of power within workplace relationships (Darwin, 2000), because when people in power look for successors, they often identify protégés with characteristics most like themselves (Kanter, 1977). “The recycling of power is based on the assumption that mentoring is a power-dependent, hierarchical activity, which initiates the protégé and renews the mentor” (Darwin, 2000:202).

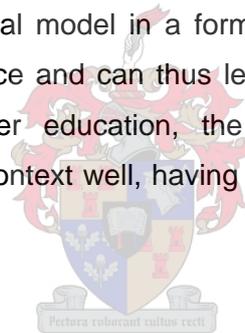
The second function of mentor programmes, according to the functionalist perspective, is psychosocial support. Developmental models have this function at the core of their philosophy. A developmental model assumes that the mentor has more experience and knowledge than the protégé, a notion that has been shown to have serious complications. The time of having ‘one career for a lifetime’ has long passed, and now it is common for older people with varied experience to enter a new work environment, one in which a younger person may have more specific experience or knowledge.

² Sills (1968:29) describes the “distribution of authority and prestige” as the “now-traditional concerns of sociology and social anthropology, the elements stressed by the major theorists from Emile Durkheim and Max Weber to A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Talcott Parsons, and George C. Homans”. Parsons developed a model of society as a functioning system, on which he elaborates in his book, *The Social System* of 1951 (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press).

Kram (1983) describes the classic, distinct stages of informal mentoring, namely, the initiation, cultivation and separation phases, after which the relationship is redefined, either by ending it or by taking on different characteristics. This model of the typical phases of a mentoring relationship, as offered by Kram (1983), is no longer relevant, as mentoring relationships are often much shorter these days (because people tend to change jobs more often than before).

Furthermore, developmental models have generally used men's experience in the workplace as benchmarks, often with detrimental effects for women and minority groups (Belenky, Field, McVicker, Goldberger, Rule, & Mattuck, 1986, 1997). It is also apparent that sometimes an almost ethereal quality is ascribed to mentoring relationships (Daloz, 1999), as if a magical transformation will take place. Traditional assumptions about retaining the status quo simply do not hold anymore in a changing workplace and academic environment.

Ironically, the kind of mentoring that would benefit students at higher education institutions, would typically be the developmental model in a formal programme, one which assumes that the mentor has more experience and can thus lead the protégé to a better career or graduate success. Thus, in higher education, the developmental model (within the functionalist paradigm) serves the context well, having objectives that include various forms of personal and social development.



Functions of mentoring

As seen in a previous section, some authors prefer to define mentoring by means of its attributes (Roberts, 2000), and many researchers choose to define mentoring in terms of the functions provided by a mentor, or the roles played in relation to a protégé (Jacobi, 1991:508). Jacobi discusses fifteen different functions as presented in eight different studies from 1977 to 1989 (merged into Table 2.2). It is interesting to note that the most functions (10 functions) were drawn from the latest study in 1989 [by Blackwell] (probably because the use and possibilities of mentoring have expanded since 1977).

Jacobi groups and summarises the functions into three major components of mentoring, namely "(a) emotional and psychological support, (b) direct assistance with career and professional development, and (c) role modelling" (Jacobi, 1991:510). I have merged the functions listed by Jacobi with those listed in more recent studies by Smith, Howard and Harrington (2005) and Cassim (2005), and have created a matrix of functions in Table 2.2. Though Jacobi lists role modelling separately as one of the three major functions (the other

two being career enhancement and psychosocial support), Smith *et al.* (2005) include role modelling in psychosocial support.

Chao *et al.* (1992:620) also highlight only two major mentor functions derived from the work of Kram (1983), namely career-related and psychosocial functions.

Career-related functions included providing sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection and challenging assignments. Psychosocial functions included providing role-modelling, acceptance, confirmation, counselling, and friendship – activities that influence the protégé's self-image and competence.

In education, the specific functions of mentoring have become key factors in guiding novices towards successful integration into various systems, be it undergraduate students (Jacobi, 1991; Langer, 2001; Pope & Van Dyke, 1998; Frierson, 1998; Goodlad, 1998; Naidoo, 1999; Anderson, 2004), postgraduate students or new teachers and faculty members. Boyle and Boice (1998), Buchner and Hay (1998), Benson *et al.* (2002), Capel (2003) and Gilles and Wilson (2004) describe processes whereby senior staff members guide new staff and students in the different aspects of their initial teacher education courses. Cassim (2005:16-17) summarises the primary functions or roles and responsibilities in a South African educational context as

- a coach;
- a counsellor;
- a mediator;
- a change agent;
- a friend;
- an evaluator of performance;
- a promoter of training and development;
- a promoter of personal growth;
- an encourager of independence; and
- being open to new learning.



Table 2.2 Functions of mentoring (* Sources quoted in Smith, Howard and Harrington)

		*Blackburn Chapman, Cameron, 1981	*Kram 1985	*Leon 1993	*Taylor 1997	Chao, Walz & Gardner 1992	*Williams & Kilbourne 1985	*Zey 1995	Jacobi 1991	Smith, Howard & Harrington 2005	Cassim 2005
Career enhancing	Advising		X				X		X		
	Challenging		X				X		X		
	Coaching		X			X	X			X	X
	Consulting	X		X	X						
	Develops cooperation									X	
	Discipline									X	
	Educating	X		X	X						
	Evaluator										X
	Exposure/Visibility		X			X	X		X		
	Fosters teamwork									X	
	Goal clarifying								X		
	Mediating										X
	Networking									X	
	Organisational interventions							X		X	
	Protecting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Role modelling		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Sponsoring	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Teaching/Training							X	X		X	
Psychosocial support	Acceptance and confidence					X			X	X	
	Befriending		X	X	X	X	X				X
	Change agent										X
	Counselling/Guidance		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
	Encouraging			X	X		X				X
	Socialisation										
	Validation								X		
	Vision		X							X	

Mentors are often utilised and described as coaches (Cassim, 2005) or tutors, or at least as fulfilling a tutoring role (Page, Loots & Du Toit, 2005, Topping, 1998). Part of a mentor's role is to impart knowledge. Higher education institutions supposedly provide students with different elements, such as theoretical perspectives, approaches to practice and appropriate knowledge and pedagogies, while mentoring strengthens the perspective of the holistic picture with complementary knowledge and support and career advice. Research indicates that mentors perceive themselves as playing complementary roles to tutors rather than duplicating the roles of tutors (Cameron-Jones & O'Hara 1995). Miller (2002:46) also defines an "ideal-typical" mentoring programme as "holistic", "where there is an intention to develop the whole student – personally, vocationally and academically – and the mentor skilfully uses a range of helping behaviours in this task".

Inherent to the roles and functions of mentors is that of role modelling. The literature on mentoring (e.g. Beck, 1989; Jacobi, 1991) emphasises mentors being role models to protégés. Thus the imperative to find and to be a good mentor is even more pertinent. According to a mentee "...it must be someone who motivates you...to want to be like them" (Loots & Engelbrecht, 2005). It is therefore important that both mentors and mentees understand their roles and duties and that formal training for mentors and mentees should be provided, for example "to enable individuals to detect potentially problematic situations before they become serious" (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004:115). Training programmes for supervisors who also act as mentors should go beyond the administrative interpretations of supervision, and should focus on the complexities and difficulties involved in the dual mentoring-supervision relationships as well (Manathunga, 2004). Research with participants in focus group discussions conducted by Loots and Engelbrecht (2005) indicate clearly that both mentees and mentors should develop the skills needed to address the different roles, expectations and outcomes involved in a mentorship programme.

Expectations in mentoring programmes

Parsons, as representative of the functionalist paradigm, elaborates on the expectations of the various role players in social systems (so evident in more traditional mentor programmes). "What Parsons called the 'complementarity of expectations must occur in a multitude of social interactions or role relations in order for social systems to achieve routine order" (Seidman, 1994:106).

Expectations of mentors as well as those of protégés mostly centre around career-related success and social support (Kram, 1983, 1985; Scandura & Williams, 2003; Young & Perrewe, 2004). There is also a strong link between the perceptions of the participants and the actual outcomes of a mentoring relationship:

Foa maintained that an individual's perceptions of outcomes have much to do with the expectations, and someone who has high expectations and has perceived sufficient levels of support will continue to perceive satisfactory levels of support, even if actual support increases or diminishes. (Foa, 1957 cited in Young & Perrewe, 2004:106).

Because of this strong link, it is important that a sound relationship between mentor and protégé is formed from the start, with clarity about both parties' expectations and roles (Young & Perrewe, 2004). Much has been published about mentor characteristics (Freedman, 1992; Goodlad, 1998; Miller, 2002) and mentor's expectations of their own roles (Gilles & Wilson, 2004), but Young and Perrewe highlight some of the characteristics of protégés in their study on expectations, which include the need for power, achievement, affiliation and autonomy:

Although need for affiliation and autonomy did not prove to be more prevalent in protégés than non-protégés, need for power and achievement were significantly higher for protégés than for non-protégés (Young & Perrewe, 2004:107).

Career success and achievement are typical expectations from a mentoring relationship, and Kram (1983) highlights such functions as coaching, exposure, guidance and protection. Young and Perrewe quote Hunt and Michael's [1983] description of the mentoring relationship as a "power-dependent-dyad", and according to the literature, mentorship is fairly successful in attaining career-related goals for protégés.

Characteristics of mentors

Several authors (Goodlad, 1998; Roberts, 2002; Miller, 2002:189-190; Smith *et al.*, 2005) describe the characteristics of 'ideal' mentors. Miller (2002) mentions personality traits such as "empathy, discretion, interest, sensitivity, patience, respect", and even "affection". The roles, functions and characteristics definitely have an impact on the benefits and outcomes of the process for mentees. Smith *et al.* (2005) observe that the demographic characteristics of both mentor and protégé (such as age, gender, race, rank in the organisation, and experience) do affect both the expectations and the actual outcomes of the mentoring relationship.

It is a given that not all educators, supervisors and senior students are "ideal" mentors, and that some awareness training is thus beneficial. Loots and Engelbrecht (2005) highlight some of the challenges in linking postgraduate students to supervisors who do not feel inclined to be mentors as well. Manathunga (2004) recommends educational development for researcher supervisors that goes beyond the usual administrative interpretations. Goodlad (1998:10) says that "whatever additional instruction tutors and mentors receive, they must be given basic training" in responsible mentoring, a sentiment also stressed by Smith *et al.* (2005:47).

However, it is not only the characteristics of mentors, their training or sensitising, and the expectations of protégés that influence outcomes. Smith, Howard and Harrington (2005:35) also maintain (in accordance with Chao et al. 1992, Mullen & Lick, 1999; Blake-Beard, 2001) that formal programmes will also influence outcomes when linked to the characteristics of the mentor: “We anticipate that formal mentors who had experienced less rich formal mentorships will continue the established norm of less rich formal mentor behaviours.” The reason behind this conviction is that the matching of mentoring pairs in formal programmes is artificial, and does not sufficiently consider the subjective criteria for matching. Smith et al. (2005:41) list specific mentor characteristics such as honesty, integrity, high moral and ethical standards, and personal presence (which might be an indication of power) as general traits. The most significant, overarching characteristics to consider in a mentor are respectability, wisdom and sensitivity.

Benefits and outcomes of mentoring

The functionalist approach to mentoring allegedly provides mutual benefits to the protégé, the mentor, and the organisation. Benefits to the mentor include satisfaction, loyalty, and peer recognition. Benefits to the protégé are assumed to include a greater understanding of organisational culture, career advice, and promotion, while benefits to the organisation include increased motivation and productivity, “stability of culture”, “reduced turnover”, leadership development, and improved communications (Darwin, 2000:202). While functionalists do stress reciprocal relationships, Sills (1968:29) says, “The typical monograph or essay also includes relationships based on similarity, one-way causation, and fulfilment of a psychological or social need”. According to Cassim (2005:13-14) mentorship ideally offers a “win-win” scenario for both mentor and protégé, with reciprocal enrichment in the following areas:

- mutual respect;
- friendship;
- personal fulfilment;
- career enhancement;
- productivity;
- understanding and valuing diversity; and
- role models .

Naturally, the different functions, roles, expectations and characteristics of mentorship, as discussed above, will lead to different outcomes, which in turn are closely related to supposedly specific benefits to the protégé. Some authors (Mullen, 1994; Beasley, 1997:21) argue that the mentoring relationship should benefit both partners, and that information

should be exchanged both ways. Thus, apart from the expected benefits for mentors such as satisfaction (set out below by Gilles & Wilson, 2004), there should be a definite scholarly learning curve for both parties.

Benefits for mentors

The academic benefits for mentors themselves (in the reciprocal relationship of functionalism that Sills highlights) are often reported and are highlighted in a study by Gilles and Wilson (2004) on mentors' perceptions on their own development. In this instance the programme was formally planned, structured and monitored. The mentors' work included dialogue, planning, team-teaching, demonstration, working with small groups of students, general assistance and locating of resources. The benefits for mentors in this process are summarised as follows:

- mentors are stimulated emotionally and intellectually;
- mentors report a sense of satisfaction with their role;
- they enjoy sharing their experiences and see their mentees succeed;
- they feel pride and a sense of self worth and are often re-energised for their profession (also mentioned by Miller [2002:189] as an "aim" for mentor personal development);
- questions from mentees cause mentors to be more introspective;
- mentors receive new ideas from mentees as well as from mentor training;
- new ideas keep mentors up to date with educational theory, increasing their professionalism;
- the learning relationships provide more collegiality and enhanced interpersonal skills;
- because of their knowledge and skills, professional opportunities become available to mentors;
- "...one of the most common outcomes mentors attribute to the mentor-mentee relationship is the chance for self-reflection" (Gilles & Wilson, 2004:92) (also indicated by Goodlad, 1998:8);
- understanding of the bigger picture (changing worldview, learning, policies, communication, decision-making) enabled mentors to become "more effective leaders" (Gilles & Wilson, 2004:104).

The mentors in the Gilles and Wilson study clearly benefited, and as they were in a formal programme at an institution, the institution also benefited. According to Seidman (1994:106) Parsons argues that "well-functioning social systems require a 'fit' between the needs and motivations of the individual and the role requirements of the institution or social unit". The fact of the "fit" between roles, benefits, expectations from role players and the institution, informs the programme, which in turn reflects the paradigm in which mentoring operates.

Benefits and outcomes for mentees/protégés

Chao et al. (1992) say that the outcomes of the mentorship are directly related to what and how much input the mentor provides for the protégé, and that the experience will influence the protégé's job satisfaction, and of course, performance. A tangible outcome for undergraduate students will be the passing of courses, and eventually, graduation. As stated before, the perceptions and expectations protégés have about the mentoring process, will also influence the outcomes (Young & Perrewe, 2004).

In undergraduate education, the outcome of mentoring, as pointed out above, is directly related to the three broad aims of student mentoring, namely academic guidance, psychosocial support and role-modelling, and fits into the developmental philosophy of mentoring (Jacobi, 1991:510; Darwin, 2000; Miller, 2002:33). According to Miller the three broad aims of student mentoring include the following:

- *Developmental mentoring may involve social skills, attitudinal change, social inclusion, anti-drug strategies, self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings about self and others, spiritual development, motivation, attitudes and values and so-called 'soft' skills.*
- *Work-related mentoring can include employability and work-related skills, key skills, enterprise, career progression and management, and future goals and aspirations.*
- *Subject mentoring may relate knowledge acquisition, subject-specific skills and study skills (Miller, 2002:33).*

The broad aims above all have their own objectives, designed to bring maximum benefit to the protégés. Just as there are clear roles and functions stipulated for mentors, it is supposed that protégés or mentees also have certain responsibilities in order for a mentoring relationship to be beneficial. Cassim (2005:18-19) offers these responsibilities:

- be committed to own learning;
- promote and support the mentor's development;
- build the relationship by being committed and honest;
- communicate with relevant stakeholders/counsellors/facilitators;
- accept responsibility for own development; and
- offer friendship: trust and support.

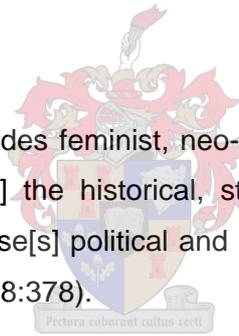
Literature on mentoring is unanimous on the benefits of this process for mentees or protégés, except in cases of dysfunctional relationships and power play (Blake-Beard, 2001; Moberg & Velasquez, 2004) as is discussed in Section 2.3.2 of this chapter. Real gains for newcomers to any field include a significant increase in knowledge and confidence (in undergraduate students), increased research productivity and confidence for graduate students, as well as significant career advantages, improved "risk-taking, political savvy and

specialized professional skills” for young professionals (Boyle & Boice, 1998:158). When undergraduates receive mentoring in small groups, there are even more benefits, such as personal and social development (Rossini & Hyland, 2003:154). Inclusive programmes also aid the development of students’ self-esteem and confidence, helping them to associate with their peers (Little, 2005). The academic requirements of programmes in higher education demand deliberate effort from students, who often underestimate the workload and level of insight expected from them. Support for this from a mentor who can lead the way has proven invaluable for student success (Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004).

The traditional mentor-protégé relationship - where there is a clearly defined power structure, and various roles and functions are assigned - falls easily into the paradigm of functionalist theory. Because of the clear structure, the functionalist paradigm is often the preferred choice for institutions with formal mentor programmes, as it also allows for the evaluation of the outcomes. In a less structured, informal programme such as those often preferred by proponents of the radical humanist and feminist theories, the roles and functions are less traditional and open.

2.3.2 Radical humanist theory

The paradigm of critical theory includes feminist, neo-Marxist, critical and radical humanist theory.³ Critical theory “illuminate[s] the historical, structural, and value bases of social phenomena, and in doing so, catalyse[s] political and social change toward greater justice, equity and democracy” (Greene, 1998:378).



In the radical humanist context, proponents are informed by “post-discourses” (e.g. postmodernism, critical feminism, poststructuralism) and maintain that individuals’ views of themselves and the world are even more influenced by social and historical forces than previously believed (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005:304; Freire, 1983). Radical Humanist conceptions highlight contests for meaning and strive to expose unequal and often dysfunctional (and exploitive) power relations (Darwin, 2000).

Principles of social justice are used to assess whether the distribution of benefits and burdens among members of society are appropriate, fair, and moral. The substance of such assessments usually consists of arguments about the concepts of rights, benefits, or needs. When applied to society as a whole, social justice pertains to whether the institutions of a

³ Kincheloe, J.L. and McLaren, P. (2005:304) describe the following critical traditions:
Marx; Kant; Weber; Hegel; the Frankfurt School theorists;
Continental social theorists such as Foucault, Habermas, and Derrida;
Latin American thinkers such as Paulo Freire;
French feminists such as Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous;
Russian sociolinguists such as Bakhtin and Vygotsky.

society are arranged to produce appropriate, fair, and moral distributions of benefits and burdens among societal members (House, 2005:1074).

Making of meaning is of particular importance in critical theory, and is specifically prevalent in the constructivist theory (described in Section 2.3.3). Constructivists highlight the making of meaning in language, as well as the social processes and procedures that lead to action and interaction (Gibb, 1994). Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000), and Silverman (1993) are also concerned with language and meaning-making in social interaction, as is Gaskell (2000), though he takes meaning-making into the further realms of text, image and sound. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:304) capture the essence of critical theory when they highlight certain basic assumptions:

- all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted;
- facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription;
- the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed [according to Derrida, 1980] and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption [compare with Baudrillard, 1987];
- language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness) [the work of poststructuralists - and constructivists - such as Lyotard, 1987];
- certain groups in any society and particular societies are privileged over others and, although the reasons for this privileging may vary widely, the oppression that characterises contemporary societies is most forcefully reproduced when subordinates accept their social status as natural, necessary or inevitable⁴;
- oppression has many faces and focusing on only one at the expense of others (e.g. class oppression versus racism) often elides the interconnections among them⁵; and finally,
- mainstream practices generally, although most often unwittingly, perpetuate the reproduction of systems [the functionalist paradigm represented for example by Talcott Parsons] of class, race, and gender oppression. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005:304)

⁴Freire (1998:56) highlights situations where individuals are exposed to traditional power relations because they believe it to apply to them. These individuals need to be made aware that they have to deny the “humiliating truth, a truth that humiliates them precisely because they introject the dominant ideology that sketches them as incompetent and guilty, the authors of their own failures. And yet the actual “why” of those failures is to be found in the perversity of the system.”

⁵Compare with Smith’s (1987) feminist theory.

The reproduction of social systems and the positivist orientation have led to the phenomenon that “social justice concerns have long been excluded from social science research for political reasons” (House, 2005:1074). According to Freire (1983:83)

...[many] political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their action) the men-in-situation to whom their program was ostensibly directed.

As a fierce proponent of social justice, Freire (1998:132) situates himself in the “progressive postmodern, democratic outlook” which acknowledges the right of the working class to be educated.

The working class has a right to know its geography, and its language – or rather, a critical understanding of language in its dialectical relationship with thought and world: the dialectical interrelations of language, ideology, social classes, and education (Freire (1998:132).

His main argument is that people should be educated to realise their own value, and not accept oppression or power relations as a given.

Freire’s educational sentiments are echoed by Miller (2002:21-22) who stresses what he calls the “politics” of mentoring, which serves both “rightwing and leftwing ideologies” but which actually fit the radical humanist paradigm. Miller offers his “politics” with the following aims:

- *to promote equal opportunities for females and minority students (a social justice perspective, according to Darwin, 2000);*
- *to raise the educational aspirations of students from poor families;*
- *to increase the proportion of students from poor families graduating and going into higher education;*
- *to redress faulty socialization within dysfunctional families;*
- *to instil values in young offenders; and*
- *to promote character education, faith and family values.*

Although advocates of the learning organisation appear on the surface to favour the democratisation of the workplace and employee empowerment by means of mentoring (as Miller advocates above), a radical humanist perspective examines power relations, and Darwin (2000:203) warns of the “ontological commitments” inherent in mentoring. From within a radical humanist perspective, mentoring is a process that places social justice in the foreground. Power relations are challenged and worker subjectivity respected. “The radical humanist mentor takes a broad perspective that goes well beyond notions of efficiency found in a functionalist perspective” (Darwin, 2000:204).

Whereas the mentoring relationship in a functionalist perspective involves the transfer of knowledge and expertise from a mentor (as teacher) to the protégé (as novice), in the

radical humanist perspective the relationship is more interdependent. Co-learning or co-mentoring (Mullen & Kealy, 1999; Lick, 1999) is the preferred method of interaction. Individuals transcend the traditional roles or create new roles and interact as equals to the benefit of both (or more) partners (Little, 2005). In a co-mentoring relationship, leadership and mentorship become more closely aligned, and the influence is reciprocal. Peer mentoring also offers a more equal support system than the traditional view of mentoring.

Mentoring from a radical humanist perspective is inherent to organisational culture, where the decision-making and contributions of both young and old (chronological as well as career-wise) are taken into account. In this way perspectives are challenged and new knowledge created. The notion of power-sharing across cultures, gender and hierarchical levels may seem utopian (Darwin, 2000:205), but it has the capacity to transform individuals and workplace relationships (Little, 2005).

Developmental models of mentoring programmes are inherent to the radical humanist paradigm. Whereas the developmental models in the functionalist paradigm focus on specific roles and functions, the developmental models in the radical humanist paradigm include behavioural and attitudinal objectives for students who may be socially excluded or at risk. These developmental models, however, do not necessarily exclude the well-adjusted student, a point previously raised by Buckley and Zimmerman (2003).

Miller (2002:34) presents three objectives for developmental mentoring programmes, namely the development of self-esteem, personal and social skills and improved motivation. He notes that improved self-esteem is one of the main outcomes of student mentoring programmes, and gives the definition of self-esteem as “the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with life’s challenges and being worthy of happiness”. This feeling may be enhanced by being in a small group with a mentor, and being accepted⁶ and made to feel welcome (Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004). Contributions to group learning and the formation of peer friendships within the group may also raise self-esteem (Little, 2005).

Linked to the objective of raising self-esteem in the developmental model of mentoring is the objective of improving students’ personal, interpersonal and social skills. Mentees gain confidence in handling various situations they encounter (Goodlad, 1998; Frierson, 1998; Miller, 2002). Astin (1993), Beasley (1997), Kelly and Llacuna (2000), Guerazzi (2002), Austin

⁶ “Being accepted” is emphasised by many authors (Levinson, 1978; Kram, 1985; Jacobi, 1991, Smith et al., 2005) as an essential function of mentoring. See Table 2.2.

et al. (2003), and Little (2005) also report this renewed self-confidence in students' capabilities within an academic environment.

The motivational objective in a developmental model in undergraduate mentoring is critical in the link between subject-oriented and developmental mentoring (Miller, 2002:35), especially in undergraduate peer mentoring in higher education. Here mentors would encourage mentees to work in subjects, regardless of their feelings about a lecturer. A strong motivational factor is provided when mentees see that a mentor who is only a year or two their senior understands what they are experiencing and possibly even has experienced and overcome the same problems. Student development is enhanced when mentors are accessible – which is optimum with peer-mentors – and they have the opportunity to speak freely and gain (subject or institutional/cultural) knowledge. The involvement (and socialization that is facilitated by a mentoring programme) also “increases the overall level of students' satisfaction with their undergraduate experience as well as promotes academic success” (Kelly & Llacuna, 2000:1).

Closely linked to the objectives and outcomes above, is emotional support (Jacobi, 1991:524). This is related to the motivational objective, promotes integration or involvement, which in turn leads to academic success. “...Student mentors promote a feeling of belonging or integration among students by offering them acceptance, validation and friendship.” Direct assistance with professional development may follow in importance, particularly socialization functions that assist students to understand the institutional culture. Role modelling from this perspective would also be a means of socialization. It might not be easy to link the attributes and functions of mentoring to specific mentor duties, but Jacobi's (1991:526) inference (echoed by Goodlad, 1998; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Miller, 2002) that “the role-modelling function is of greatest importance to student development, followed by emotional support and direct assistance” fits the ideal of undergraduate academic success to a large extent.

As seen in the previous paragraphs, the functions of mentoring are often regarded as the defining criteria for mentoring in specific contexts, and often reflect the paradigm in which the mentoring is situated. Different, non-traditional or informal mentor programmes are designed to minimise the effect of power relations, which impact not only on women's careers, but also on those of minority groups, as is apparent in the next section.

Feminist theory

Feminist theory underscores the centrality of gender inequality and women's oppression in society, often related to sex roles and patriarchy. Dorothy Smith (1987) focuses on a different but central mechanism of social domination, namely objectified knowledge and discourse. Smith highlights the exclusion of women from business, the professions, scientific, medical, and mass media discourses. The exclusion of people from knowledge systems is a common and central feature of dominant power relations in contemporary Western capitalist societies. According to Seidman (1994:309) the role of knowledge as a social force of domination "exhibits the intersection of male dominance, racism, and capitalism".

Mentoring in institutions has often been offered exclusively for men, enabling them to share in the knowledge and practices of the current powers, to retain the status quo, and to further male dominance. Informal mentoring schemes, peer group support and co-mentoring contrast directly with the dominant, traditional, functionalist model of mentoring, in favour of a radical humanist, feminist, constructivist theory.

Formal and informal mentoring

The functionalist approach to mentoring is at its most prevalent in formal programmes. Feminist writers seem to agree that a formal mentoring scheme perpetuates the status quo of male dominance, claims to exclusive knowledge, the maintaining of power relations and favouritism (senior management targeting selected protégés). Darwin points out the "flaws" in theories that suggest there is a predictable path of careers in adult development within organisational hierarchies:

A great deal of mentoring research has been based on this assumption and remains relatively unchallenged. Traditional assumptions about mentoring, aimed at replicating the status quo, may have been relevant in a time before women entered the workforce and before downsizing and flatter structures reduced the role of hierarchy within organizations. These theories are anchored in a world that no longer exists (Darwin, 2000:203).

Though career advancement or support in academic culture seem commendable from a functionalist perspective, difficulties may occur when such programmes are made compulsory and authoritarian senior managers control the functioning of the programme. Because of the underlying power relations inherent in mentoring, the question of formal or informal mentoring programmes presents another difference of opinion amongst authors (Blake-Beard, 2001; Chao et al., 1992; Smith et al., 2005).

Authors of mentoring literature make distinctions between spontaneous, informal (or natural) mentoring and structured, planned or formal mentoring and the difference in job satisfaction

and career advancement between the two types (Chao et al., 1992; Blake-Beard, 2001; Scandura & Williams, 2003; Miller, 2002; Allen & Eby, 2003). Scandura and Williams (2003) distinguish a further step in planned or formal mentoring, namely the difference in purpose between transformational leadership (e.g. that of a supervisor) which is performance oriented, and mentoring, which is development oriented. Allen and Eby (2003) maintain that the type of mentoring (formal or spontaneous), does not have a direct relationship with mentor effectiveness, and that “no research [has established] if mentor reports of learning and quality vary by how the relationship was formed”. However, Smith et al. (2005) do find that the initial formation of that relationship is important, and may play a major role in the [dys-]functioning of the process.

Chao et al. (1992), Blake-Beard (2001) and Smith et al. (2005) express serious doubts about formal mentoring programmes, especially for women in the workplace. They focus on the challenges facing women when negotiating mentoring relationships, and suggest alternative sources of support, for example friendship groups, role-modelling, social support and acceptance. The authors found that protégés involved in informal mentoring relationships reported better outcomes (job satisfaction and increased salaries) than women in formal mentoring relationships. The support for women is one of the reasons for founding MentorNet in 1997, a non-profit e-mentoring network. It is designed to support the retention of women in engineering, science and mathematics, specifically because they have often been excluded from formal mentoring programmes.

Power relations

The many pitfalls of power relations in mentor-protégé relations are recurring themes in mentoring literature (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004; Blake-Beard, 2001, Chao et al., 1992). The concepts of gender, race, power relations and formal versus informal mentoring cannot be separated. Allen and Eby (2003:472) state, “Perhaps one of the most salient characteristics on which we draw conclusions of similarity is gender”. Some research points out that full support could only be gained from mentoring through a relationship with the same gender, because “the barriers to empathy and identification often prevented the development of a fuller mentoring relationship” (Levinson, 1996:270). Darwin (2000:202) alludes to another problem, namely the possibility of unwanted romantic or sexual involvement that is sometimes associated with cross-gender mentoring.

The issue of gender in mentor dyads or the homogeneity or diversity of mentor groups provides much debate (Blake-Beard, 2001; Moberg & Velasquez, 2004; Sosik & Godshalk, 2005) and will continue to be a field of research in future, as many different aspects of power relations are being investigated. Haring states,

The traditional model of mentoring has exhausted its potential to foster innovative practice, especially on a larger scale. That traditional model, called grooming mentoring, is severely constrained by its hierarchical, power-laden and dyadic nature (Haring, 1999:xi).

This view further highlights the problems surrounding the multiple meanings of mentoring, the functionalist theory of mentoring, and gender issues in radical humanist and feminist theory. In co-mentoring and peer mentoring in education, as well as in the shift to more informal mentoring schemes (mainly aimed at women's empowerment), the effort to move away from hierarchical power relations is obvious.

Though cross-cultural, cross-race and cross-gender mentoring relationships may present numerous problems, it seems that these issues are of lesser importance to students. Little (2005:92) admits that though students bring with them the "hidden rules" of the class in which they are raised, heterogeneous mentoring groups provide students with "a sense of community and security, as well as the ability to learn from other students". Provided the mentors are sensitised to diverse needs and backgrounds, the relationships formed in peer mentoring groups may prove to be prime examples of transformation at the most basic level, not imposed by a higher structure:

A lack of organizational imagination and commitment to racial justice and equity in many educational settings places an enormous burden on individual students – students of colour and white students – to learn academic material and relate effectively with one another. It also places a great burden on faculty members to try and teach well in this difficult environment (Chesler, 2003:1).

In mentoring, cross-gender and cross-race relationships must be well monitored. Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004) maintain that these can be sites of struggle if there is no awareness of the inherent pitfalls of cross-cultural mentoring. They use their own mentoring history of thirteen years (a black woman mentee and a white male mentor) to point out the issues facing academics in such relationships, amongst which the "otherness" in the academy presents a salient point. In undergraduate mentoring the issue of cross-cultural mentoring does not seem to present insurmountable stumbling blocks, possibly because mentors are willing and empathetic volunteers who want to help, and mentees primarily need to pass a course in an often unfamiliar academic culture. Grossman (2002:6) agrees with Bailey and Cervero stating that the "main argument in favour of cross-race matching is that the mentor's personal qualities, not her or his race, are what matter most".

Dysfunctional relationships

The shift in focus to different issues in society (such as diversity, social justice and equal opportunities) has paved the way for support programmes in various institutions. While the literature certainly highlights the benefits and successes of mentoring, dysfunctional

relationships are just as common (Blake-Beard, 2001; Johnson & Huwe, 2002; Moberg & Velasquez, 2004). The literature reports mismatches in values, style and personality. Moberg and Velasquez (2004) cite mentor neglect, self-absorption and intentional exclusion, as well as manipulative behaviour and incompetence as examples of dysfunctional relationships. Miller (2002:231-232) states that sometimes “unsuitable” mentors volunteer in programmes, and then later abandon their mentees. Literature also highlights the hierarchical structure of mentor relationships, which could lead to what Miller calls “cloning” – mentors try to mould mentees in their own image, and form their attitudes in a prescriptive way.

From the mentors' side, dysfunctional behaviour regarding mentees include forms of deceit, as well as demanding mentees, whom they perceive as being overly dependent or spoilt (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004). Johnson and Huwe (2002) report on dysfunctional relationships stemming from faulty matching, “boundary violations” (participants not respecting professional distancing), and incompetence, in addition to the complexity of cross-gender and cross-cultural mentoring. Furthermore, inequalities in the distribution of power between mentor and mentee are reinforced by the view that only one party in the relationship possesses knowledge, skills and research networks. A belief in the inequality of power may lead to mentees becoming dependent on their mentors, who they perceive to have a much higher status (Engelbrecht, 2004). Another problem that may arise is allegations or complaints from mentees against other teachers, which places the mentor in a difficult position (Miller, 2002:232). This manipulative aspect of mentee behaviour should be highlighted in mentor training, to make mentors aware of possible difficult situations.

Higher education is a site where difficult situations potentially may develop. Many students are thrown together from racially and economically diverse communities, and yet need to live in community with “the other”, often for the first time. New relationships with peers and staff, including mentors, need to be forged, regardless of classist or racist baggage (Chin et al., 2003). As mentioned earlier, relationships formed in peer mentoring under such conditions may offer good examples of transformation.

Some of the problems in mentor-protégé relationships can be prevented by matching pairs or peer-and-group as carefully as possible. If the mentors are not identified by mentees or vice-versa in an informal manner, programme criteria must be adhered to. It is important to see the mentees as willing volunteers (Miller, 2002:234) who need to be briefed about the processes of mentoring, the aims and objectives. It is also important to identify any potential problems, and devise strategies to handle them. Mentors and mentees must also be supported through a well-managed programme.

The relationships discussed in this section, are often still based on the traditional mentor-mentee pair, focusing on adults and young adult development. Many aspects of the mentoring relationship are then assumed rather than experienced (for example, perceptions of the roles of mentors and the expectations about the outcomes). Though the functionalist conception of formal mentoring provides a more explicit structure, informal mentoring schemes that demonstrate a crucial awareness of power relations, diversity and social justice are becoming more acceptable and more prevalent.

2.3.3 Constructivism

Linking to the relationship issue in mentoring, the theoretical perspective highlighting the process of “making meaning” in mentoring relationships, is the constructivist or constructionist paradigm. Constructivists are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world.

The social constructionist perspective employs the primacy of conversation in making a relationship. According to Rix and Gold (2000:59) it is the process of making meaning that is central to mentoring, rather than the adoption of the roles of mentor and mentee that are emphasised in the functionalist paradigm. In the social constructivist perspective of mentoring, Rix and Gold (2000:59) argue that the relationship is of primary importance, “more than the skills, competencies and expertise (academic or otherwise)” of the mentor. The relationship should be in the foreground, as it “helps us notice the contingent, local, temporary and precarious nature of mentoring”. In a mentor/mentee relationship, people from different worlds and interests are bound together in a coordination of talk and actions, and are able to construct a world of mutual understanding, support and trust. Conversation is the element of joint understanding between their two worlds. A social constructionist perspective is adopted to highlight the way people interact through talk. Language is central to this perspective, and how language is organised in discourses, narratives and stories (Rix & Gold, 2000:49).

The kind of language and the way we use it to construct meanings is evident in Plummer’s (2005:358) statement: “The languages we use bring with them all kinds of tensions”. Building on the theories of Garfinkel and Sacks, Lee (1991) warns that the logical feasibility of linking linguistic concepts in formal speeches with the social organisation of “talk” should always be considered. Though formal speeches direct people’s attention to a specific context, no dialogue or *talk* is involved. According to Shotter (1993) the function of the crucial aspects of dialogue (talking or conversation) is to direct people’s attention to the context in which they find themselves, while constructing meaning between each other. For example, between the mentor and the protégé an orderly world is constructed, informed by meanings in the

language of the context, and probably also creating expectations of what their roles should entail. Also drawing on Garfinkel (1967, cited in Shotter, 1993), Shotter (1993:1) states, "In practice, shared understandings are developed or negotiated between participants over a period of time, in the course of an ongoing conversation".

Shared understandings are constructed through narratives (talk, stories, myths, tales and novels) in order to coordinate activities, which in turn need procedures (or consecutive steps) to take place. "Narrative provides a language of action, movement and process, which is more appropriate to the continuous flux as meanings are made and remade among people" (Rix & Gold, 2000:50). Since the 1960s, qualitative researchers have been interested in the processes used to construct social realities, e.g. Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social constructionism, and Blumer, Hewitt and Weigert's symbolic interactionism (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005). "...[B]ut ethnomethodology [Garfinkel's] arguably has been the most analytically radical and empirically productive in specifying the actual procedures through which social order is accomplished" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005:483).

Procedures that describe action (Rix & Gold, 2000:55), interaction and "joint action" (Shotter, 1993:179) and even "transaction" (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) all take place within socially significant dimensions. Guba and Lincoln's work overlaps with the various different participatory action approaches discussed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005), who argue that constructivism connects action to praxis while encouraging experimental and multi-voiced texts (such as the "queer theory" described by Plummer, 2005). Daloz (1999) and Galbraith (1991) describe the functions and actual procedures underlying mentoring particularly in the light of four principles of the transactional process: collaboration, challenge, critical reflection, and praxis, which in turn reflect the constructivist paradigm (Gibb, 1994).

The "action" that, for example, takes place in a mentor programme, is set out by Rix and Gold in a logical framework that presents the same steps (though in different terms) as the logic model used to evaluate the mentor programme (discussed in Chapter 4). Typically, in a social constructivist paradigm, facilitating change entails the following steps (or procedures) with dialogue as vehicle. Rix and Gold present the following diagram (Figure 2.1) to outline the procedure.

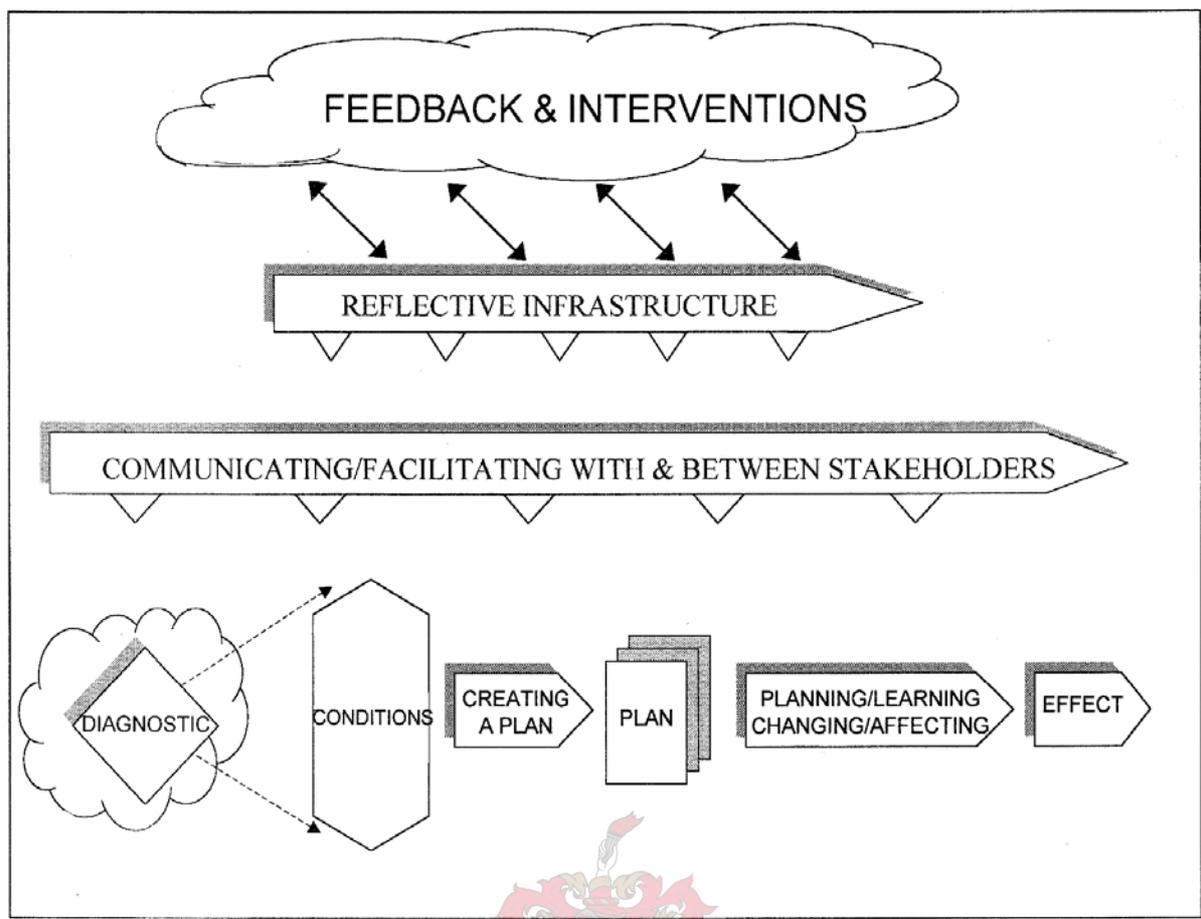


Figure 2.1. Procedures to facilitate change (Rix & Gold, 2000:54)

I describe Rix and Gold's exposition of their model here, as it is so closely related to the model that I use in Chapter 4 for the management and evaluation of the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme. An important first step (progressing from the top of the diagram) is the feedback and intervention phase, where group discussions are conducted with management and stakeholders, to establish what their visions and problems are (for example, resistance to change or 'new' ideas). In the reflective, second phase, participants talk and reflect about events, and try to accomplish some action. Rix and Gold (2000) and Shotter (1993) refer to Vygotsky's [1978] principle of the social cultural way of learning (Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development"), which includes experiencing the world as mediated by cultural means and the help of others, so individuals can move to higher levels of functioning. Freire (1983:13) describes this process as "[m]en educate each other through the mediation of the world". The main purpose of the reflective stage is to encourage stakeholders to reflect on a current situation (in an academic mentor programme it would be the difficulties mentees experience in adjusting and the academic culture) and to consider new ways of moving a project forward. Language (specifically narrative) is the means of meaning-making.

The new perspectives are communicated to stakeholders in phase three and a model of argument based on Toulmin's [1958] model is used (Rix & Gold, 2000):

1. *The claim (the expression of a view about the issue);*
2. *The data (evidence to support the claim); and*
3. *The warrant (reasoning that allows the data to justify the claim).*

The fourth phase constitutes the process set in motion to facilitate the change, set out in the form of a logic model in order to manage a programme. Similar to the Logic Model used in Chapter 4 of this thesis, the one presented by Rix and Gold (2000) maps a path of the process, starting with diagnostic procedures (causes), conditions (problems), creating a plan (activities and inputs), the plan (outputs), the actual learning/ changing/affecting (activities) and effect (outcomes).

Plummer (2005:359) states that the language used in interaction with others is a language that he calls "that of critical humanism, one allied to symbolic interactionism, pragmatism, democratic thinking, storytelling, moral progress, redistribution, justice and good citizenship". It is important to re-emphasise the links and overlaps between the paradigms (the bricolage) when trying to understand the hermeneutics of constructivism. The social justice, democratic thinking, pragmatism and emphasis on narratives of the constructivism are just as evident in the interpretivist and postmodernist paradigms.

To conclude the section on the paradigms in which mentoring and mentor schemes function, it is important to emphasise that knowledge of the "grand" theories enhances an understanding of the practice of mentoring in various contexts. Each paradigm makes a useful contribution to the concept of mentoring: functionalism with its clearly defined roles, functions and structure; radical humanist theory with its sensitivity towards social justice and power relations; and constructivism with its emphasis on the primacy of meaning-making through language and the importance of narratives. Each of these paradigms informs the institutions and programme coordinators, and are reflected in their programme theories and structures.

2.4 Types of mentoring

In the previous sections the concept of mentoring was discussed according to its history, context and the paradigms in which it functions. Different types of mentoring function in the broad models of mentoring (the developmental models, the formal and informal programme models, including the roles, relationships, functions and expectations). For the sake of clarity, it is now necessary to provide an overview of the various typologies of mentoring (for example, older/younger and peer mentoring) as they function within the various

programmes. I provide a brief description of each, and present them in a table showing their main characteristics and the most probable paradigm or theoretical perspective they fall into, together with the specific design of the programme.

The types are often so interlinked that clear-cut distinctions are not always possible. The specific models are quite easily described by their functions and characteristics (namely one-on-one, peer mentoring, group mentoring and co-mentoring). More complicated are the broader types of informal and formal mentoring, and developmental and career enhancing models. A further “model” lies in the directiveness of the programme (in education). Miller describes these as three potentially conflicting “philosophies” of mentoring, namely programmes that could be student-led, school/college/programme-led or mentor-led. Each of these has a different focus and aim. Miller (2002:43) explains:

In student-led mentoring programmes, the mentor is briefed to be responsive to the expressed needs of the student, so that the content of mentoring meetings is largely determined by the mentee. In school/college/programme-led mentoring programmes, the scheme managers aim to provide a structure for mentor meetings, often based around target setting to reflect the objectives of the scheme... In mentor-led programmes, the school is happy to leave mentors to be the main determinants of what is transacted during mentoring meetings. This is probably the least common or advised approach, and most often arises from a perceived lack of direction from the school and a lack of understanding on the part of the student of the purpose of the mentoring (Miller, 2002:43).

The most common approach in higher education is programme driven, providing a formal structure within which the mentoring functions. Table 2.3 provides a matrix of the different typologies with their preferred position in a certain paradigm, and the intended outcomes of each type when informed by the paradigm.

In the first column the types of mentoring (as discussed in the following paragraphs) are listed. Supplemental instruction (SI) has been added to this list, as it forms part of the support structure of many higher education institutions. It can be assumed that SI fulfils the coaching function of a mentoring objective. The second column represents the structure of the mentoring relationship as it unfolds, in either a formal or an informal mentor programme.

The third column, subdivided into the three theoretical paradigms discussed in Section 2.3, indicates the most likely ‘fit’ of a specific type of mentoring, while the fourth column (Outcomes) is divided into the two main objectives of mentoring, namely career enhancement and/or developmental/ psychosocial support. The crosses in the cells indicate the probable prevalence of the types of mentoring in the various programme structures, the paradigms and the outcomes:

Table 2.3: A typology matrix

Typology	Structure of the mentoring relationship		Paradigm			Envisioned outcome	
	Formal programme	Informal programme	Functionalist	Radical humanist	Constructivist	Developmental	Career
Older – younger	X	X	X			X	X
Peer mentoring	X	X		X	X		X
Co-mentoring		X		X	X	X	X
Group mentoring	X	X		X	X	X	X
e-mentoring				X		X	X
Supplemental Instruction	X		X				X
Big Brothers Big Sisters		X		X		X	

2.4.1 One on one, older/younger

The older (expert) and younger (novice) relationship is the archetypical mentor-protégé relationship; the traditional concept of a committed relationship between two people. Buckley and Zimmermann (2003:2) state that “teaching, socialising and role modelling” are central aspects of this mentoring relationship. However, mentoring extends beyond the imparting of knowledge and skills. Unlike teaching or role modelling, which may occur without direct contact or emotional engagement, mentoring requires an emotional connection. Mentors and mentees possess a unique bond, created largely on the basis of the mentor’s willingness to listen, to empathise, and to validate the young person’s experience. The support, guidance, and friendship of the mentor widen the worldview of the mentee, “potentially expanding the young person’s sense of life roles and opportunities” (Buckley & Zimmermann, 2003: 2).

The power relations of the typical hierarchical relationship is also found in higher education in the relationship of supervisor and postgraduate student (Boud, 1999; Lessing & Schulze, 2003), or with an experienced staff member and a newly appointed colleague (Boyle & Boice, 1998; Buchner & Hay, 1998; Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Calkins & Kelly, 2005). From discussions with postgraduate students in traditional dyads it is clear that mentees’ expectations of the mentor-mentee relationship are high and that they expect advice,

guidance, protection and encouragement from their mentors (Loots & Engelbrecht, 2005). Lyons, Scroggins and Rule (1990) examined the effects of mentorship on doctoral students, and found that those who experienced a close working relationship with a faculty member had a more satisfying education than their counterparts. This finding is also confirmed by Chao et al. (1992), who report even more productive outcomes from relationships in which the supervisor also played the primary mentoring role.

2.4.2 Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring or tutoring (sometimes also referred to as peer learning) may be broadly defined as a more-experienced or able person of roughly the same age or at the same level of career helping less-experienced counterparts to adjust and cope successfully with a new environment or field of study (Boud, 1999; Little, 2005). Peer learning may also be applied to students mentoring students, formally or informally, one-on-one or in small groups (Bitzer, 1999). Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (Cole, 1978) remains a cornerstone of peer-assisted learning, and many pedagogical advantages have been explored. These include "more active and interactive learning", more open communication, immediate feedback, lowered anxiety and greater student ownership of the learning material and process (Topping, 1998:53). The more-experienced peer provides support in and knowledge of academic and social stumbling blocks. Goodlad (1998:13) notes a further beneficial aspect of peer mentoring, which is described as "experiential learning". This occurs when student mentors use the actual mentoring as "study service learning", to equip themselves to work with clients and to develop responsibility and skills in this area. Peer learning is also used between staff members in higher education, where faculty members support each other in developing and improving their skills in order to teach better in a multicultural classroom (Chesler, 2003; Little, 2005).

Austin, Covalea and Weal (2003) report on a mentor programme from Swinburne University (Australia) where students volunteer as mentors to help exchange students in particular to adjust to a new academic and cultural environment. Chang (2003) reports a similar system at the University of Melbourne called "Buddies" (trained senior students) to enhance the academic, social and professional well-being of fellow students. This model of mentoring is followed at numerous institutions of higher education across the globe to ease the transition of students who come to university for the first time, or to support them academically in order to retain them in the system. In a peer mentoring situation, the mentor (a fellow student), also benefits academically from the interaction with the protégé or the group of protégés. Benefits include improved understanding and performance in the subject area involved, improved confidence and study skills, as well as on-going friendships. "These benefits accrue to both parties. Peer tutors regularly report what we as teachers already

know: that the best way to really develop one's understanding of an area is to teach it to someone else" (Beasley, 1997:21).

The difference between mentoring and tutoring (which is sometimes somewhat contested in undergraduate mentoring) is basically the length of time of the activity. Tutoring might be limited to a few weeks' intensive subject training, usually in a classroom, while mentoring could last several years and has a definitive 'life-skills' component. Mentoring does not exclude tutoring (Topping, 1998; Page et al., 2005; Cassim, 2005) – the imparting of knowledge and specific skills and capabilities - but the general approach would be more holistic. Admittedly, when "mentoring focuses on subject learning, and involves a group, then this sharp distinction becomes blurred" (Miller, 2002:32).

Apart from the obvious supporting role that peer mentors play, Beasley (1997) states that peer mentoring (also called peer tutoring, peer coaching, peer learning and supplemental instruction) has the added advantage of being a cost-effective means of providing academic support to fellow students - a very important factor in the programme, which will be touched on in Chapter 9.

2.4.3 Group mentoring

An individual who mentors a group is a form of mentoring that is particularly useful in undergraduate education and, though it might occur spontaneously, it is often organised as part of a formal programme. It also involves peer mentoring, as it could be run equally successfully by a peer or the traditional older person. A small number of students are provided with academic support by a fellow student or an older individual (Page et al. 2005), or with help in adjusting to a new academic or cultural environment. "The young people tended to respect mentors who had relevant experience and who understood their expectations" (Miller, 2002:25). Undergraduate students are often intimidated or too scared to ask questions, afraid that they are the only ones "who do not know". When peers facilitate mentor groups, the mentee discovers that she/he is not the only one with a particular problem, or with a misconception of the academic work. Mentoring in groups also has the added benefit of positive peer pressure, particularly in social involvement (Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004) and cooperative learning, where information is shared (Bitzer, 1999). Darwin (2002:204) talks about a learning model that uses "tacit knowledge, typically untaught but essential to thriving organizations", and by implication, thriving individuals. Such tacit knowledge is an important part of all mentoring, but especially peer mentoring.

Friend-to-friend mentoring (which encompasses all the different models) described by Miller (2002:25), highlights special friendships among women who have often been previously

excluded from career-advancing relationships (Darwin, 2000; Mullen et al., 2000; Moberg & Velasquez, 2004), as well as minority groups (Anderson, 2004). Here an environment of mutual benefit without powerplay provides a confidential and safe setting for mentoring. Some form of power relation will obviously still be present, even in small peer mentoring groups, as the mentor is supposed to be the facilitator with previous knowledge. The value of these groups lies in the whole support structure that is offered by peers “in the same boat”. A previous section (Section 2.2.4) on mentor-protégé relationships also emphasises the critical functions of peer support.

2.4.4 Co-mentoring

Closely related to peer coaching and collaborative teaching is the fairly recently introduced concept of co-mentoring. The purpose of co-mentoring is to establish mutually enriching relationships between faculty members or/and students, without reference to rank, status, gender or experience (Mullen *et al.*, 2000).

We define the faculty-student support group, then, as a co-mentoring collegial network that brings together persons across differences who are committed to the professional development of all members (Mullen et al. 2000:36).

Mullen (1999a: 1) first suggested the term as an innovation in mentoring theory and practice that was initiated in research at universities in Florida. It involved teachers, professors, administrators and graduate students in discussing the issues and processes of mentoring, because

...our schools and universities are filled with the potential for promising collaboration at higher levels of integrity, creativity and synergy. What is needed then, are constructive ways to think about partnership and to link different professionals and their educational contexts (Mullen, 1999a:1).

Mullen et al. (2000) draw on studies involving the mentoring of mainly women in academia, to advocate co-mentoring as a solution to the problem of mentoring minority groups. McGuire (2003) also advocates co-mentoring as a model for the professional academic development of women.

The debate around formal and informal mentoring, especially for people who have previously not been readily selected for constructive mentoring, sparked renewed interest in finding different ways of offering support (and stretched the boundaries of the definition of mentoring even further). Though Chao et al. (1992) present a strong case for informal mentoring in their empirical study, Boyle and Boice (1998) favour formal mentoring. They are of the opinion that proponents of spontaneous, informal mentoring overlook the fact that it is again available for only a few people. Informal, unstructured mentoring thus means that many who need mentoring go without it, and people who are the “least likely to find

spontaneous support like mentoring are women and minorities” (Boyle and Boice,1998:159). Because women have been historically excluded from universities and also from mentoring relationships (as either mentor or protégé) alternative ways of providing support in groups were explored:

Individuals belonging to such [support] groups can function proactively to co-mentor and to assist in another's learning. The support group can aim to reconstruct traditional one-to-one mentoring relationships, sustain development among members even where political controversy and transition are issues, and reinforce co-mentoring as a process of lifelong learning. We define the faculty-student support group, then, as a co-mentoring collegial network that brings together persons across differences who are committed to the professional development of all members (Mullen et al., 2000:36).

According to Lick (1999:34) co-mentoring is a powerful approach to the human dynamics and learning accomplishments of groups of people, because it involves the creation of synergistic relationships. As will be seen in the current study, the group in a mentoring situation fulfils an important developmental, synergistic role with strong links to the concept of co-mentoring, as presented by various authors since 1999. The main difference in a co-mentoring situation is that there is no agreed “leader”, while in a group mentoring situation, such as in undergraduate support, a leader is necessary to facilitate learning to a greater extent. However, there is enough evidence to prove that reciprocal learning in such a group among members does take place, and even mentors admit to learning more from mentees than they initially thought possible.

Groomes (1999:86) reports on the valuable outcomes of a system of co-mentoring not only for faculty and students, but in his own life, where he experienced a positive example of mentorship in higher education, where “seasoned travellers” made a significant difference in the lives of fellow students, especially women and people of colour.

Funk and Kochan (1999:87) too highlight synergistic mentoring experiences and empowerment through co-mentoring. They include another element in the mentoring relationship for optimal benefit, namely long-term status, and study the evolvement of the relationship over time. Barrett-Hayes (1999:140) comments that innovative mentoring partnerships, a powerful form of co-mentoring, could provide university and school teachers with the resources they need to promote student learning.

A form of co-mentoring, though not called by that name, is suggested by Blake-Beard (2001) when she highlights the pitfalls of formal mentoring programmes for women and minority groups. Without dismissing the benefits of formal mentoring completely, she is concerned (and so are Kram, 1985 and Chao et al., 1992) about the challenges and cost in the form of sexual innuendos and power play that women often face in such relationships. She

suggests “other advanced organizational members, peers, and organizational groups” as sources of psychosocial support (Blake-Beard, 2001:342). Co-mentoring would fulfil such a need to the fullest extent, and provides the space for Haring’s (1991:xii) comment that different applications of support explore “the conceptual dimension of a mentoring process” and “demonstrate far greater possibilities for mentoring than many have imagined”.

2.4.5 e-Mentoring

Electronic mentoring uses technology to connect people across time and distance. It is relatively uncommon as the only form of support between mentor and protégé in higher education, though it could provide for an increasing need to make contact with similar organisations or institutional settings across the globe. Some programmes in higher education (for example the present study) do convey messages and make appointments with mentors and mentees via Internet, but there was no evidence of e-mentoring as a stand-alone method of mentoring in the literature. However, it does exist and is undeniably in use, as can be seen in the existence of MentorNet (1997, www.mentornet.net) for example, with 97 campuses participating in this project (as on 2 November 2005). In 2001 the National E-Mentoring Clearinghouse (United States) convened the E-mentoring Advisory Team, “a representative group of non-profit organizations and corporations with significant experience in running successful e-mentoring programs”. They developed a set of guidelines, policies and practices that have proven effective in a range of existing mentoring models. The guidelines include long-term operational plans, a technology implementation strategy, safety measures for mentee and mentor, recruitment plans, orientation, screening and training for mentors and mentees, strategies for matching and the monitoring of the process. The guidelines also include a support, recognition and retention component with closure steps and an evaluation and dissemination of the process (www.mentoring.org/emc).

As technological access becomes more available, there is no doubt that e-mentoring forms part of the growing expansion of the mentoring initiative for youth. It brings a totally new dimension to traditional roles and functions of mentoring, and complicates the definitional clarity for purists even more. In an ever-changing world the boundaries of information and contact are expanding – to the extent that Baudrillard (1987:130) calls it the “obscenity of information” - and so are concepts and relationships. Postmodernism encompasses many “post” paradigms with an emphasis on various relationships within support systems and mentor programmes specifically.

2.5 Conclusion

The wealth of literature on mentoring produced over the past three or four decades generate two important conclusions:

- “mentoring” has multiple meanings, applied in many contexts; and
- the search for a definition can only be situated in a theoretical paradigm against which the programme planners’ intentions can be understood.

The discussion of the various paradigms forms a backdrop against which the many mentoring practices can be understood. Again it must be emphasised that there is no meta-narrative or grand structure that fulfils all the purposes and objectives of mentoring. The most obvious theories in the mentoring process are played out in the functionalist and the radical humanist paradigms, with the constructivists as an important catalyst in the realising of certain processes, procedures and actions. No single study has yet offered a full analysis of mentor programmes in the various paradigms, and the analysis that I present is likewise not a “final answer”, only a pliable structure to enhance the understanding of the underlying social theories as they make use of mentoring.

It seems that the concept of mentoring is primarily driven by a genuine desire to support, help, educate and empower people. Authors’ and programme planners’ intentions for and applications of the concept of mentoring are consciously or unconsciously rooted in their own theoretical paradigms, or those of the institutions in which they operate. The kind of programme designed to implement a mentor programme reflects their basic beliefs in either

- structured functions and responsibilities (functionalist paradigm);
- the addressing of social justice (the radical humanist paradigm) or the highlighting of exploitative power relations (feminist theory);
- emphasising the primacy of narratives or meaning-making in language (constructivist theory), or
- combinations of the main principles of these paradigms in order to provide a functional, assessable programme.

Reviews of mentoring literature have been conducted in three areas: higher education, organisational management and developmental psychology (Jacobi, 1991; Goodlad, 1998; Roberts, 2000; Langer, 2001). Though authors conclude that there are some areas of overlap, and that there is little consistency in the way mentoring is defined both within these categories and across them, they do not make the paradigm connection.

Within the category of higher education certain assumptions have emerged from the definitions of mentoring, among them that there is usually a significant difference between

mentor and mentee in both age and life experience. However, as has been shown, the implied hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee may not be appropriate in the mentoring of students, as the contexts and programmes differ according to the specific needs and the theoretical belief systems of the institution and stakeholders. Thus different applications of the mentoring concept are employed to accommodate the diversity of institutional and programme needs.

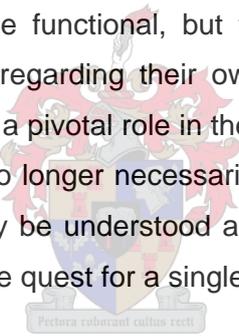
The literature on mentoring repeatedly draws attention to the fact that there is no single definition of mentoring widely accepted by those who practice or study it (Roberts, 2000; Mullen et al., 2000). Authors such as Jacobi (1991), Roberts (2000) and Miller (2002) describe mentoring in terms of functions and attributes (which reflects the functionalist paradigm). Researchers focus on topics such as the nature of the relationship between mentor and mentee (radical humanist paradigm), and make recommendations about procedures that yield optimal results. These procedures form the basis of the transactions that should occur between the mentor and mentee so as to enhance the effectiveness of the relationship and thus provide a better vehicle for transformation (Galbraith, 1991). Transformation of the individual occurs best through a transactional process. This is an educational interface in which mentor and mentee collaborate in such a way that they exchange mutually useful information, making the learning experience a mutually enriching one (the constructivist paradigm). Many authors stress that the mentoring process should be a reciprocal, enriching experience.

Mentoring ideally focuses on the development of the mentee, drawing on his or her existing strengths and attributes as an adult. Thus it seems that the goal of mentoring, broadly stated, is to assist adult learners to realise their own full potential, hopefully within a functional but open and fair system or programme that facilitates these processes of (mutual) enrichment.

Though mutual benefits are frequent, mentoring relationships are not always simple and beneficial. Dysfunctional behaviour is often reported from both the mentee and the mentor's perspectives (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004). A contributing factor in the complexity of these relationships is the type of programme, namely whether it is formal or informal. Some authors (Chao et al., 1992; Blake-Beard, 2001) emphasise the effect of hierarchical structures on women and minority groups in particular, in formal programmes. Other contributing factors that impact on relationships are cross-cultural and cross-race mentoring (Grossman, 2002; Chesler, 2003). These relationships may be beneficial and transformational to both parties (Grossman, 2002) but should be monitored closely to identify and pre-empt potential problems.

The lack of rigorous evaluation of the processes and functions of mentor programmes in mentoring literature poses a severe limitation when conducting research on mentoring. Though authors allude to this fact (Jacobi, 1991; Miller, 2002) and suggest ways to evaluate programmes, I could find no comprehensive evaluation study in the literature. There is evidence that some aspects of programmes have been monitored, but only to a limited extent (covering attendance and results of tests). The evaluation of all aspects from goals to outcomes, as well as effects on participants, staff and funding agencies remain assumptions and speculations.

It can be stated that it is no longer feasible to see mentoring in the light of the classic, traditional definition offered in the literature prior to 1980, often steeped in the functionalist paradigm. The context of mentoring, as well as the scene and context of higher education has changed over the last forty years, a pace that has even accelerated since 2000. There are now different demands for access and performance; students and institutions alike are under pressure to deliver results, and institutional mergers are the order of the day. Mentoring is not only required to be functional, but to address social justice. Students' perceptions of their responsibilities regarding their own development and academic and professional successes seem to play a pivotal role in their performance. The mentor-mentee relationship, the nature of which is no longer necessarily seen as hierarchical, is applied to many different contexts that can only be understood against the background of theoretical paradigms that provide answers to the quest for a single definition.

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CHAPTER 3: SOUTH AFRICAN APPROACHES TO MENTORING

3.1 Introduction

As is seen in Chapter 2, social programmes and interventions are steeped in the political assumptions arising from the worldview of the various stakeholders. Many of the mentor programmes that will be discussed in this chapter have (consciously or unconsciously) adopted a social justice stance for their interventions, in an honest attempt to “help” those in need of a better chance of success in higher education. Though Gibb (1994:47) warns against “slipping into a naïve relativism, where more or less any ‘helping’ role can be termed mentoring”, it is exactly the various forms and desires to support that are paramount in mentor programmes. This is also one of the reasons for the so-called (postmodern) definitional vagueness, which is much lamented by some authors, but celebrated by practitioners.

Chapter 3 provides an outline of the broad models of mentoring applied in higher education, such as supplemental instruction, general developmental programmes, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the focused mentor programmes of Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB).

South African approaches to mentoring at higher education institutions are based on the developmental model to a large extent. The demand for greater access to university coupled with a legacy of poor schooling and dismal first-year university pass rates prompted university managements to look at support structures (or “scaffolded support” as Naidoo, 1999, calls it) that would improve the pass rate of first-entry- and historically disadvantaged students. All higher education institutions now have some form of student support in place, which take various forms: orientation workshops, bridging programmes, extended degree programmes, residential guides or advisors, tutoring programmes, or mentoring programmes.

The following examples of mentor programmes use basically three models, namely Supplemental Instruction (SI), the Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB) model, and programme-driven developmental models. One institution uses the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) model, and only one reports an informal mentoring programme for a limited number of students. Chapter 3 thus provides general information on all the various kinds of programmes and specific information on the programmes in higher education institutions.

3.2 Models of mentoring in higher education

3.2.1 Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was first introduced as a concept by Deanna Martin in the USA, and plays an important role in addressing failure rates and low grades of students. Many universities in South Africa (such as The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the Vaal University of Technology, the University of Fort Hare, the Walter Sisulu University of Technology and Science, the Central University of Technology and the University of Johannesburg) implement an SI programme. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University hosts the SI National Centre in South Africa, which provides ongoing support and advice to institutions and conducts regular workshops. Training programmes had, however, been introduced to South African higher education institutions prior to 1995 through workshops conducted by Deanna Martin from the United States and Jenni Wallace from the United Kingdom (Clarke-Unite, 2005:17).

3.2.2 Undergraduate (developmental) programmes

The few South African models of undergraduate mentor programmes display similar features to SI to a large extent: Most of them are run by a coordinator (with or without supervisors and assistants) and utilise student mentors who are screened and selected according to criteria of social and academic capabilities. Mentees, or first-entry students, usually meet in small groups of six to ten, and the overarching goals of the programmes are induction into academic culture and to facilitate equal access and academic success for the participants. Most mentors are required to submit reports or keep journals to enable the programme coordinators to evaluate the process. Test and exam results of mentees are also used when evaluating the success of the programme and, in some instances, analyses of qualitative data are included. A few institutions (such as Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University, the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the University of the Free State) have more than one mentoring programme, each with a different focus. As such there are mentor programmes for first-years, senior students, postgraduate students and staff. Others have specific foci on new researchers, women and administrative personnel (e.g. library staff at the University of Johannesburg). One university (Cape Peninsula University of Technology) has a smallish informal programme that successfully introduces previously disadvantaged students into the world of art and art education.

3.2.3 Big Brothers Big Sisters

Another mentoring organisation that is of major importance and that has played a remarkable role in South Africa and in countries all over the world, is the Big Brothers Big

Sisters (BBBS) Association. “Big Brothers Big Sisters programmes are established and managed by leaders in the community, valuing the individual, the family, and society's culture, and comply with the international standards of service delivery” (www.bbbsi.org/).

BBBS is based on the volunteer work of dedicated people working to improve the lives of children and youth around the world through mentoring programmes. They operate independently in various countries, helping to build service capacity and to create sustainability uplifting children and youth. Though BBBS is not formally operative in higher education institutions in South Africa, some do refer to the model (Matumba & Patel, 2005 at the University of Johannesburg) in certain programmes that train students to become mentors to children.

3.2.4 Medical Education for South African Blacks (MESAB)

MESAB is an organisation that operates across many institutions of higher education. It is funded by private donors from the USA, and has played a vital role in introducing and funding many mentoring schemes at medical schools countrywide. MESAB has also been instrumental in spreading information and good practices to other institutions without medical faculties.

Established in 1985 as a non-profit organization in the United States and as an Educational Trust in South Africa, MESAB's primary goal is to train South African Black Health Professionals to meet the challenges involved in bringing health care to disadvantaged Black South Africans (Dinath, 2004).

Since 1985 MESAB has provided more than U\$ 7 million in scholarships and grants to more than 4000 candidates for undergraduate, post-basic training and postgraduate medical training at South African higher education institutions. Two thousand graduates in various fields are currently working in South Africa and over 1400 midwives have completed one or more training modules to enhance their skills and improve health delivery aimed at addressing the high infant and maternal mortality in rural areas.

The MESAB Scholarship programme at undergraduate level is built on a unique mentoring programme on 18 campuses. Hundreds of students each year receive both social mentoring and academic tutoring to help them cope with the transition from high school to university, thereby improving the success rates. MESAB is recognised for the role it plays in ensuring that mentoring changes the way Health Science faculties and universities care for students at both social and academic levels. Various workshops are conducted throughout the year.

3.3 Mentor programmes at South African higher education institutions

3.3.1 University of Cape Town

The University of Cape Town (UCT) responded to the challenge of developing more skilled graduates and catering for more diverse needs by developing different models of educational interventions to foster students' knowledge and abilities (Warren, 1998:76). Warren distinguishes between separate and integrated forms of educational intervention, on the basis of their target groups, goals and assumptions. He also mentions the "non-traditional" (first-entry, previously disadvantaged) student as a prime concern, "even though they bring [with them] qualities of thoughtfulness and rich social and cultural experiences" (Warren, 1998:77).

One of the models of intervention at UCT that comes closest to the concept of group mentoring (though never identified by this term) is the Supplementary Tutorial Programme (STP). This programme assists students "from underprivileged backgrounds to cope with the mainstream course", as well as "providing a separate, safe space for addressing their learning difficulties, developing study and writing skills, and clarifying key concepts and elements of content" (Warren, 1998:78). This programme was phased out, however, mainly due to three problems: firstly, attendance was erratic, and though students indicated appreciation for the assistance, preparation for class was poor. Secondly, tutors observed that students remained surface learners, and, thirdly, they found it a costly programme, requiring too much time to be given to too small a number of students. Warren (1998:82) summarises that the general trend is now to shift away from separate remedial courses towards an integrated, mainstream approach involving skills-based courses and alternative entry points into the curriculum - the main aim being to accommodate a more diverse student intake.

3.3.2 University of Durban Westville

In 1998 the University of Durban Westville was "the only university in South Africa to attempt a mentorship programme on a fairly large scale" (Naidoo, 1999:219). Their Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) was initially centrally organised by the university's Academic Transformation Office and managed by the Central SMP Coordinator. Senior students were interviewed and selected as mentors, according to the criteria of being capable facilitators and having a sound academic track record. They are expected to be able to provide first-entry students "with a true perspective of tertiary education while not losing sight of their own goals as senior student" (ibid). By 1999 the SMP had 51 mentors with 502 mentees. Group mentoring takes place, with a ratio of roughly 10 mentees per mentor. Mentors are paid according to their academic level (undergraduate, postgraduate) on the same scale as departmental tutors and assistants.

The matching between mentors and mentees was initially random, but in 1999 the mentees requested to preview the group mentors. The mentors were required to introduce themselves to the whole group of mentees in an auditorium – “an unnerving, unstructured affair that harboured many risks”. However, this subjective selection process proved to be part of the success of the programme (Naidoo, 1999:220), as it led to a strong emotional link between mentees and mentors. Reportedly, a willingness to solve problems together and an increase in mentees’ confidence were the result of this selection process.

Naidoo describes the SMP as “holistic, offering social and academic support”, and says that such an intervention is necessary in order to have an impact on the personal development of first-entry students in higher education (Naidoo, 1999:221). In a study specifically aimed at the personal development of students at the Westville Campus, Essack (2006) also stresses the positive contribution that mentorship can make regarding institutional development.

3.3.3 University of Natal

An example of the importance of having mentors in the same academic field was highlighted by the experience of the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine at the University of Natal. It was demonstrated that not only is the field of expertise important in the role that mentors play, but the specific curriculum as well.

McLean (2004) reports that peer mentoring has been used at the Medical School for many years to assist students in making the transition into academic and social culture. However, “in 2001, an unusual situation arose. A problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum was introduced and the first cohort in this programme was mentored by senior traditional curriculum students” (McLean, 2004:173). An ensuing study to ascertain the impact of the “mismatch” was conducted, and overwhelming evidence was found that “mismatches” impacted negatively on student performance. “...[I]t is only when mentors are able to share the same experiences as their mentees [that] they can fully understand student problems” (McLean, 2004:187). However, in spite of this mentees did eventually form bonds with their mentors, and some even described their mentors as role models. The findings in this study are important as they underline the value of having a *subject specific mentor* in achieving undergraduate success.

3.3.4 Stellenbosch University: Health Sciences

Not unlike the programme of the University of Natal discussed above, the Faculty of Health Sciences of Stellenbosch University embarked on a tutor/mentor peer support programme in 1999. They attempted to address the failure rate among medical students in the first and second year of study (Page et al., 2005:9) and sought to provide increased access to

students from poor scholastic and socio-economic backgrounds. To attain this, they use subject specific mentors and call it a tutor/mentor programme, because the focus is mainly academic. The programme targets students in the lower fiftieth percentile of the class – for these students attendance is compulsory. For those above the target, the programme is optional. Since the inception of the programme the failure rate has declined from between 13–18% to below 6%. Similar successes are reported by all the allied Health Science departments at the Tygerberg campus (Page et al., 2005).

Tutor/mentors meet with their groups for a minimum of two hours per week, primarily as tutors to discuss academic progress, and secondarily to act as mentors to deal with issues of self-confidence, loneliness, isolation or any other matters of a psychosocial nature. The programme is not exclusively for first-years, but is designed in such a way that second-year students tutor/mentor first-years and third-year students tutor/mentor second-years (Page et al., 2005:14). More than 700 students are supported in this way by about 130 tutor/mentors who act as peer instructors.

Mentees have been allowed to determine the composition of their groups. Some groups are mixed (gender, language and ethnicity), while others are more homogenous. The ratio of mentors to mentees is roughly one to seven and tutor/mentors submit a monthly report on the progress of their respective groups, as well as topics discussed, attendance and the levels of participation in the group discussions. All the programme participants (both mentees and mentors) complete a structured questionnaire to enable the coordinator to evaluate the successes, failures and weaknesses of the programme.

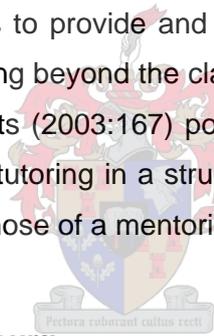
3.3.5 The Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme

A programme similar in design to the programme at Health Sciences at Tygerberg Campus (and the subject of the current evaluation study) was implemented in 2004 on the main campus of Stellenbosch University. The primary difference is that the programme extends across five faculties and only targets first-year students who are either referred by their respective academic departments and/or report to the mentor coordinator after encountering difficulties. The programme is centrally organised by the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and follows the principles of monitoring and management according to a programme evaluation design. It provides academic and psychosocial support to mentees in 48 modules, comprising 2917 participants by August 2006. The programme is evaluated on a continuous basis by means of reports, observations, individual and group interviews. The mentors in both these programmes (Tygerberg and Stellenbosch) are remunerated for their inputs.

3.3.6 University of the Witwatersrand

Many institutions of higher education display efforts to implement interventions to decrease student failure rates, and to increase student learning productivity and accountability from university lecturers in the mainstream (though with different degrees of success, according to Koch and Mallon, 1998). Such a programme was implemented at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1995. A Supplemental Instruction (SI) programme was run for students of specific courses within the Faculty of Law to assess student learning and to broaden access to reflect student profiles according to regional demography (Smuts, 2003:166).

The aim of the study by Smuts (2003) was to measure the impact of SI on student performance, and to evaluate the educational outcomes of the SI programme in three postgraduate courses, by comparing the results with those of students who were not part of this intervention. "SI provides out-of-class interaction of an educational nature between student peers and a senior student leader in a non-threatening, non judgmental environment" (Smuts, 2003:167). It is implied that SI intervention has a positive impact on student success, and provides both role-models as well as linguistic support. "One approach to increasing learning productivity is to provide and to encourage students to take greater advantage of opportunities for learning beyond the classroom and for interacting with human resources" (Smuts, 2003:166). Smuts (2003:167) postulates that SI facilitates out-of-class-interaction and extends informal co-tutoring in a structure with "legitimacy and importance". It thus displays the same ideals as those of a mentoring programme.



3.3.7 The University of Johannesburg

The University of Johannesburg approach their mentoring programme from another angle. The programme is for first-year students, but this time they are not mentees but *interns* in a programme as part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Africa (BBBSSA) (www.bbsi.org/) programme that trains them to be mentors to children at risk.

South African higher education policy also has a community service component, and the University uses this approach "to promote civic engagement" and as a tool for academic development (Matumba & Patel, 2005:1). The mentor programme is a supervised community service learning experience (based on the said BBBS Programme) conducted over two years for which the students receive credit. The impact of the learning experiences of the students is evaluated in terms of the knowledge, skills, and values acquired during the programme. This programme is not unlike Goodlad's (1998:13) notion of "study service learning" discussed before, where students are trained to be mentors while they are in a mentoring situation themselves.

3.3.8 Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)

At the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (previously the University of Port Elizabeth) two models are utilised, namely a University Practice for Advancement (which is a tutoring system in a foundation programme) and a campus-wide Supplemental Instruction (SI) initiative. The SI programme was adopted because it was felt that it would meet the students' holistic needs, and because it was a cost-effective intervention with a proven track record. SI was also chosen because learners "were now given the opportunity to embrace the concept of 'the learning community' by taking responsibility for their own learning and developing the attitude of lifelong learning" (Clark-Unite, 2005:16). By 2005 the SI programme had been running in fourteen departments in five faculties, and comprised 28 SI leaders conducting about sixty sessions per week. One coordinator centrally supervises the programme.

Research on the effectiveness of the programme and the students' experience of the support is conducted on a continual basis. Koch and Mallon (1998) report a performance assessment approach in evaluating the effectiveness of this SI programme, and present some interesting findings. They are amongst the very few authors who have also evaluated the reach and effectiveness of such programmes, and they found that the programme was relatively ineffective in supporting very under-prepared students. These findings underline the fact that definite claims about programme effectiveness are very difficult to make without a full range of evaluative practices.

Another interventional programme at NMMU that incorporates mentoring is the University Practice for Advancement (UPA). It is an academic and life-skills module of the Foundation Programme that is designed to increase student access to higher education (Vawda & Gwam, 2005). This is a typical developmental model aimed at students who do not meet the standard admission requirements to degree programmes in their first application, and thus provides the option of a Foundation Programme to improve their admission status. On the successful completion of the foundation year, students then gain access into the normal mainstream degree programmes.

Though the programme concentrates mainly on subject content, it is also aimed at increasing the students' belief in their abilities to reach their goals. Part of the job description of UPA facilitators is to be mentors to students. In this instance staff members (including qualified social workers and qualified counselling psychologists) provide mentoring in small groups, as well as on a one-to-one basis. The programme (called a module) covers various topics, such as goal setting, time management, communication and self-concept. The

practice of portfolios and experiential learning methods are used to encourage reflection and analysis of the mentee's development. The group also provides feedback and guidance.

3.3.9 Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CAPUT)

An example of unstructured, informal mentoring is found in the Education Faculty of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Visual Art is taught, not as a subject that will lead to a career in fine art, but primarily as a teaching methodology that “serves as a means of developing the students' visual literacy, their problem-solving skills, and their critical thinking skills” (Johnson, 2005:1).

Johnson maintains that “visual art is an ideal discipline to mentor students through their teaching studies, developing their self esteem by using their growing art-making skills, and by using the opportunities afforded by the smaller classes to challenge, encourage, stimulate and involve” (Johnson, 2005:1). She also claims that her methodology teaches students critical thinking skills about issues surrounding teaching, and facilitates a conscious awareness of personal development.

This particular course was offered on a part-time basis over two years, to encourage insecure students to empower themselves and to discover the value of the creative process, both as a means of developing themselves as educators, and as a means of teaching non-verbal expressive communication to children. Johnson illustrates that mentoring in this programme removes the traditional roles played by teacher and student, and that “the hierarchy is made redundant”, a sentiment echoed in the research of many authors (such as Mullen & Kealy, 1999) discussed before. She consciously focuses on both the professional and psychosocial development, and proves that real transformation can take place.

An informal mentor programme such as this one works very well in an environment where all the participants have equal access. In this instance, the mentees were all in one class, busy with projects together with an available lecturer as advisor. This kind of mentoring works well in a safe environment with a (small) group of students (in this instance, all women) studying visual art, music or poetry under the guidance of an accomplished leader. In a larger group, such as the intake of a cohort of first-years, there is no equal access to mentors, and literature (Beasley, 1997; Goodlad, 1998; Capel, 2003) is unanimous that in such circumstances a formal, structured programme is preferable.

3.3.10 University of Limpopo

The Student Mentorship Programme at the University of Limpopo is an example of a programme with a specific academic focus (mathematics and science), though the

coordinators claim that it also plays the role of general support and adjustment. They mention the problem of the “various assessment mechanisms at higher education institutions for determining admission into various programmes” (Mabila & Mabaso, 2005:1). The drop out rate is particularly high in the natural sciences among first-years who have not had proper schooling.

The Student Mentorship Programme was established in 1997. First-year students are allocated student mentors to help them to improve their performance in mathematics and science. Mabila and Mabaso (2005:2) describe the programme as “an example of a supplementary model of academic development... and that it increases contact hours with students and encourages peer learning and group work”.

The University Foundation Year (UNIFY) programme is assessed by analysing the attendance records of students in the programme and comparing them with student performance. A study was conducted with a group of 27 UNIFY mentored students, based on their attendance records. Information from these analyses reveals positive correlations between the students’ attendance and their performance, showing that the mentorship programme is vital for student development, especially in programmes such as UNIFY (Mabila and Mabaso, 2005:3).

3.3.11 Walter Sisulu University (The former University of the Transkei [Unitra])

Another developmental model of mentoring is run by coordinators at Unitra to address the needs of students from economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The Faculty of Health Sciences has adopted the transformation perspective of quality in education as a priority (Mammen, 2005) and mentoring has been identified as one mechanism of helping students to complete the course, while obtaining both social and academic guidance.

The mentor programme was implemented in 1994, and utilises senior students as mentors to the first-year Health Science students. The mentors are selected by a mentoring committee based on the usual set of criteria of sound academic performance, leadership qualities and good interpersonal relationships. They are trained before commencing their task, and both mentors and mentees are given guidelines on mentoring. Reference is made to evaluation in the form of a survey, during which questionnaires were administered to 200 mentees and 60 mentors. The response of the students in the evaluation was not overly enthusiastic. Between 46% and 66% give positive feedback though 95% of students felt that the programme should continue. Mammen (2005) is nevertheless of the opinion that this form of mentoring is an effective tool in helping students during their transition from socially

and academically disadvantaged backgrounds to an environment where more cognitive learning takes place.

3.3.12 Rhodes University

Though mentoring at Rhodes University has been practiced over many decades, and has involved lecturers, tutors, staff and students, the efforts “were scattered and largely comprised of independent initiatives” (Naran & Vorster, 2005:1). Apparently, earlier mentoring took place in informal contexts, leaving little documentation to gauge the range and depth of its effect. The current formal Mentoring Programme for “disadvantaged, under-prepared black South African students” was conceived in 2002 and initiated in 2003 to address issues of access, retention and academic performance.

Mentors are senior students matched according to the faculty affiliations of the mentees. One mentor is assigned to a maximum of four first-year students for the duration of the first semester. The groups consist of students from different races and genders, but “where possible takes account of the cultural background of mentees. Observational research indicated that sensitivity to language and traditional values would play a significant role in the success of building and maintaining relationships” (Naran & Vorster, 2005:5). Again, the emphasis is generally on social and cultural adjustment, but mentors also assist with academic support.

The mentor supervisors and a programme coordinator facilitate the recruitment of mentors and training workshops. Mentors keep journals for the administration and tracking of mentor-mentee activities. Brief reports are also written in which reflection, challenges and successes are recorded. Mentors are paid for their services.

Surveys have been conducted to gauge satisfaction with the system of mentoring and to assess the general benefits for both mentors and mentees. The programme is being managed and evaluated, and seems to be effective. Though the contact between mentor and mentees lasts only one semester, this is regarded as sufficient time to make the transition into higher education. Programme coordinators do report, however, that mentor recruitment has proved to be one of the most crucial aspects of the programme and requires more attention: “Successful matching and support of mentees are integral to the effectiveness of the programme” (Naran & Vorster, 2005:8).

Two additional mentoring programmes are supervised at Rhodes, facilitating the mentoring of undergraduate (first and second year of study) pharmaceutical students, as well as the internship of trainee pharmacists (Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of

Pharmacists in South Africa). The aim of the programme for first-year students is to implement and evaluate a comprehensive mentoring programme in order to minimise academic and environmental difficulties for mentees and to facilitate their socialisation within the University and professional pharmaceutical environment. The programme is formally structured and the mentors are remunerated. It is important to note that the programme is not exclusively for those who are struggling or from a disadvantaged background. It is a voluntary programme and mentees are able to join the programme at any stage.

Action research was used to provide the coordinator with an understanding of the complexity and the potential of mentoring in different environments:

I identified that there is no 'generic mentoring programme'. Each programme has to be developed and adapted to meet the needs of the mentees, acknowledge the environment, and allow both the mentee and the mentor to benefit (Oltman, 2005:2).

Oltman maintains that the difference between “tutoring” and “academic mentoring” does not necessarily lie in the process or the outcome, but in the reason for it occurring. A tutor will have a defined outcome in mind, which is usually determined by the department or faculty, while with mentoring a relationship must be established dealing with issues that the mentee deems as “real”.

According to Oltman, mentoring is a way of empowering, motivating and engaging people to “thrive, strive and succeed”. She quotes Zubin Austin, one of the speakers at a Life Long Learning in Pharmacy Conference in Canada (2005): “We cannot create empowered, motivated, engaged people. They become that.”

These words summarise the mentoring focus that drives all the programmes discussed above. Though theories and methods may differ, the overarching goal of all these mentor programmes is to support and guide, and to help students to become what they are capable of.

3.4 Discussion

Judgment about the value, methods, programmes and materials is a specialised type of applied research that should be practised by programme managers. It can be classified into four main areas of investigation: needs assessment (planning), formative (process) evaluation, summative (outcome) evaluation and efficiency (cost benefit) evaluation. (IRFOL: Commonwealth of Learning, B6:17). Not only does this yield valuable insight into the programmes themselves, but it also provides new information on teaching, learning and the support of students. There is currently not much evidence of any rigorous evaluation of

mentoring programmes in either South African or of overseas models, though some measurements of certain aspects in programmes are available.

Although it is clear that educational developers (or the implementers and coordinators) in South Africa value the importance of their programmes' outcomes and impact, systematic evaluation is still uncommon. As with many programmes in the United States, they often only rely on "inference measures such as the extent of participation and satisfaction" (Kreber & Brook, 2001:96). The evaluation of (educational) programmes, and specifically mentoring programmes, will be discussed in another chapter. However, it is important to stress that the lack of systematic evaluation of such programmes presents a serious concern to academic institutions, and questions about the status quo date back as early as the 1970s:

Unless we evaluate our programs and demonstrate that they produce results in terms of better courses or better educated students, more knowledge, sensitive, effective, or satisfied faculty members, or more effectively managed organizations, we will all be out of business (Gaff, 1975, quoted in Kreber & Brook, 2001:97).

Even in the absence of rigorous evaluation, there seems to be a broad belief in the value of mentoring for improving student retention, levels of involvement and academic success in higher education institutions. Jacobi (1991) explores the question of the extent to which formal or informal mentoring programmes or interventions promote academic success. However, she found that direct support for the hypothesis (that mentoring supports academic success) is largely absent (1991:515), mainly due to the lack of diligent evaluation. The contact of students with mentors implies that mentoring functions could have a positive influence on retention and achievement levels. This finding fits with Astin's (1993) and Boyle and Boice's (1998) notion of the importance of 'involvement'.

Literature on mentoring tries very hard to promote not only the tangible positive results of the immediate outcomes of interventions such as mentor programmes (usually attendance results), but also assumptions as to their value. Feedback from 60% or more of Capel's (2003) respondents in such a programme showed that the mentees regarded their mentors as "very valuable". The mentees most valued mentors who were highly supportive and reassuring, and who were willing to make time for them and offer practical advice and ideas. However, the results also showed that the quality of mentoring was variable, and that 12 out of 16 interviewees "reported some problems with at least one of their mentors" (Capel, 2003:135).

The value of mentor programmes and the standard of the mentoring process are becoming important aspects of evaluation. 'Consumer Guides' (Office of Research: Education, 1993)

and 'Benchmarks' (Mentoring Australia, 2000) for effective mentoring are being made available on some government websites.

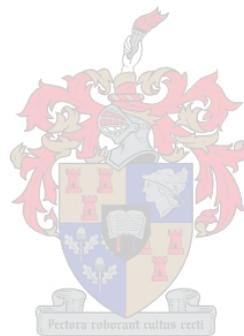
The problem with studies claiming positive results in certain areas of mentoring is that the whole programme is seldom effectively evaluated according to evaluation principles and rigorous design. The small size of the sample in the study by Capel is a severe limitation, though results of the four Higher Education Institutions (researched by Capel) are very similar, supporting the claim that mentoring indeed makes a valuable contribution to support and development. Pope and Van Dyke (1998) similarly report positive outcomes with reports of 82.2% of their students finding their mentor "very useful". Rossini and Hyland (2003:162) underline the value of group interaction in "social capital", where the sharing of experiences and self-development fosters identification with the community. In a South African model 95% of the students feel that the programme should continue, though paradoxically only between 46% and 66% of the same group felt they had benefited directly from the programme (Mammen, 2005).

In discussing the various interventions at South African higher education institutions, specifically mentor programmes, it is clear that almost all of them have some form of evaluation or assessment of the outcomes of the programme. While it is important to gain information regarding the mentees on the many levels of these programmes, it is just as important to gain feedback from the mentors, programme managers and coordinators. Miller (2002:207) is of the opinion that "programme managers are failing in their responsibilities, if, after matching, mentors and mentees are left to their own devices". He maintains that failed matches are a direct consequence of the lack of regular contact with supervisors or facilitators. Apart from the obvious support that should be provided to mentors via regular contact, there is always the question of the realisation of the outcomes of programmes, not only for the mentees and mentors, but also for all role players and stakeholders.

Many of the South African models report regular interaction with their mentors, both to offer support, as well as to get back information about the programme (through reports on self-reflection, goals and successes) (Oltman, 2005; Naran & Vorster, 2005). Koch & Mallon's study was the only one I could find that applies an approach that assesses the efficiency, quality and effectiveness of a programme. Some South African models indicate that they use questionnaires to ascertain programme need, satisfaction or value (Page et al., 2005). Others (Mabila & Mabaso, 2005; Smuts, 2003) use test and examination results in correlation with attendance of mentoring groups to measure the success of the intervention. Very few authors (Koch & Mallon, 1998) report positive findings when a programme and its outcomes are considered as a whole.

Programme reports require extensive documentation often consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data. The various terms in evaluation research describe measurable, tangible “happenings” that indicate the scope and depth of the programme. Terms such as “inputs”, “activities”, “outputs” and “outcomes” are used to provide structure and aim to the programme.

The following chapter (Chapter 4) presents a logic model for programme evaluation of the Stellenbosch University Mentor Programme. The history of the programme, programme theory and envisioned outcomes are discussed, in order to provide a management tool and structure for evaluation of the programme. Chapter 4 links to Chapter 5 where the research design and methodology for an outcome evaluation study is presented.



CHAPTER 4: THE STUDENT MENTOR PROGRAMME

4.1 Background

The Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP) for undergraduate students is one of three mentor programmes on main campus, and is situated within the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). A similar programme is run at Tygerberg campus for students in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The SMP targets mainly (but not exclusively) first-year students in five faculties, offering them academic and psychosocial support in a new environment. Another mentor programme on campus targets primarily postgraduate students who are bursary holders of various donor foundations, and mentoring forms part of the bursary requirements. A further mentor programme is aimed at staff members, to support them in their teaching and research tasks.

4.1.1 Institutional context

The University of Stellenbosch, reflecting the reality of a historically Afrikaans and advantaged university in the Western Cape, currently enrolls students from diverse backgrounds and capacities. The ever-increasing demands in a changing higher education arena present a variety of challenges to all aspects of the University's operation such as:

Student challenges

- the need for equal access to learning;
- the need to be accommodated in the cultural and language diversity, and to be assimilated into the University's culture (hostels, student life, societies, sport, etc.); and
- the need to maintain academic standards (how to access knowledge resources, how to apply study methods and time management skills).

Institutional challenges

- a diverse student population (students differ greatly in their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and [dis]abilities);
- structural issues (time and resources, such as additional staff, are needed to manage extra programmes, and to identify and address problem cases timeously); and
- financial resources have to be available and allocated judiciously (especially to implement and manage academic development programmes, including mentoring, tutoring, extended degree and bridging programmes, loans and bursaries, and work-study initiatives).

The student challenges (the first three bullets above) are the primary challenges that can be met directly by the intervention of a mentor programme, while the institutional challenges are

related to policy issues that the university must have in place to support the operationalisation of the various programmes. All these challenges relate to the pre- and post-enrolment factors highlighted in Chapter 1. In order to address the issues above, a renewed emphasis has been placed on student support, and a Student Mentor Programme seems to be one of the ways by which the University can deliver a tangible service.

4.2 History of the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP)

The SMP in its current form was designed in 2003 and implemented as a pilot study in 2004. The first feedback in 2004 formed part of an evaluation study to establish the reach and value of the programme. Some adjustments were made for 2005, and again for the 2006 programme, in accordance with programme monitoring methodology.

A small Mentor Programme started in 1998, primarily for African students in the Natural Sciences, and this was initiated and funded by an international company with mining interests. Specially trained senior students served as mentors who were engaged to provide more than just subject tutoring. Though no formal evaluation was done of this programme, during interviews the mentees reported the value of the support they had received, and it was thus decided to expand the programme to include more students from other faculties. The original funding was withdrawn in 2003, but the need for the intervention was sufficiently established. A fulltime coordinator was appointed, and a new programme was designed, implemented and managed from August 2003.

The programme has expanded from 4 mentors and 20 mentees in 1998 in one faculty to 87 mentors and 686 mentees from mainstream in 2004 on main campus. The mentees include first-year students from initially seven faculties: Natural Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Engineering, Arts, Law, Education and Theology. The Faculty of Health Sciences runs their own programme at Tygerberg and the Faculty of Engineering started their own programme during 2004. The few students from Education and Theology were absorbed into the Faculty of Arts for administrative purposes. During 2005 The Faculty of Military Sciences embarked on a mentoring programme for their students, with assistance from main campus. The Student Mentor Programme on main campus has become an open, voluntary programme for anyone who feels the need for academic assistance or psychosocial support. Mentees may also be referred by their lecturers or counsellors. By the end of 2005, 1281 mentees and 155 mentors had participated in the programme, and by August 2006 new applicants amounted to 2917 students receiving support in 48 modules.

4.2.1 Goals and objectives

The main goal of the SMP is to assist students to achieve academic success and thereby to improve the retention rate of first-year SU students. Two *key constructs* - academic success and psychosocial support - are fundamental to the programme objectives.

“Academic success” is understood to refer to acceptable levels of academic performance that will enable the student to pass the first-year subjects and proceed to the second academic year, thus remaining in higher education and not dropping out. Mentor support includes the facilitation of specific subject knowledge, discourse, study methods, the structuring of essays or examination questions, access to library resources and computer user areas, and general academic growth of the first-year student.

“Psychosocial support” is understood to refer to the assimilation of students into university culture, including student associations, sport facilities, social functions and general wellbeing. Because mentoring takes place in small, diverse groups, friendships are formed and sharing knowledge about each other is encouraged. The holistic approach of mentoring is essential, as academic success and psychosocial wellbeing inform each other: a well-adjusted student is able to cope with academic demands, and a student who performs sufficiently well in her/his studies is better equipped to handle social and cultural pressure (Jacobi, 1991; Goodlad, 1998; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Bitzer & Troskie de Bruin, 2004).

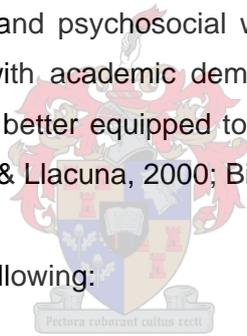
The objectives of the SMP are the following:

Primary objectives:

- to equip mentors (senior students) sufficiently well so that they are able provide quality academic mentoring to mentees; and
- to equip mentors (senior students) to recognise and address minor problems and to know when to refer possible psychosocial problems (e.g. substance abuse, depression and stress).

Secondary objectives:

- to provide first-year students (mentees) with sufficient academic support to enable them to achieve academic success (i.e. passing their first year in all subjects); and
- to support first-year students (mentees) psychosocially so as to ensure that they cope well with their studies and adjust appropriately to university life.



4.2.2 Programme functioning

The SMP is situated in the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which is one of the five centres of Academic Support, a separate division within academic management. Academic Support is headed by a senior director who reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs and each of the five centres is headed by a director. Figure 4.1 indicates the interrelationships and main functions of each of the centres in the Division for Academic Support.

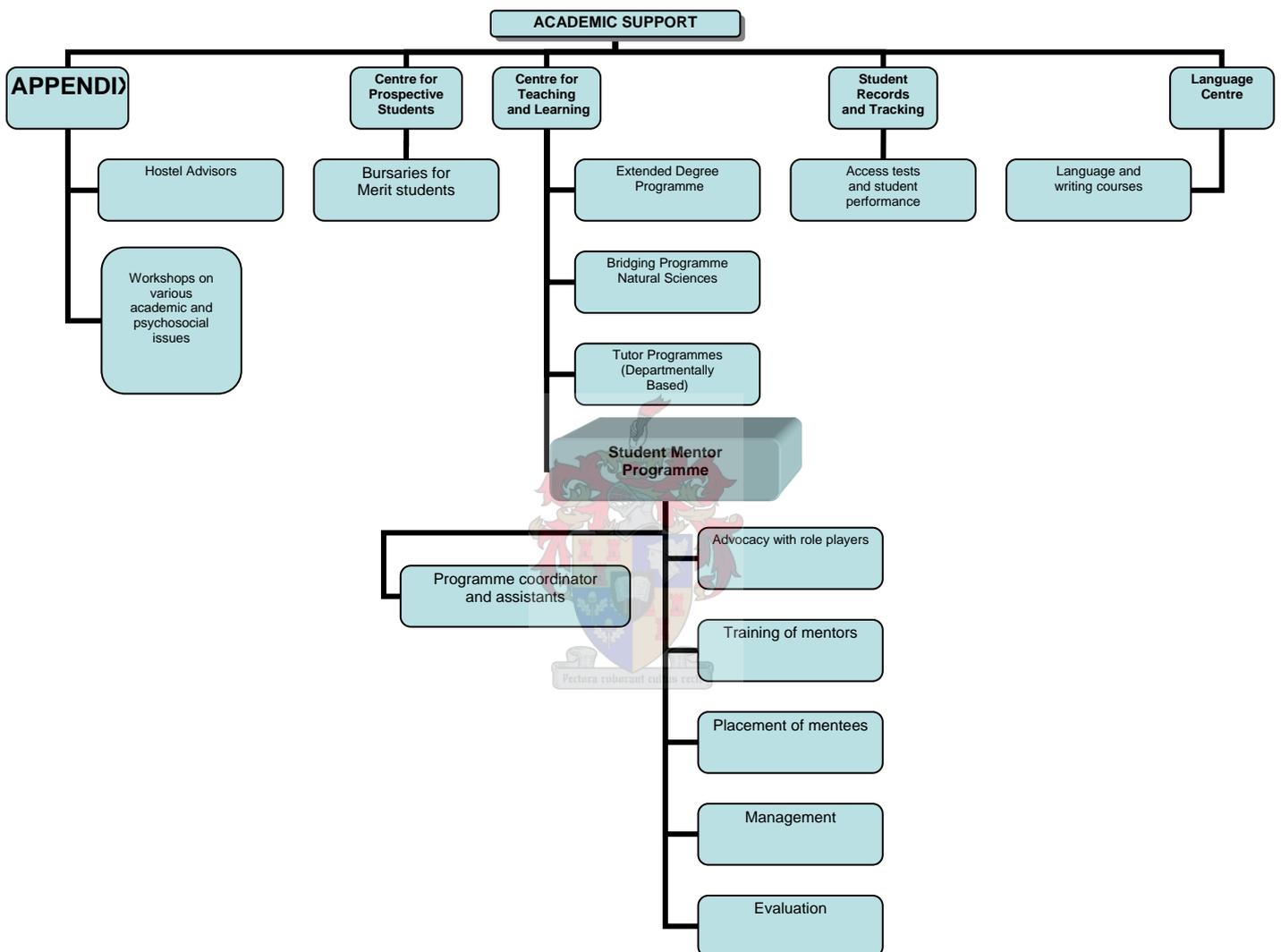


Figure 4.1 The position of the Student Mentor Programme within Academic Support

The SMP is managed by a programme coordinator, two assistants and an additional colleague (handling the finances) at CTL. The functions of the programme coordinator consist of

- advocacy with role players (deans, lecturers and CTL staff);
- ensuring that the programme is implemented according to the design;
- appointing and training of mentors;
- conducting workshops, interviews, focus group discussions and observations;

- collecting data by means of questionnaires, observations and interviews;
- managing the programme according to its Logic Model;
- evaluation of the SMP; and
- compiling the Annual Report.

Two assistants are used to help place mentees in groups, each with a module specific mentor, and to organise the various workshops and focus group discussions. The additional staff member at CTL is mainly involved with the financial management of the programme, namely the allocation of the funding by the donors and the remuneration of the mentors.

During training workshops colleagues from the Language Centre and the Centre for Student Counselling and Development make various inputs in their specific fields of expertise, in order to give the mentors a holistic insight into their role. The programme is managed according to programme monitoring principles, and the delivery of the programme is thus based on continuous evaluative activities to ascertain whether it is reaching the intended beneficiaries and to establish whether it is effective.

Advocacy

Appointments are made annually in January in consultation with the deans of the faculties involved (Arts, Education, Economic and Management Sciences, Natural Sciences, Agriculture and Forestry, and Theology) and the functioning of the Mentor Programme is discussed. The Annual Report of the SMP of the previous year is also available by then and it forms the basis of discussion. The deans' support for the programme is vital (although they are not involved in the funding or running of the programme), and they are often able to suggest which staff members can best offer additional support to students in the traditionally "difficult" subjects. The Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry (who only take students in their second year of study) benefits indirectly, as their first-year students have access to the mentor programmes in the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

Ideally, lecturers should have regular contact with the mentors, but this only happened initially in a few isolated cases during 2004, although interest in the programme has grown rapidly during 2005, and many lecturers have referred students with problems to the programme coordinator. Lecturers also often recommend senior students to serve as mentors in the programme. In some cases, lecturers meet with the mentors in their specific subject fields or modules on a regular basis.

Mentors

Mentors apply for the programme during September (for the next academic year), and are interviewed during October (See Application Form in Appendix A). The prospective mentor list is then circulated to faculties for input from the lecturers. Mentors are selected according to the following criteria:

- they must have obtained at least 65% in the module that they offer to the mentee group;
- they must have good communication skills (this is established in the interview prior to appointment.); and
- they must exhibit leadership qualities and/or have had some involvement in campus or community activities, as indicated on their curriculum vitae.

After the first training workshop in February, conducted by the programme coordinator at the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) together with colleagues from the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), and the Language Centre (LC), the mentees are assigned to the different mentors in specific modules. The groups begin to meet at mutually suitable times and venues. Monthly reports are submitted to the coordinator, indicating the attendance of the group members, as well as the degrees of participation and the problems discussed. Individual appointments and random interviews are conducted with the mentors as well as the mentees. A timeline of the programme activities from month to month is presented in Table 4.1.

At the training session mentors complete an open-ended questionnaire on their expectations of the Mentor Programme, and also list any problems that they themselves may have experienced as first-year students. This reflective information from senior students (also used prior to the pilot study discussed in Chapter 5) serves a dual purpose: it raises the mentors' awareness of possible problems, and highlights potential problem areas to the coordinator. Topics covered in the training sessions are the following:

- the concept of mentoring (history and applications) (CTL);
- the roles and expectations of mentors and mentees (CTL);
- the first-year student – expectations, perceptions and experiences (CSCD);
- writing skills (LC);
- information on the previous year's programme (Annual Report) (CTL); and
- general administration: report forms, interviews, questionnaires, feedback and contact with lecturers (CTL).

Mentors must attend two further workshops conducted by the CSDC during the year on a variety of topics, such as time management, eating disorders, study skills, and peer

pressure (See the list of workshops attached in Appendix B). Mentors are remunerated for their work, and receive a certificate of participation as mentor in the Student Mentor Programme at the end of the year.

Mentors meet with their mentee-group (3 to 8 students) for three hours per week, at times and venues that are suitable to all. Mentees may ask questions on work done by the lecturers, concepts, study skills, answering of test papers and time management. It is very important that mentors do not spoon-feed or lecture the mentees. They have to facilitate learning by setting problem-solving tasks, and facilitate discussion (academic discourse) in which mentees play the major role. Mentors are trained to recognise stress symptoms and may refer a student with problems to the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, after consulting the Programme Coordinator. Mentors submit monthly reports on mentee attendance and participation, and an academic progress report on mentee test results once a semester. Mentors also make regular appointments with the coordinator, and are in constant e-mail contact. During appointments, interviews are randomly conducted and taped for coding and analysis.

Observations of the mentor groups are also done on a random basis five times per semester. During the second, third and fourth terms faculty-specific focus group discussions between the mentors and the coordinator are conducted. At the various focus group discussions, mentors relate their experiences (positive and negative), expectations and problems regarding the programme. A second training workshop is conducted in April, which mentors who were appointed after the first training session must attend.

Table 4.1 Timeline of activities, inputs and outputs

Activities	Inputs	Outputs	Time line
Programme administration	CTL staff, Programme coordinator Financial official	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of mentees with mentors • Handling queries from students and lecturers • Consultations with mentees and mentors • Collaboration with other higher education institutions • Mentor appointments and payments 	Continuous
Mentor training	Staff, venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training module on WebCT • Workshop material 	Feb 2005 July 2005
Mentee baseline questionnaire	Coordinator & assistants, mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire developed with guidelines from CREST (Centre for Research in Science and Technology) 	March 2005
Focus group discussions with mentors from different faculties	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taped and transcribed discussions of 12 focus groups 	March, May, August
Individual interviews with mentors and mentees	SMP coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 mentee interviews • 12 mentor interviews (taped and transcribed) 	On regular basis
Monthly reports	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report forms • Statistics of attendance 	Monthly
Advertising of SMP mentor positions	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements on Web (electronically); on notice boards (posters) and through lecturers (in class). • Application form. 	August and September 2005
Mentor application interviews	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview schedule • Interview forms 	October 2005
Mentor feedback questionnaire	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 	October 2005
Mentee feedback questionnaire	SMP coordinator & assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 	October 2005
Interaction with lecturers	SMP coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions and e-mail 	Ongoing
Annual report	SMP coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report containing programme activities and outcomes 	December 2005 – January 2006
Research	SMP coordinator and assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers at conferences • Research article(s) in Journal • Workshops on mentoring at conferences • Generation of data for postgraduate studies 	Continuous

End of semester progress reports on mentees' test and examination results are submitted for a dual purpose: firstly, the mentors must know that mentee growth and progress is expected, and that they (the mentors) are accountable. It also enables mentors to reflect on their own input in the programme. Secondly, the coordinator is provided with a profile of mentee performance, and problems can be identified. Each mentor completes an evaluation questionnaire on the management of the programme at the end of the academic year.

Mentees

Mentees apply for the programme by going directly to the coordinator's office and are assigned to appropriate mentors, after the programme has been explained to them by either the coordinator or one of the assistants. The appropriate mentor is one who can provide the specific subject support needed by the mentee. Both the mentor and the mentee sign a contract in the form of a Code of Conduct, to confirm their commitment to the programme and to clarify their roles. They complete a Baseline Questionnaire on application for the SMP, which provides general information and background details to the programme coordinator. (Appendix C).

The number of mentees assigned to a mentor depends on the module. For instance, a mentor in Philosophy may facilitate a maximum of eight mentees, while a mentor for Mathematics ideally facilitates a maximum of only four mentees. Mentees are thus placed with subject specific mentors, as we have found that they derive the most academic benefit under these conditions. (We tried a broad, general mentoring system in the Faculty of Arts for a period of four months, and found that it was not successful.) Mentees usually have very specific queries and want to ask subject-specific questions from a peer they know has studied and passed the module.

Many mentees also enquire about the programme via e-mail, and are then invited to make an appointment. They are informed that any problems with their mentor or the programme should be communicated to the coordinator. In this way, efforts are made to place mentees with someone with whom they feel comfortable. At the end of the academic year, mentees complete an evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix D) about the programme and their mentor.

Mentees are generally not selected to participate in the programme, though in some instances lecturers refer them to the programme. The initial idea was that those who struggle academically or psychosocially would come to the programme for support. It targets mainstream students and there is thus no stigma attached to it. What has happened in reality is that students with high marks also make use of the programme, to “feel safer” or to adjust their study techniques. This phenomenon is discussed in Chapter 8 where the outcomes of the evaluation are analysed.

4.2.3 Funding

The programme management has a responsibility towards the institution and the funders to implement and run the programme so that the stated outcomes are attained. The Student Mentor Programme is funded by the University as well as outside donors, and though the

facilities of the University are used (buildings, venues) the mentors (as well as the SMP coordinator, initially) are paid from funds generated in the private sector. Some of the donors have a vested interest in the success of the programme, as many of their employees are former SU students. It is also important that the University has the support of commercial partners for the funding of certain projects. Companies that give bursaries to certain students expect their “investments” to be secure, and the added support of a mentor programme to those candidates has been welcomed.

In order to be accountable to the institutions that contribute to the funding of the Student Mentor Programme, it is necessary to submit detailed reports on the programme processes and outcomes. A logic model of the programme management and evaluation enable programme coordinators to keep track of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of the programme, and provide the necessary information.

4.3 The programme logic model

Social interventions are structures or programmes that are put in place to change the conditions or circumstances of specific individuals “for the better”. “We intervene in the world when we believe that the normal course of events ‘has gone wrong’, that includes for example the quality of schooling, health care, housing services, or other areas (such as higher education) where the services are perceived to be less than acceptable or on the decline.” (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:342). General statements such as “empowering” or “transforming” people or “improving quality of life” are not sufficient descriptions of the goals of programmes. While they do state values, specific, measurable outcomes need to be specified as well. That is why a logic model of the intended intervention or programme is drawn up to represent the steps in the process of programme implementation, or delivery towards the eventual expected outcomes.

A programme logic model may also be described as a tool of clarification that enables evaluators (and programme managers) (Mouton, 2002a) to see the actual objectives, activities and impact of a programme. Many logic models are offered in the literature, such as the one discussed in Chapter 2 that was utilised by Rix and Gold (2000) as a tool to explain the social constructivist approach, and those presented by Lipsey and Pollard (1989). Babbie and Mouton (2003:343) also offer a framework (comparable to that of Rix & Gold [2000] in Chapter 2, Figure 2.1). According to these authors, a special relationship exists between the programme goals and the target group, as the programme is designed and implemented to address the specific needs of the target group, and the needs of the target group in turn inform the programme goals.

The core dimensions of a social intervention display the features illustrated in Figure 4.2 (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:343):

- clearly defined goals and objectives;
- the target group (or beneficiaries);
- outcome measures;
- programme components and activities (the means to achieve the goals);
- the infrastructure for implementation and management;
- the human resources to drive to programme;
- the stakeholders who have direct or indirect interest in the programme; and
- the context of the programme.

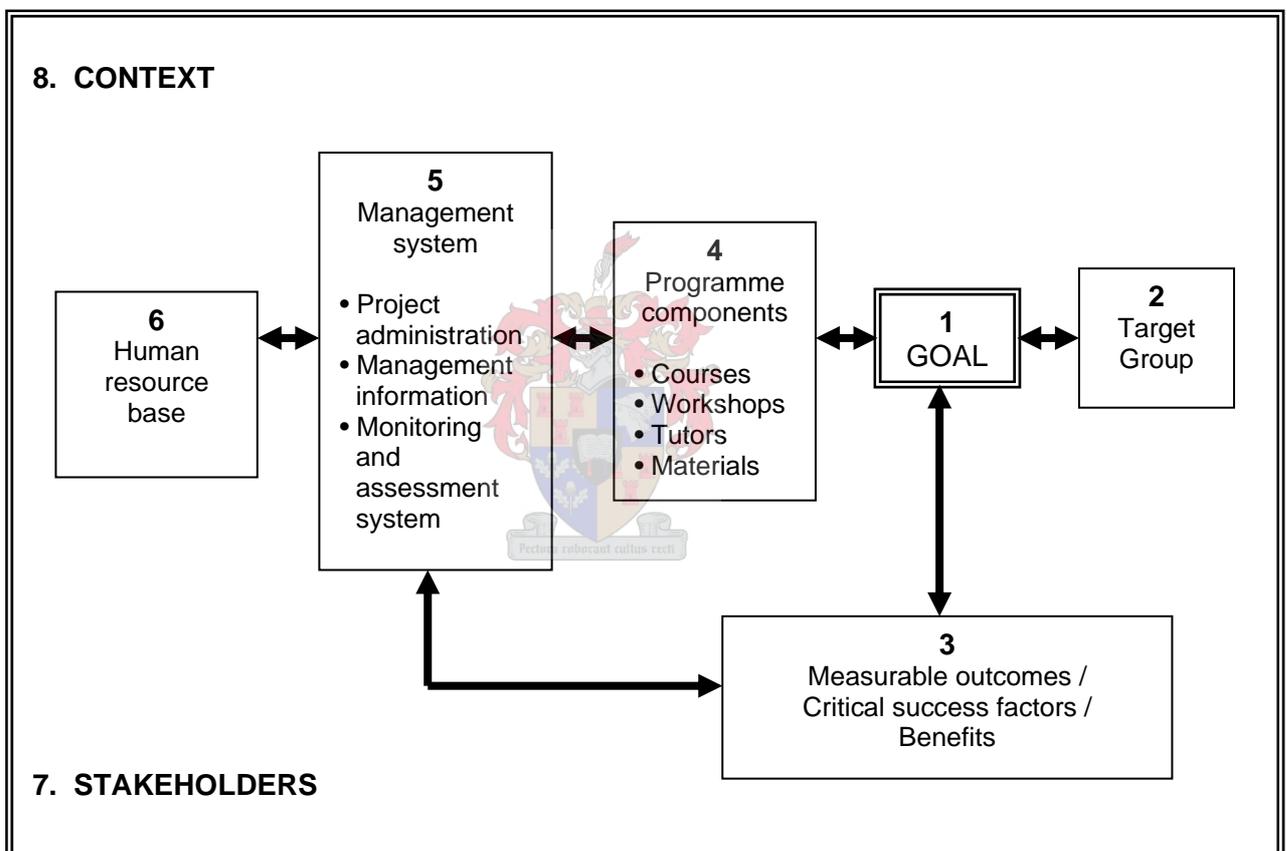


Figure 4.2 A conceptual model of social programmes (Babbie & Mouton, 2003:343)

The conceptual model offered above can be divided into three distinct parts, with part one (numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4) forming the intervention structure, part two (numbers 5 and 6) the intervention management), and the third part (7 and 6) representing those with a vested interest (the institution and the funders). The conceptual model applied to the SMP at Stellenbosch University entails the following (Figure 4.3):

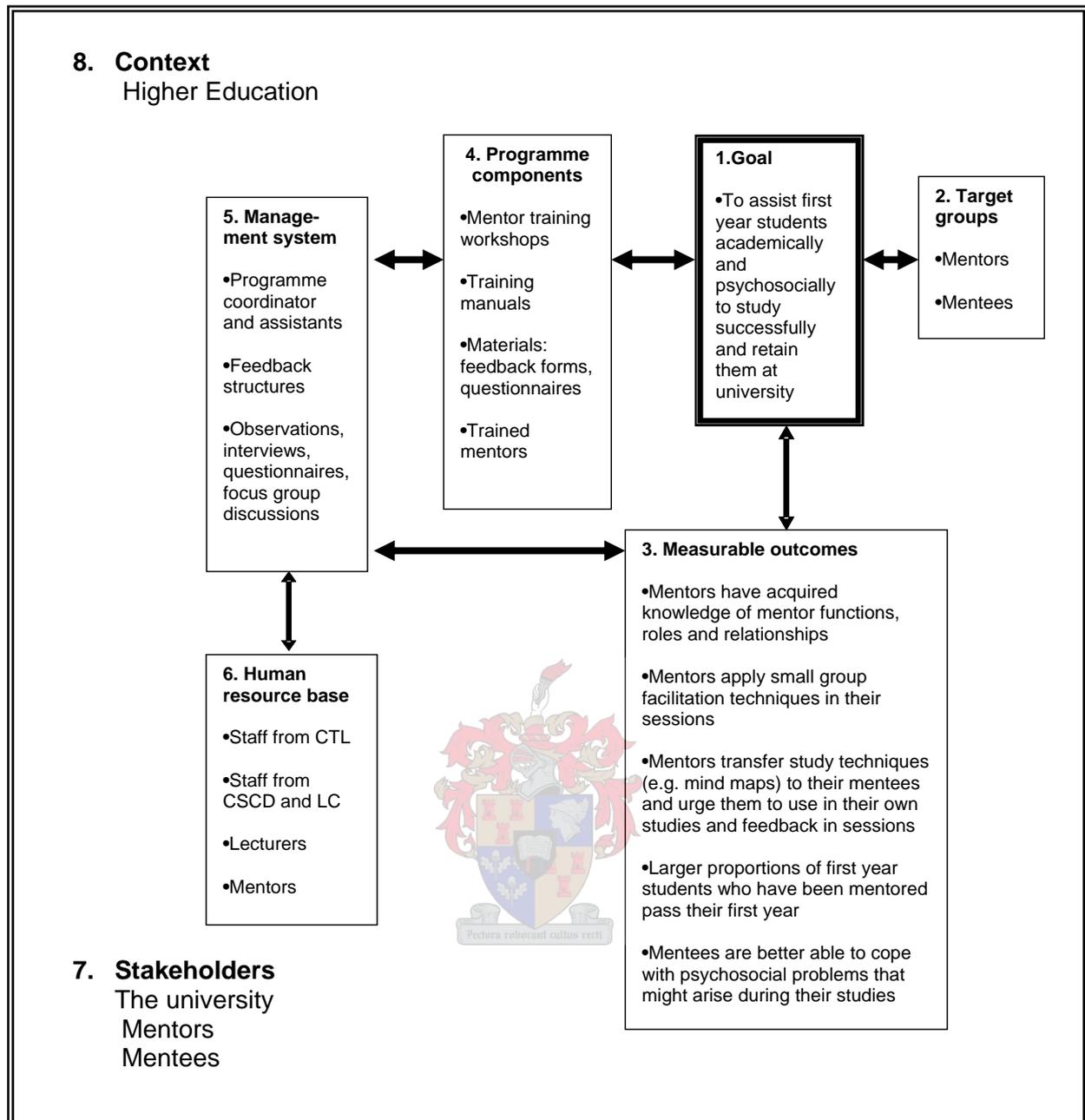


Figure 4.3 *Babbie and Mouton's (2003:343) conceptual model applied to the Student Mentor Programme*

The version of the logic model proposed by Mouton (2002a) which is utilised for the management and evaluation of the SMP, identifies the following elements of the programme:

- causes (factors causing the problem);
- problems (a problematic condition in the current environment);
- goals and objectives (what is to be achieved in the intervention);
- resources (what is needed to support the activities);
- activities (planned actions with available resources);
- outputs (services or products flowing from the activities); and
- outcomes (expected results, short- and long-term) (Mouton, 2002b).

A schematic representation of Mouton's Logic Model indicating the consecutive steps that should be considered for programme evaluation is illustrated in Figure 4.4. The Logic Model as it specifically pertains to the SMP (Tables 4.4 and 4.5) is presented according to the objectives for the two target groups in the programme, the mentors and the mentees. In order to realise the main objective of the programme, to support mentees (first-years) to study successfully and remain in higher education, further aims for the mentors as primary target group also need to be realised. These aims are unpacked in the programme theory that supports the logic model.

The academic support (the main objective) and psychosocial support are closely interlinked and reflected in the logic model. The different areas such as **causes** and **problems** also inform each other (Bitzer & Troskie de Bruin, 2004): If the student (e.g. from mainstream, a minority group or different language group) experiences acceptance and is well adjusted to residence life, she/he also copes better psychologically, and is also more able to focus on academic studies. If the student copes academically, she/he has more confidence to address any cultural and social problems (Jacobi, 1991:524; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000:1).

Both levels of support, namely academic and psychosocial, are addressed simultaneously, though the different training workshops for the mentors focus on different aspects. The basic focus is on academic support, however, because during academic discourse and group interaction in the mentor sessions, social and cultural issues are also addressed. First-year students get to know each other, and peer support (apart from support from the mentor) also takes place. Academic support in small groups also facilitates social interaction, which is an important retention factor in higher education (involvement versus isolation) (Jacobi, 1991:524). Kelly and Llacuna (2000:1) argue that the overall level of students' satisfaction with their undergraduate experience can be increased through involvement, which in turn "promotes academic success".

4.3.1 Programme theory

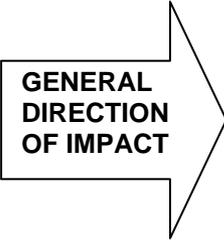
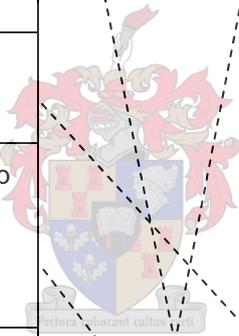
The functioning of the SMP is based on the assumption that the effective management of the *process* of mentoring will impact favourably on the academic and social profile of students, and will result in retaining first-year students in higher education. The essence of the programme theory is thus that **if** the SMP is properly implemented and the mentors (senior students) are efficiently trained and monitored, and if the mentoring intervention does indeed lead to improved academic performance and psychosocial coping, **then** the dropout rate for these students would diminish significantly. A simplified programme theory can be summarised as follows:

If mentees are supported academically in weekly mentor sessions and if mentees meet weekly in mentor sessions where potential psychosocial problems can also be discussed or recognised and timely action can be taken, and if mentors (senior students) are sufficiently well equipped to provide high-quality academic mentoring and psychosocial support to mentees, then mentees will be able to achieve better results and pass their first year of study and be retained in higher education.

The schematic representation of the programme theory in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 lists *two* target groups, namely mentors and mentees.



Table 4.2 Target group 1: MENTORS

I M P L E M E N T A T I O N	Implementation theory (programme activities)	 	Programme theory (mechanisms of change)
	Senior students are interviewed and selected as mentors (criteria: leadership & academics above 65%)		Mentors are appointed according to criteria
	Conduct workshops on didactic skills		1. Mentors are trained and their didactic skills are improved 2. Mentors apply their didactic skills in group sessions
	Conduct workshops on identification of psychosocial problems		1. Mentors attend and their understanding of social problems is improved 2. Mentors refer serious social and psychological problems
	Mentors submit monthly reports		Mentors' work monitored and individually discussed and adapted if necessary
	Mentors attend 2 focus group interviews		1. Feedback on programme participants is obtained 2. Problems in programme are discussed and addressed
	Individual interviews with mentors are randomly conducted		Programme and student experience is assessed
	Mentors complete evaluative questionnaires on programme content and management		Mentor suggestions on management of programme are implemented
	Mentor group interaction is observed		Interaction of mentors and mentees can be assessed
	Mentors support mentees in regular sessions discussing academic and psychosocial content		1. Mentors are equipped for mentor task regarding academic, social and psychosocial guidance 2. Mentees are supported academically and psychosocially

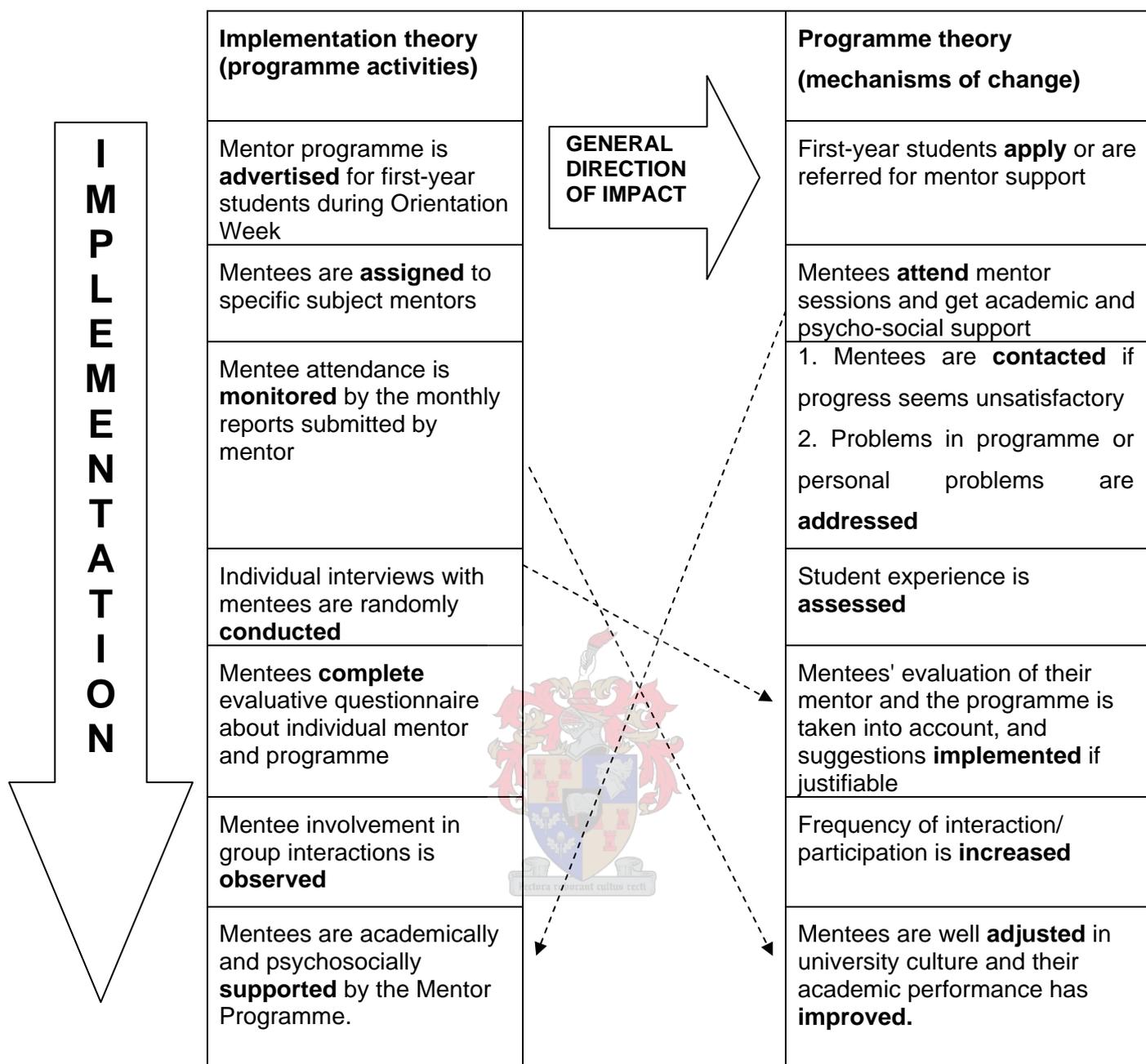
Mentors (Table 4.2) are senior students who apply for the position of mentor. They are interviewed and selected and, if they meet academic and leadership criteria, are appointed. They must attend two workshops conducted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning on didactic skills, small group facilitation and the general function and focus of being a mentor. Two workshops are offered by the Centre for Student Counselling and Development on topics such as stress management, study skills, confidence building, eating disorders and general psychological issues. Through the activities in the programme (training workshops, focus group discussions, observation of groups, monthly reports and questionnaires) the mentors are equipped to offer the mentees academic and psychosocial support, and their success is indicated by the comments and feedback from mentees, and mentee retention in either the programme or the University.

The second target group (Table 4.3) indicates the programme activities for **mentees** (first-year students). These cover awareness of programme, enrolment into the programme with specific mentors, and support through weekly meetings. Interviews, observations and questionnaires are used to keep track of the mentees' progress. The implementation theory comprises the programme activities, which relate linearly as well as diagonally to the programme theory, or mechanisms of change.

Once designed, the implementation of the SMP (Tables 4.1 and 4.2) is discussed with deans and programme staff. As a first **activity**, the SMP is advertised in student newspapers and on the students' website. First-year students then apply for the programme, or are referred by lecturers, advisors in residences or counsellors from the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. Senior students apply for positions as mentors, and are selected according to the criteria of academic accomplishment (above 65% in the subject area they will be mentoring) and leadership skills. They are trained in various workshops, and workshop material is at their disposal for future reference. Three to eight mentees are then placed in a group with a mentor, according to their specific subject needs. They have group sessions of three hours per week, and the mentors' input and the mentees' attendance are monitored by means of monthly reports submitted by the mentors.

One focus group discussion per term (from the second term) per faculty (that is five faculties x three terms) is conducted with mentors, to get feedback from them on programme issues. Observations of mentor groups as well as individual interviews with both mentors and mentees are conducted to monitor progress and address problems. Both mentors and mentees also complete questionnaires about the programme. The activities and inputs in the programme are aimed at the proper functioning of the programme, and are delivered according to a timeline (Table 4.1).

Table 4.3 TARGET GROUP 2: MENTEES



Inputs to the programme consist of funding from the private sector, the time and expertise of staff members from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (where the Mentor Programme is situated) and contributions from the staff of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, in the form of student referrals and inputs in workshops. The venues for the actual mentoring groups and the training are all at the University.

Outputs from the programme are in the form of workshops and workshop material (manuals) as well as the data generated from the various reports, questionnaires, transcribed interviews and discussions for monitoring purposes. The outcomes of the programme must relate to the

programme goals. The **main programme goal** is to support and retain first-year students at the University. To attain this goal various objectives must be met, and the outcomes stipulated:

The primary envisioned **outcomes** (target group 2 - mentees) are:

- larger proportions of first-year students who have been mentored pass their first year; and
- mentees are retained in higher education.

Secondary envisioned **outcomes** (target group 1 – mentors) are:

- mentors have acquired knowledge of mentor functions, roles and relationships;
- mentors apply small-group facilitation techniques in their sessions;
- mentors transfer study techniques (e.g. mind maps) to their mentees and urge them to use it in their own feedback; and
- mentors reflect on their own input in the programme.

By following the steps indicated in the diagram of the Logic Model (Tables 4.4 and 4.5), evaluation of participant satisfaction with the programme (first-year students at the SU), detailed tracking of staff efforts (mentors and programme coordinators) and assessment of administrative and programme functions and activities are possible.



4.4 Conclusion

Many factors such as broadening access to higher education, government subsidies and alarming failure rates of students have forced academic institutions to focus on support structures to retain students in higher education. One of the ways of offering support is by means of a mentoring system. Such a programme was developed and implemented in 2003 for first-year students at Stellenbosch University. The Student Mentor Programme (SMP) is managed according to a logic model that sets out the steps in programme delivery and enables evaluation. The logic model is built on a programme theory that underpins the assumptions, goals, activities and outcomes of the SMP.

The various participants in the programme (from lecturers, mentees and mentors to funders and programme staff) are kept informed about programme delivery and outcomes through reports and feedback on evaluation questionnaires. The programme logic model facilitates a capacity building cycle of implementation, evaluation, rethinking and re-implementation. The logic model also highlights the envisioned outcomes of the programme, and is crucial in the realising of the programme goals, which are formulated according to the desired outcomes.

Such a cycle is paramount in programme monitoring or process evaluation. Process- as well as Outcome Evaluation is discussed in Chapter 5, and forms part of the research design and methodology of the study.



Table 4.4: Programme Logic Model - Target Group 1: Mentors

Main goal:

To assist first year students to achieve academic success and thereby to improve their retention rate in higher education.

Objectives:

1. To equip mentors (senior students) sufficiently so that they can provide quality academic mentoring to mentees
2. To equip mentors (senior students) sufficiently so that they can recognise possible psychosocial problems (e.g. substance abuse and stress) and address or refer these.

(Table 4.4)

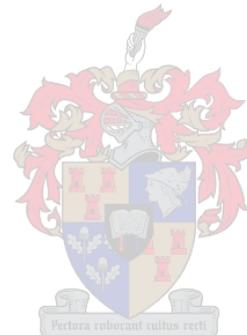


Table 4.4: Programme Logic Model - Target Group 1: Mentors

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
1. To equip mentors (senior students) sufficiently so that they can provide quality academic mentoring to mentees	<p>1.1. Conduct a two day workshop on mentor functions, roles and relationships</p> <p>1.2 Providing skills in small group facilitation to mentors</p> <p>1.3. Introducing various study techniques for mentors to use and to introduce to their mentees</p> <p>1.4. Conducting monthly feedback procedures</p> <p>1.5 Conducting focus group discussions once a term as feedback and support for mentors</p>	<p>1.1.1 Workshops presented</p> <p>1.1.2 Mentor manuals produced</p> <p>1.2 Various small group facilitation techniques</p> <p>1.3 Manual with study techniques, also available on CD Rom</p> <p>1.4 Monthly feedback forms are submitted containing valuable programme information</p> <p>1.5 Focus groups conducted Dissemination of viewpoints and "best practices" shared by mentors</p>	<p>1.1 Mentors have acquired appropriate and sufficient knowledge of mentor functions, roles and relationships</p> <p>1.2 Mentors apply small group facilitation techniques in their sessions appropriately</p> <p>1.3 Mentors transfer study techniques (e.g. mind maps) to their mentees appropriately</p> <p>1.4 Mentors work more reflexively regarding their own input in the programme</p> <p>1.5 Enhanced mentor skills and knowledge through shared experiences and "tips" from peers</p> <p>1.6 Mentees are supported to study successfully</p>	<p>1.1 Acquired mentor skills are being utilised in groups.</p> <p>1.2 Mentors let mentees do the talking (problem solving) in turns. Mentees present group work</p> <p>1.3 Mentees bring mind maps of their own work to mentor groups</p> <p>1.4 Attendance, performance and topics discussed are indicated on forms</p> <p>1.5 Mentors report satisfaction with support they receive through focus group discussions, describe feeling of coherence</p>
2. To equip mentors (senior students) sufficiently so that they can recognise possible psychosocial problems (e.g. substance abuse and stress)	<p>2.1. Organise two separate workshops for mentors with different psychosocial foci</p> <p>2.2 Conduct focus group discussions on possible problems and solutions in first year behaviour</p>	<p>2.1 Workshops on psychosocial factors</p> <p>2.2 Worksheets with information on various psychosocial problems</p> <p>2.3 Feedback focus groups conducted 2.3 Feedback on encountered problems and the handling thereof</p>	<p>2.1 Mentors have acquired valuable/appropriate knowledge on psychosocial problems and behaviour.</p> <p>2.2 Mentors are able to refer mentees for specific help as and when required</p> <p>2.3 Mentors are able to recognise possible problems and share information with peers in focus groups</p>	<p>2. Mentors refer mentees with problems to the relevant authorities (e.g. Student Counselling, Language Centre, Student Affairs)</p>

Table 4.5: Logic Model of the Student Mentor Programme - Target Group 2: Mentees

Main goal: To assist students to achieve academic success and thereby to improve the retention rate of first year SU students.

Objectives:

1. To provide first year students (mentees) with academic support to enable them to perform successfully (i.e. passing their first year in all subjects)
2. To support first year students (mentees) psychosocially so as to ensure that they proceed to the second year of their studies

CAUSES	PROBLEMS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
First year students are unprepared for the challenges/ demands/ of academic culture and work load	Students fail and drop out of University	1.To provide first year students (mentees) with academic support in the form of mentor groups to enable them to achieve academic success	<p>1.1 Provide group facilitation with didactically equipped subject mentors for group discussions on subject matter.</p> <p>1.2 Establish contact with subject lecturer to identify possible problem candidates who need academic help</p>	1. Mentees are supported academically in weekly mentor sessions (Functioning peer mentoring group)	1. Larger proportions of first year students who have been mentored pass their first year	<p>1.1Mentees report in interviews that the mentor support is valuable</p> <p>1.2 Performance results indicate an increase in marks</p>
		2. Mentees are met in weekly mentor sessions where potential problems can be discussed or recognised and timely action can be taken.	<p>2.1 Mentees acquire appropriate coping skills to deal with psycho-social problems</p> <p>2.2 Mentees are retained in the university</p>	<p>2.1.1 Reports from the CSCD indicate that mentees are referred to counselling by mentors</p> <p>2.1.2 CSCD indicates that mentees attend workshops on special coping skills</p>		

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Social or educational programmes such as the Student Mentor Programme vary according to the nature of the issues involved, the perspectives of the managers, and the policy of the institution. Evaluation of programmes will also vary according to the purpose of the programme, services rendered, the scope of the programme and the kind of information needed. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, social programmes are often situated in different philosophical paradigms, and these paradigms also inform the design and methodology of the evaluation of the programmes. Moreover, the evaluation of a social programme is not free from the “political” influence of the evaluator, and is often highly personal and situational (Patton, 1990). Programme coordinators respond to the individual and institutional needs, which are “proposed, defined, debated, enacted and funded through political processes, and in implementation they remain subject to [political] pressures – both supportive and hostile” (Weiss, 1998:48).

Programme evaluators are not only bound by political pressures, such as the policy of an institution, but their work is also framed by “the concerns and interests of selected members of the setting being evaluated” (Greene, 1998:374). Evaluation questions about programme goals (better performance of first-year students), or about the quality of programme strategies (design and implementation) and effectiveness of delivery (coordinator inputs and management) “reflect not only inquirer autonomy or theoretical predictions, but rather a politicised process of priority setting” (ibid). Thus, evaluation results cannot be presented as decontextualised theoretical knowledge claims, but rather as practical knowledge claims or “empirically justified value judgments about the merit or worth of the programme evaluated” (ibid) as it pertains to the needs of the participants or stakeholders. Matters are even more complicated when the designer of the programme is also the coordinator/manager as well as the evaluator, as is the case in the present study. The following diagram (Figure 5.1) explains the interrelatedness of paradigms and research designs:

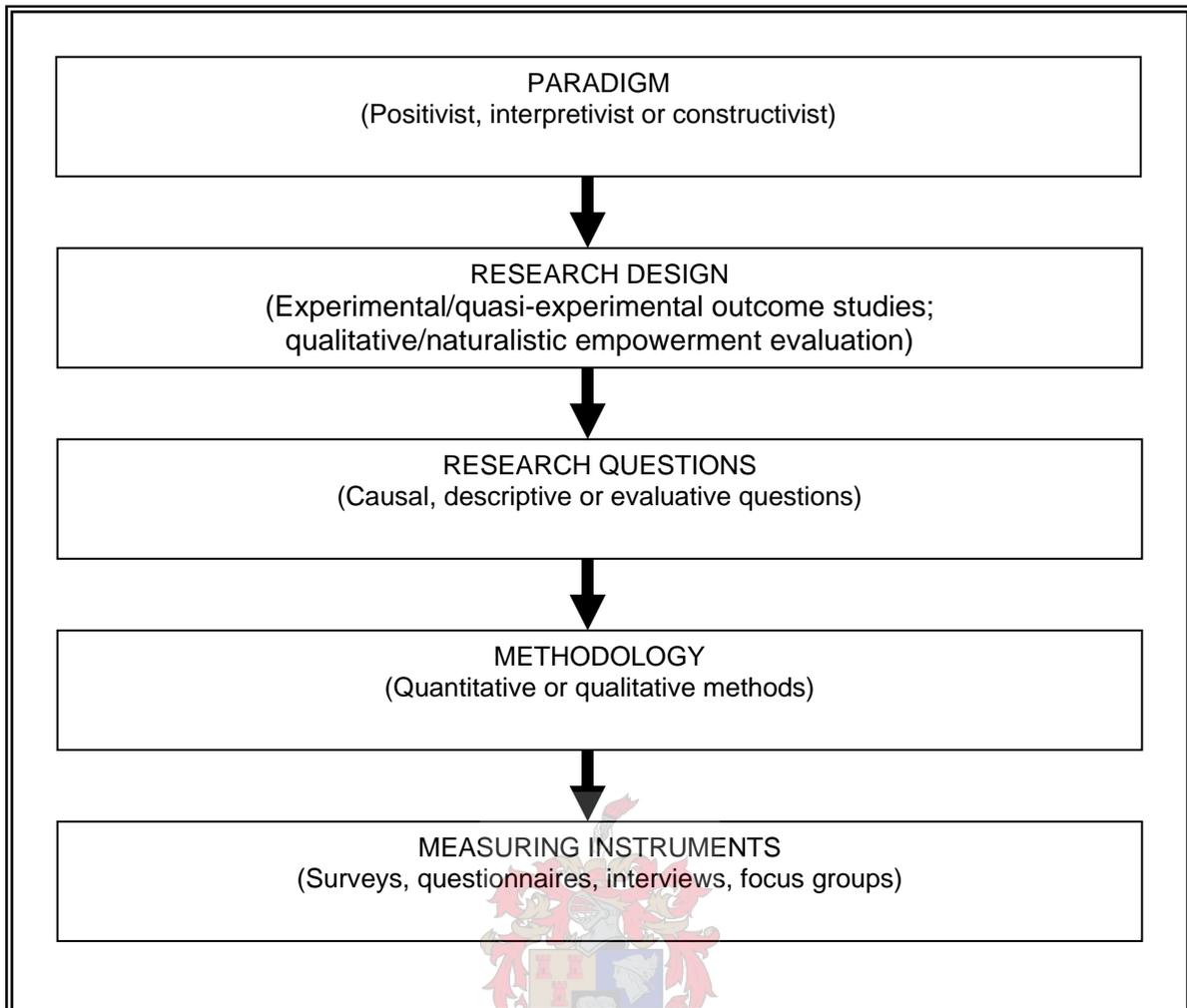


Figure 5.1: A research design hierarchy

One could postulate that value judgments on programme effectiveness or outcomes depend on the political or philosophical paradigm of the funders or the evaluator as they inform the type of questions asked. The postpositivists and realists might want to emphasise theoretical causal knowledge and apply quantitative methodology, while the critical theory (including the radical humanist and constructivist) paradigms will have empowerment, social change and meaning construction in mind, and apply mostly qualitative and participatory methods. Greene argues:

...The fundamental political nature of programme evaluation contexts, intertwined with the predispositions and beliefs of the evaluator that shape the contours of evaluation methodologies and guide the selection of a specific evaluation approach for a given context (Greene, 1998:375).

The context is determined by the philosophical assumptions of the different stakeholders, from the funders to managers and the programme participants.

Ernest House describes an evaluation approach as follows:

...[C]oncerns about the distribution of benefits and calls for qualitative studies moved evaluators away from the value-free, quantitative methodology that the social sciences had been nurturing. Eventually, concern about stakeholders permeated the evaluation literature, even seeping into quantitative studies, and an acceptance of multiple methods, multiple stakeholders, and multiple outcomes in evaluation studies emerged, even among those not accepting egalitarian social justice (House, 2005:1076).

From the above quote it is clear that many considerations go into the design of an appropriate evaluation study. Not only must stakeholder interests, participant benefits and cost efficiency be taken into account, but paradigms, multiple methods and outcomes also play important roles. However, the essence of evaluation is still the “generating [of] credible answers to questions about the performance of a social program” (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004:68). These questions must be reasonable, appropriate and answerable, relating to needs, performance and criteria (Rossi et al., 2004). The formulating of such questions and their contexts and criteria will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.2 Research design

The research design for this study is a comprehensive programme evaluation that focuses on both process and outcome evaluation. The research is empirical, of medium control and utilises numerical and textual data (Mouton, 2001:158). This means that the data to be interpreted is both quantitative as well as qualitative. Key questions will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs, but these centre around the issue of whether the programme is being run as it was designed to, and whether the programme is effective enough to produce a tangible short-term outcome. Continuous data collection and analysis provide a picture of programme delivery and its effects.

Both process- and outcome evaluation designs are used in the present study, to avoid the problem of the “blackbox evaluation” discussed before. The outcomes cannot be judged without knowledge of programme implementation and delivery: “Questions about program outcome... are meaningful only if the program design is well implemented” (Rossi et al., 2004:79). In a discussion about programme evaluation hierarchy, Rossi et al. state that outcome evaluation can only take place once the social need for the programme is understood first, when the programme theory for addressing the need is reasonable, and the activities and services are well implemented. “...*Then* it may be meaningful to assess program outcomes” (Rossi et al., 2004:80-81) (my italics).

5.2.1 Process evaluation design

The purpose of process evaluation is improvement (or formative) oriented. Information is gathered on programme outputs such as the number of mentees in the programme, attendance of group sessions and workshops. Continuous monitoring is done through regular meetings and e-mails with the staff who deliver the services (programme assistants as well as mentors). Programme monitoring is one of the forms of process evaluation, and takes place once the programme has already been implemented. It could therefore be defined as a "continuing function that aims primarily to provide the management and main stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievements of results" (Malik, 2002:6).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2003:346), programme monitoring serves at least three functions: information on programme delivery, coverage (of target population) and information on programme diffusion. Practices must be clearly documented to establish whether there is supportive evidence that the programme is working and to enable replication. The aim of the evaluation of the Student Mentor Programme is thus to improve programme performance through effective monitoring, and is therefore formative evaluation.

The following diagram in Figure 5.2 (adapted from Malik, 2002:6) explains the cyclical nature of programme monitoring: capacities are built and strengthened while staff is accountable for their own roles and responsibilities within the programme. They reposition themselves when changes have to be made, and learn from experience to avoid certain pitfalls and apply different techniques. In doing so, they make better-informed decisions and become more accountable, and the cycle starts again. The process is repeated over and over again, growing more efficient with each cycle:

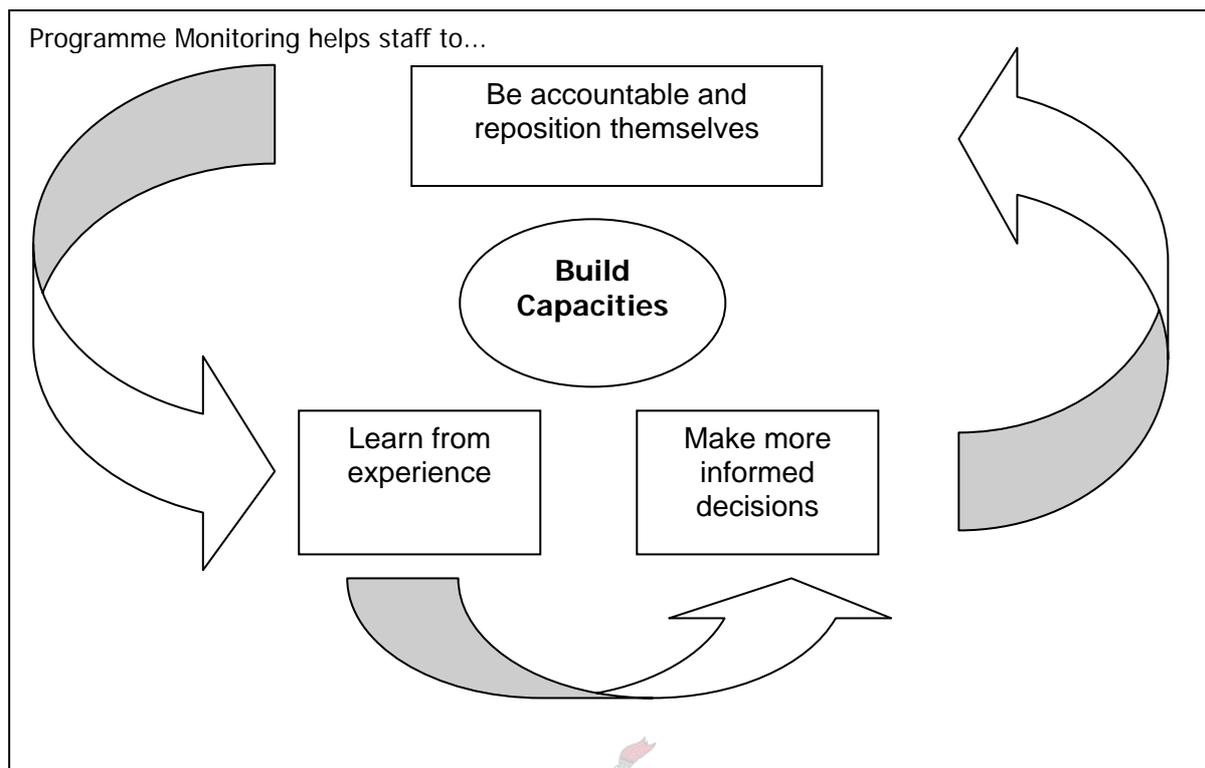


Figure 5.2 The programme monitoring cycle (adapted from Malik, 2002:6)

The goal of process evaluation is thus to get feedback during the course of the programme in order to see if the programme is actually working, and to make changes if necessary. Tessmer (1993:10) states, "formative evaluation is a judgment of the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in its developing stages, for purposes of revising the instruction to improve its effectiveness and appeal".

The process evaluation component of the design for this study consists of a close monitoring of the programme, with emphasis on the following:

- assessment of participant satisfaction by means of interviews, focus group discussions and observations (first-year students or mentees at the SU);
- detailed tracking of staff efforts by means of monthly report forms (mentors, programme assistants);
- assessment of administrative and programme functions and activities through midterm or annual reports and training manuals (programme coordinators);
- process evaluation (a well-implemented, monitored programme) which should enable replication (Patton, 1990) at a similar institution or in a related context or situation.

Key questions

Based on Babbie and Mouton's (2003:341) description of process evaluation, the evaluation questions are:

- Do all the mentees who volunteered for the programme - receive the intervention (i.e. adequate mentoring – both academic and psychosocial)?
- Is the standard of mentoring from all the mentors making an impact?
- Is the implementation of the programme well documented?
- Is the programme delivery sustainable?
- “What are the things people experience that make this programme what it is?” (Patton, 1990:95)
- “What is the nature of staff-client interactions”? (ibid).

Research problem for process evaluation

Students who enrol at Stellenbosch University are often not equipped for university study and are intimidated because of a lack of skills and knowledge, as well as the academic workload. In order to help students meet these challenges, a Student Mentor Programme has been implemented to offer support (mainly to first-year) students and to equip them with the necessary skills. Senior students are trained as mentors meeting with mentees in discussion groups, facilitating discourse. The aim of this study is to assess whether the Student Mentor Programme is being properly implemented and delivered, whether the target group (mentors) is sufficiently equipped and whether the support (for mentees) is sustained. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observations were used.

5.2.2 Outcome evaluation

Rossi et al. (2004:204) define an outcome as “the state of the target population or the social conditions that a program is expected to have changed”. While programme monitoring focuses more on programme delivery, outcome evaluation or impact assessment looks at the actual benefits experienced by the clientele or beneficiaries. Though outcome evaluation seems to give preference to quantitative data, Patton (1990:98) warns that the outcomes may vary for each individual client; thus qualitative data may be particularly useful “for evaluation of programs that emphasize individualized client outcomes”.

Chapter 4 presents the Programme Logic Model as a management tool and an instrument with which to regulate the evaluation process and outcomes. (The intended programme outcomes are stipulated in the last column of Tables 4.4 and 4.5.) Valid measurement of those outcomes is challenging, as many factors (see Section 5.7. on validity and reliability) can influence outcomes. Rossi et al. have this to say:

Assessing a program's effect on the client it serves and the social conditions it aims to improve is the most critical evaluation task because it deals with the "bottom line" issue for social programs. No matter how well a program addresses target needs, embodies a good plan of attack, reaches its target population and delivers apparently appropriate services, it cannot be judged successful unless it actually brings about some measure of beneficial change in its given social arena (Rossi et al., 2004:204).

The beneficial change that is referred to above should be evident in the outcomes stipulated beforehand, as answers to key questions.

Key research questions

- How many students have improved their marks?
- How many of the mentees in the programme actually stayed on at university?
- Did the programme make a significant difference in students' specific subject skills?
- What was the outcome of the programme regarding students' perceptions on their own abilities?
- "Are some recipients affected more by the service than others?" (Rossi et al., 2004:78)
- Are psychosocial problems being addressed?
- A determination of the programme's efficiency (the outcomes are being met, and the impact is satisfactory): has student throughput rate been increased?

Research problem for an outcome evaluation study

Children from previously disadvantaged schools are often under-prepared for higher education, especially in the fields of the natural and economic sciences and mathematics. This lack of skills has a detrimental effect on their selection and success in certain courses in higher education. Participation in a specially designed Mentor Programme enables them to improve their marks in the chosen modules, or at least pass their modules and stay on in higher education. The aim of this research is to assess to what extent the outcomes of the Mentor Programme are being realised, and what impact a year of intensive support and training has on students' performance and perceptions of their own abilities. This part of the study uses a quantitative methodology (though not exclusively), and the results are triangulated with the qualitative results of student interviews on their psychosocial and academic experiences and own performance.

5.3 Methodology

This study utilises both the qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. According to Patton (1997) evaluation (or rather, "utilisation-focused evaluation", which means that usable knowledge on specific programmes or situations is created) is not bound to a specific

methodology, but is rather an *approach* or an *ethos*. The methodology will thus depend on the usefulness for the context and the participants. As Greene (1998) has indicated, the combination of the political-contextual and the methodological-philosophical arguments leads to the acceptance of alternative approaches - in other words more constructivist, interpretative methods - to programme evaluation, including qualitative evaluation (Greene, 1998:382).

Michael Scriven (1980) is also less concerned with methodology, and emphasises the basic logic that informs the practice of evaluation. The basic pattern of reasoning that would inform the methodology and yield the required data entails the following four steps, according to Scriven:

- establishing criteria of merit;
- constructing standards;
- measuring performance; and
- synthesising and integrating data into a value judgment about the programme.

These four steps above are integrated into the Logic Model for the management and evaluation of the Student Mentor Programme discussed in Chapter 4. As the “essence of evaluation is generating credible answers” (Rossi et al. 2004:68), the *kind* of information required informs the questions to be posed, and which, in turn, will inform the methodology. Questions yielding answers that provide tangible, measurable data, would probably be imbedded in a quantitative methodology. A more interpretative approach would use a qualitative methodology reflecting credibility rather than internal validity, transferability rather than external validity, dependability rather than reliability, and “confirmability” rather than objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1986).

5.4 Measurement

The logic model discussed in Chapter 4 is used to clarify the implementation steps of the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme, as well as to provide information on any deviations from the expected process, which then can be identified and addressed. The logic model also provides the backdrop for the whole spectrum of programme activities that are to be evaluated. In the process, a set of instruments (selection procedures for mentors, report forms, academic progress reports) were developed to monitor the programme activities (administering support, feedback and impact). Adjustments had then been made to areas where input and outcomes were not satisfactory. Questionnaires on programme delivery were tested in a pilot study, after which they were adjusted. Examples of the measuring instruments are attached as appendices at the end of the thesis. The following measurement instruments were developed:

- application form for mentors;
- interview criteria for mentors;
- baseline questionnaires for mentees upon entering the programme;
- monthly report forms for mentors about activities and attendance of the group;
- mentee feedback form on programme delivery and mentor performance;
- mentor feedback form on programme delivery and experience; and
- an academic progress report, to be completed by mentors with details of mentee test results.

5.4.1 Pilot Study

During the previous year (2004), a pilot study was conducted with the following objectives in mind:

- to obtain feedback on the reliability of the measuring instruments;
- to obtain information on participant profiles to compare with profiles of the following year; and
- to obtain information on mentee experience to include in mentor training workshops.

Questionnaire for mentors

Prior to the implementation of the programme, an open-ended questionnaire had been completed by 40 newly selected mentors. Mentors were asked to indicate what their expectations of a mentor programme would be if they were mentees in their first year of study. This was done to ascertain the kind of problems mentees experience in order to design a programme to address these problems. The data was analysed and coded in Atlas.ti, and yielded the following results on key questions:

Table 5.1 Student expectations of the Mentor Programme

Need identified	Number of reponses
1. Academic support	34
2. Adjustment support	32
3. General support	16
4. Social support	7
5. General skills	5

The rationale behind the gaining of this information was to establish where the biggest problems were situated, in order to design the programme (and train the mentors) according to the needs of the first-year students. Thus the design of the programme was based on these results. It is interesting to note that, even though mentees expected *academic support* (34 quotes) first and foremost from a mentor programme, the biggest specific *problem* that they have experienced was *adjustment* (32 quotes) to university life, to

academic culture and being far from home. Other problems also mentioned were the following:

- the stress of the heavy workload;
- uncertainty whether the specific course was the right one;
- finding a church to relate to;
- self image, peer pressure and prejudice;
- financial and emotional constraints because of lack of support systems at home;
- distances traveled to and from university;
- part-time work;
- substance abuse; and
- language problems, either because lectures are in Afrikaans, or text books are in English.

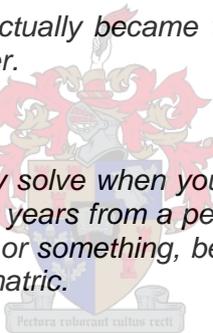
Some of these diverse problems also surfaced in interviews:

Peer pressure, self image:

- *For the first time in my life I actually became worried about my weight, because in order to fit in, I had to be smaller.*

Financial constraints and background:

- *Problems like that you can only solve when you yourself work, because your mother or father cannot move in 1 or 2 years from a person that cleans or works at Shoprite, to a manager at, lets say Spar or something, because they are not educated in most of these cases, or just have a matric.*



Distances traveled:

- *I have to get up every day at 5 in the morning to take the train in time, and get home at 7 at night and there won't be enough time to do my work.*

The emergence of these issues highlight the amount and nature of obstacles students have to deal with, and of which lecturers are often unaware. The information gained from the analysis of these questionnaires is included in the mentor training programme, to sensitise them for the problems first-year students encounter.

Mentee pilot sample

The convenience sample consisted of 102 mentees, of which 72 responded. Observations of 10 of the mentor groups were conducted. Three focus group discussions were held with each faculty-group of mentors, as well as 10 interviews each with mentees and mentors. The pilot study focused on two broad areas, namely the general profile of the mentees, and

their responses on being in the programme. These included comments on their own studying, about the mentor, and about participation and support in the programme.

The data shows that the main body of participants who completed the questionnaire (N=72) is female (69.4%). These percentages differ slightly from the data of the whole group of mentees of the first semester 2004. At that stage there were 686 mentees in the programme, of which 412 were female (61%). The trend of more females in the programme continued in 2005.

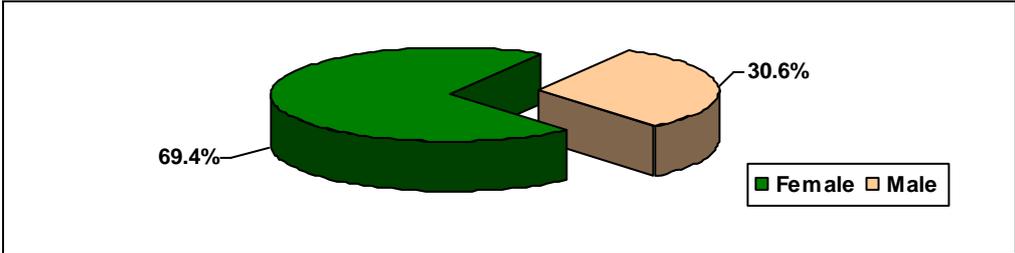


Figure 5.3 Gender (N = 72)

A slight increase in programme participants occurred in the second semester. By the end of August in the second semester, the distribution of mentees across faculties was as follows:

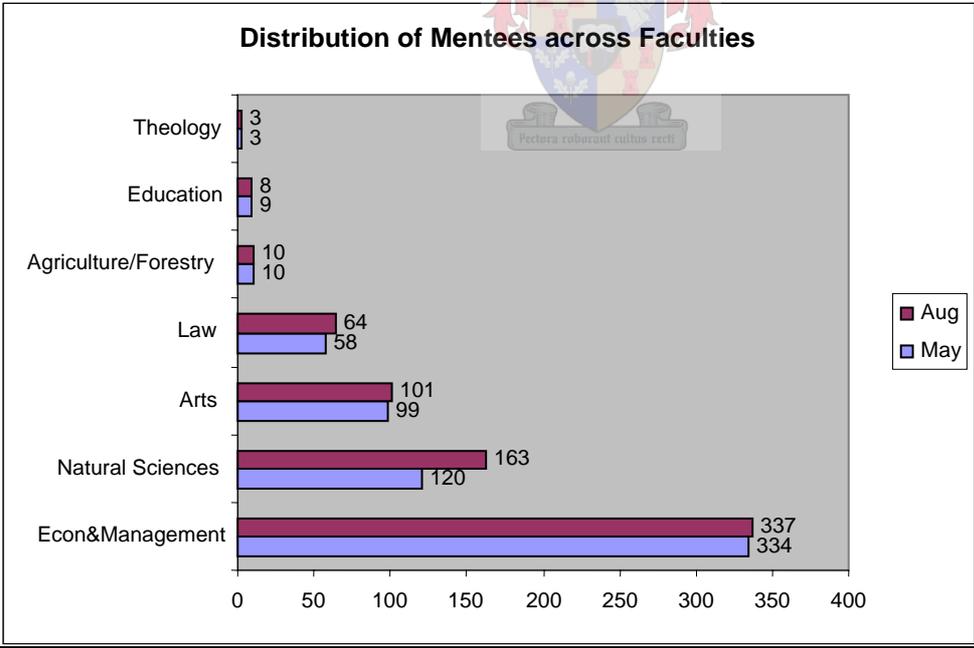


Figure 5.4 Distribution of mentees across faculties 2004

First-year students in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (also the faculty with the largest total number of first year students, namely 1317 in 2004) required the most support, followed by students in the Natural Sciences. The slight increase between the first

and second semester might indicate that first-years realised that they needed academic assistance, and that the SMP became an option for support.

As indicated in the comments of the mentors, the attendance of the mentor groups by the mentees was not as regular as one would like it to be. The reasons for this were further explored in the main study of 2005. Reasons for absenteeism vary, ranging from the fact that some mentees did not need such regular support and could do without it – only coming to ask a question or two sometimes – to problems with transport, timetable clashes or just staying away for no reason at all. Early indicators showed that mentees attending regularly had greater academic success than those in the programme not attending, a question that is further explored in the 2005 study.

Mentees' programme experience 2004

The most important body of research was aimed at mentee responses about their experiences of being in the programme. Their responses on their own studying, the input of the mentor and their participation and support are presented.

Studying and results

In the questionnaire mentees indicated that they had to change their study methods since being at university. Many mentees applied these techniques since school, but many also acquired the skills only through mentoring and peer support, as they found the work difficult to comprehend the first time.

First-year students suffer a great deal of stress when they feel that they underachieve (83.3%), especially when they believe that they study rigorously. High achievers expect to achieve also at university, and often that is not the case. The first tests show that there is a marked difference between matric results and university performance. Mentees' remarks regarding their own organisation and study methods indicated a real need for an intervention such as the Student Mentor Programme. It is highly significant that at least 26.5% of participants in 2004 (and 27.2% in 2005) indicated that at some time they considered terminating their course, a figure that roughly correlates with dropout figures for the first year in higher education. The feedback indicates that mentees realise that they are not using the most effective study methods (66.7%) to achieve better test results (either because they do not know how, or for some reason do not apply their knowledge), and therefore need the help of a mentor.

Mentee responses about mentor input

Apart from biographical and performance details of the mentees, it was also important to establish how they felt about the programme specifically, and the contribution their mentors made. The feedback data indicates a positive contribution by the mentors, with ability to assist (82.9%), availability (80.3%) and the mentor's overall contribution to the mentee's studies (69.4%). Mentees also indicated that the mentor was academically adequate (77%) and showed interest in the individual members of the group (91.5%).

Mentee opinions about participation

Mentees had mixed feelings (52.1%) on the inclusion of only underachievers of below 50% in the programme. The same percentage (52.1%) agreed that the inclusion of high achievers in the Mentor Programme was an excellent idea. Some also mentioned it in interviews:

- *But there should be a condition for students say who are obtaining 75%>. They can join so as to improve their marks as long as there is enough space. As long as there is room for students who are obtaining less than 50%. But the programme should not stop it is very good!*
- *I think if high achievers join mentor groups they will contribute positively to others.*

In general it seemed that mentees welcomed the presence of high achievers in the programme, on condition that there would be still enough space for the student who really needed academic support. (It was interesting to note that the number of high achievers on the programme increased from 2004 to 2005.) A significant number of students (38.6%) indicated that they needed more study techniques, and 80.3% felt that the programme should continue in 2005. They were appreciative of the programme also in their responses to open ended questions. Some mentees specifically highlighted academic support:

- *The mentor class has helped me a lot. It helps me understand better and makes the subject so much more interesting. My mentor was always helpful and ready to assist when needed.*
- *I believe the mentor program played a vital role in the improvement I saw in my marks. Also the mentor I had was a great source of extrinsic motivation!*
- *The mentor programme has definitely helped me to understand Statistics 186 better and achieve higher marks. I definitely recommend it continuing in 2005! Thank you.*
- *Program helped me to achieve a better mark, new skill.*

The open-ended questions in the questionnaire also provided comments on general psychosocial support and friendship:

- *The mentorship program enables me to do more to expect more from myself. I moved from being an average student, to what I think is one of the top students. I believe that X is an excellent mentor and I truly mean that from the bottom of my heart.*
- *Our mentor is very well informed about the subject and really helped me a lot in more ways than one.*
- *Mentor is very friendly and supportive!*
- *It is good to have a mentor. Assists you/helps. More personal attention than a lecture with 150+ students.*

After analysing the data, adjustments have been made to both the Mentee Baseline questionnaire and the Mentee Feedback questionnaire. The adjusted questionnaires were used in the 2005 study. The following recommendations from programme participants of 2004 were included in the programme delivery in 2005:

- the programme must start earlier in the year;
- more communication with lecturers;
- mentoring needed for *senior* students as well;
- mentee groups should not exceed four students (especially in Mathematics); and
- mentors are not necessarily the brightest academic stars, but people with social skills and empathy.

5.5 Sampling

The SMP offers a convenient sample of volunteers consisting of both mentor and mentee groups. All of them have displayed a willingness to participate in the processes, and are willing to share their views in interviews and discussion groups. Both mentors and mentees are obliged to complete evaluation forms (questionnaires) at the end of the year: mentees because they receive the service free of charge, and mentors because they are remunerated with a monthly honorarium. Mentee profiles are obtained from the questionnaires completed on entering the programme from randomly selected participants.

Questionnaires are electronically sent to all the mentors to complete, as well as the questionnaires for their mentees in the group. Mentees can complete the questionnaires either electronically, or by printing it and delivering it to the coordinator's office.

Sampling for interviews is done by selecting and inviting mentees from mentor groups with high attendance (for example above 90%), as well as from mentor groups with low attendance (30% and less). Interviews are unstructured, and open-ended, starting with the question, "How do you experience the Mentor Programme?" Mentors are randomly interviewed as they come to the office to submit their monthly reports. Written comments on

programme expectations and outcomes are sometimes obtained from “captive audiences” during training sessions with mentors.

5.6 Data collection

According to literature on programme monitoring and process evaluation (Babbie & Mouton 2003:347) three main sources of data should be studied: records (attendance records, test results), observations (of mentor/mentee interaction, participation in training workshops) and self-reports (interviews). The following data has been collected from these sources:

Quantitative data: questionnaires, attendance registers and academic results (captured and analysed in SPSS);

Qualitative data: interviews (taped and transcribed, and analysed in Atlas.ti), focus group interviews, observations and open-ended questions in questionnaires.

A time frame for the collection of data as well as the frequency and quantities are explained in the following Table 5.2:

Table 5.2 Time frame for data collection:

Instrument	MENTORS	MENTEES	LECTURERS	Date: 2005
Questionnaire	All (baseline) All (evaluation)	All (baseline) All (evaluation)		February November
Interview	10 10	10 10	3 3	February – March April – May June August- Sept Sept – Oct November
Observation	5 5			May September
Focus group	5 faculties x 3 5 faculties x 3 5 faculties x 3			April August October
Academic results		All All		June November
Attendance		All All		June November

Test and examination results of the mentees in the programme were analysed, discussed and triangulated with qualitative responses, but many factors may have influenced these outcomes. At least another year should pass before more data is collected about mentee success (pass rates). Impact should ideally be measured over a few years – the data of consecutive cohorts of first-years, as well as first-years' continuation towards graduation. Demographic data on race, gender and matric results, as well as attendance of mentor groups is available. According to Hammersley (1990:84), triangulation between the

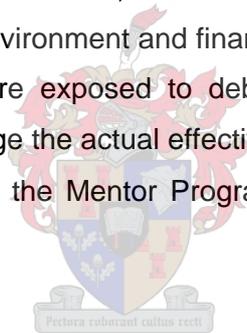
quantitative and qualitative data is done in the "hope that the different data sources will inform each other".

5.7 Validity and reliability and sources of error

5.7.1 Limitations in quantitative data analysis

Sources of error

- Because the mentees are volunteers, there are no equivalent groups, which mean that mentees cannot be matched with students not involved in the intervention, and so causal inferences become more difficult (Mouton, 2001:158).
- There is less control of extraneous variables, because mentees differ in regard to motivation and ability.
- Stochastic effects (Rossi et al., 1999:244) could influence data within the mentee group, because differences (motivation, adjustment to university life, interest in and aptitude for certain subjects) would occur even without the intervention.
- Endogenous changes (Rossi et al., 1999:243) e.g. the natural maturation of students, a better learning environment and financial assistance, will take place at an institution where students are exposed to debate and normal campus activities, which makes it difficult to judge the actual effectiveness of the Mentor Programme.
- There is no control group in the Mentor Programme, so mentees' improvement is difficult to compare.



Control for error

- Because the mentee groups are not matched, there are pre-existing differences between subjects, especially as the experimental group are all volunteers. This could be controlled for by random assignment (which might not be educationally ethical), or an adjustment for extraneous confounding effects could be made. Though the results can be compared with the whole cohort of first-year students who are not receiving mentoring, no generalisations can be made about student performance.
- Motivation must be handled as an extraneous variable and tested.
- Mathematical models (statistical inference) of sampling (Rossi et al., 1999:245) can counteract stochastic effects by judging the sampling variation beforehand. In the present study the judgment will include a decision whether it is viable to use the mentoring support programme to improve first-year academic success. As an ongoing support process, it might prove to be more informative when triangulated with participant interview results.

- Researchers must be aware of students' abilities to learn from their environment, peers and experience, and take this into consideration when evaluating the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.
- Students participating in the programme are compared with themselves by comparing their test results in the beginning of the year with results after mentoring. This procedure is comparable to writing pre- and post-tests, described by Rossi et al. (1999:588) as "reflexive control".

5.7.2 Limitations in qualitative data analysis

Sources of error

- Researcher bias: During interviews the attitude and experience of the researcher could influence the responses of the interviewee. If the researcher has a particular experience of being mentored (or not), it may influence the response of the participant, and could lead to subjective interpretation of the data. "If the researcher has a stake in a particular hypothesis, he/she may see evidence in spite of best intentions" (Stern, 1979:73). Also, if the researcher is actively involved with the programme, bias in favour of the programme may occur.
- Lack of rigour: Interviews with either mentees or mentors are not transcribed and coded in detail, and wrong conclusions could be made. Researchers are often not aware, according to Stern (ibid), of the classes of information they ignore.
- Participant effects: Mentors may say what they think the researcher wants to hear, as they are being remunerated for their work as mentors, and may be in financial need. They may not give their true opinions, for fear of being targeted or not being reappointed.
- Problems of selection, distortion and memory (Stern, 1979:72): The researcher may select the wrong data for the questionnaires and analysis. People also forget certain facts and are inclined to distort events according to their own experiences.

Control for error

- Researcher bias could be lessened if the researcher was not familiar with the interviewees, and had no relationship with them (Stern, 1979:71). A way to control for it is not to eliminate this factor, but to be explicit about it (Stern, 1979:73), as in the case of the SMP, where the programme coordinator also conducts the interviews.
- Data must be validated by a second person; in this case the two assistants employed in the administration of the programme would do this. Special care must be taken to

discuss and incorporate the proposals and inputs from each representative. "Even shared ownership of research is postulated" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:316).

- The researcher must appear non-judgmental, and assure the participants that the material will be handled confidentially.
- To control for distortion it is desirable to compare information with student records, for example scholastic ability, background information, area of accommodation, financial capacity and family support. The triangulation with existing quantitative data is done to see how the different data sources, in this case the experiences of the mentors and mentees, inform each other (Hammersley, 1990:84).

5.7.3 Observations of the mentor/mentee groups

Sources of error

- Validity regarding the gathering of scientific evidence may be suspect, as the presence of the observer could inhibit or even alter the natural flow of events (Stern, 1979:64) when mentors interact with their groups.
- "On stage effects" may play a role, because students may react to the presence of the researcher and may be on their best behaviour (or worst) which would influence the outcome of the research.

Control for error

- There must be a minimal interference with events (Stern, 1979:64), and the researcher must be as unobtrusive as possible while making observations.
- On-stage effects can be counteracted by deceiving the subjects about the purpose of the research (Stern, 1979:67). Mentees could be informed that the observer was doing a language investigation. Mentors could be informed that mentee preparation was being observed, though it is highly unlikely that either group would believe the researcher/coordinator. A better solution would be to ask an outsider to observe the group and to give an honest opinion.

5.8 Conclusion

In previous chapters I highlighted the complexity of social programmes situated in institutions that are bound in political and situational contexts, and which, in turn, are informed by certain paradigms that demand different methodological approaches for researching or evaluating the ensuing data. In this chapter I described a research design and methodology that will answer questions pertaining to the specific context, namely the performance and experience of first-year students in the SMP. Because many of the

programme outcomes are not quantifiable, the main body of the research is qualitative, and is steeped in the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms.

While the objective of qualitative research is an understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviours of people in particular programmes or social contexts (Gaskell, 2000:39), this study also relates the experiences and expectations of mentees in the programme. The complexity of social and educational programmes demands a multilevel evaluation. Programme outcomes alone cannot shed light on programme delivery, and do not provide sufficient tangible, quantifiable outcomes to substantiate any claims about programme delivery. Qualitative data collection and analysis is utilised to map and understand the respondent's life world, and as such affords an entry point to the social researcher, "which then introduces interpretative frameworks to understand the actors' accounts in more conceptual or abstract terms, often in relation to other observations" (Gaskell, 2000:38). Quantitative data in the form of test and examination results are collected to triangulate the findings from interviews.

As stated before, the real impact of the SMP can only be measured in a longitudinal study over a couple of years by looking at the pass rate of students in the programme. Even though there are baseline indicators of some importance (matric results, examination results, attendance figures), literature shows that the best indicators of first-year success are actually the first semester results. As the majority of mentees enter the programme during the first semester, it is not possible to quantify their academic performance in an existing, reliable measure. However, in the qualitative assessment of the programme (open-ended questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus group discussions) information on the delivery of the programme is available.

The next three chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) present the results of the study, broken down in demographical profiles, the programme monitoring data and programme outcome results. Chapter 6 focuses in detail on the demographical data and general profiles of the programme participants.

CHAPTER 6 PROFILES OF THE TARGET GROUPS

The results of the evaluation of the Student Mentor Programme are presented in the following three chapters, each with a different focus. Chapter 6 presents the demographics and profiles of the two target groups, mentors and mentees. The programme implementation and monitoring results are presented in Chapter 7, while the programme outcomes are presented in Chapter 8.

6.1 Mentors – basic profile

A total of 184 mentors were trained and appointed during 2005. As the attendance of active mentees in the programme varies throughout the year, the number of working mentors varies as well, and though a peak of 1279 mentees supported by 184 mentors was reached, the actual statistics for mentors are the following:

Table 6.1 Number of active mentors

TOTAL NUMBER OF MENTORS	
Initially trained mentors	133
Additional appointments	57
Sub total	184
Left the programme	29
Active mentors by end of semester 2	155

Though commitment for the whole academic year is encouraged, mentors leave the programme because some modules are only semester courses or for personal reasons.

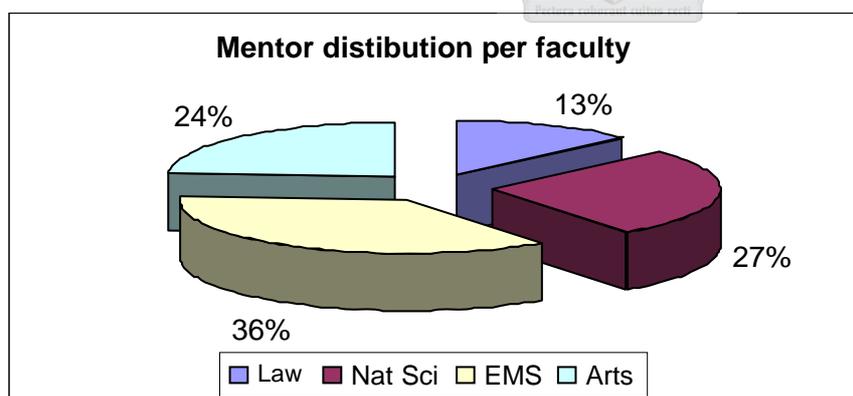


Figure 6.1 Mentors per faculty

The number of mentors per faculty depended on the number of mentees applying for support in the programme. As the largest faculty Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) had the most mentors in the SMP. The mentor for Theology and the one for Education are absorbed in the figure for Arts. The Faculty of Natural Sciences had the second largest number of mentors but the greatest demand for mentees. Mentees reported

that they did not have the necessary science subjects at school, and found the particular modules in science and mathematics difficult.

6.1.1 Race and gender

As almost 80% of the Stellenbosch University fulltime student population is white (see also Figure 6.10), the race of the mentors reflects this with the larger percentage of white mentors on the programme (85%). Coloured and Indian mentors were represented on the programme, but though there were black mentors in 2004 and again in 2006, no black mentors applied for the programme for 2005.

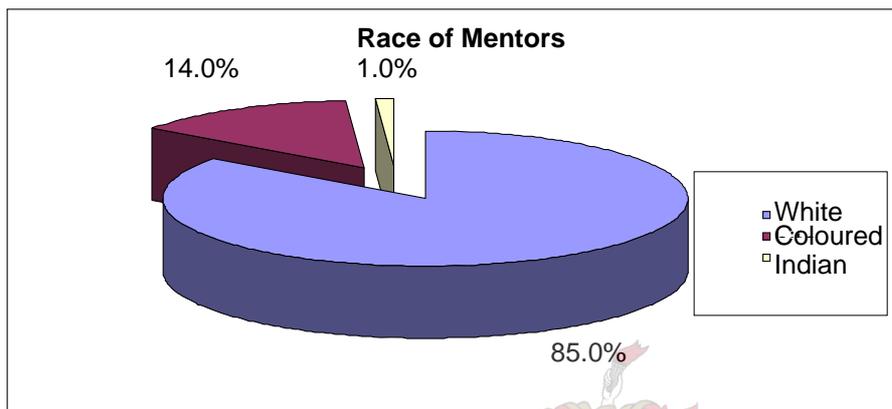


Figure 6.2 Race of the mentors (N = 155)

As in the case of the gender of the mentees, the majority of the mentors are female (Figure 6.3), but this distribution is more equal than for the mentees (Figure 6.11, discussed in Section 6.2.2).

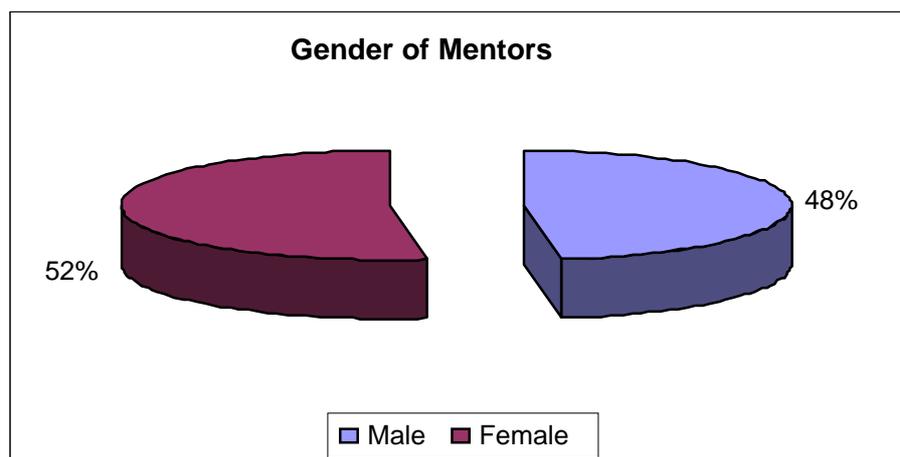


Figure 6.3 Gender of the mentors (N = 155)

6.1.2 Residence

A total of 107 mentors (69%) completed the Mentor Feedback Questionnaire at the close of the programme in October 2005. Most of these mentors (51.4%) were resident on campus, which made reaching the mentor groups more practical and easy as the groups met

informally at mutually suitable times and venues. These groups were also able to meet in residences after hours. The mentors from private accommodation and those who had to commute found it more difficult to meet, as their days were filled with classes and practicals, and travel arrangements were often complicated. However, some of the participants went to great lengths to arrange group contact, and special arrangements were made for meetings to take place in the Study Centre and seminar rooms in the library, which mentors had to book in advance. Some groups met in empty lecture halls or tutor rooms, and others in laboratories made available by lecturers (e.g. Physics).

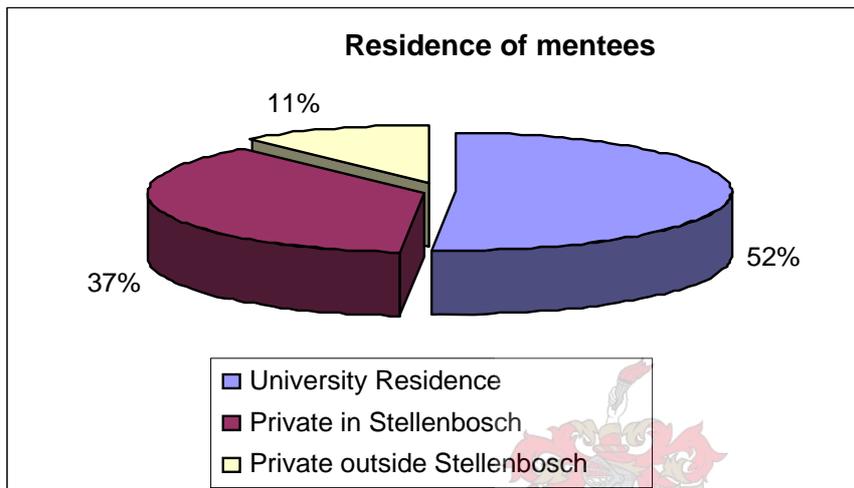


Figure 6.4 Residence of mentees (N = 107)

6.1.3 Mentor profile as facilitator

The traditional idea of a mentor as a much older, more experienced person does not apply to the SMP. Although at the initial conceptual stages of the programme the input of postgraduate students as mentors was considered, we soon found that a student in her/his third year was closer in age, experience and knowledge of the module content than a postgraduate. Through the course of the year, second-year students who had initially not been considered as mentors were also appointed, with excellent results. The 22.4% postgraduates on the programme were mainly honours students, many of whom had been mentors in their third year in 2004. Figure 6.5 shows the distribution of mentors in their different academic years.

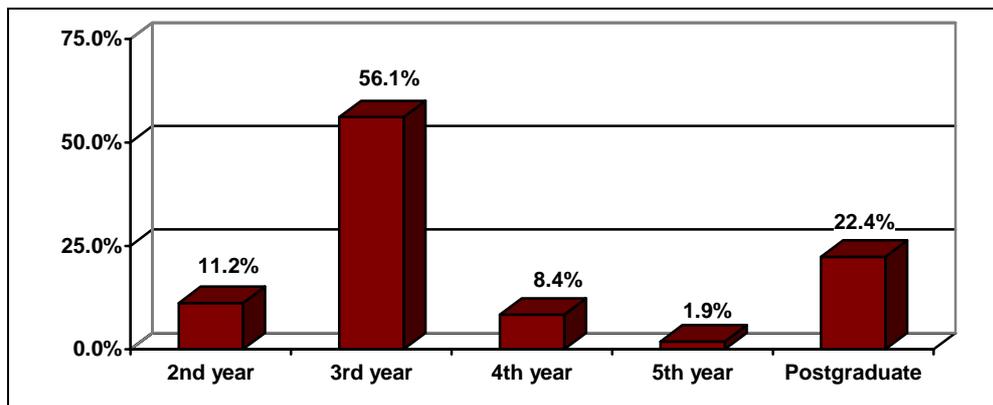


Figure 6.5 Academic year of mentors (N = 107)

In the Humaniora a maximum of eight mentees are assigned to a mentor (e.g. in Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, History, Education and Law). Not all the mentees remained in the programme and often the groups were much smaller later on in the year. In the Natural and Economic sciences, the mentors from the previous year (2004) had requested that groups should ideally not exceed four students – this was adhered to in 2005. Though groups were filled to capacity at the beginning of the year, attendance often dropped rapidly, so that the average mentees per group was less than when the programme commenced. Figure 6.6 shows the average mentees per mentor group.

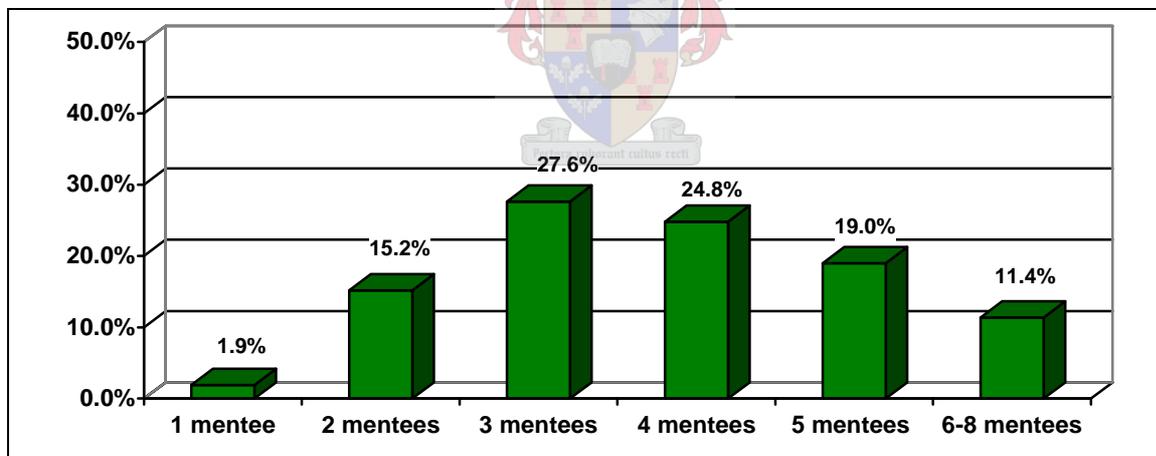


Figure 6.6 How many mentees, on average, attended your group? (N = 105)

To complete the profile of the mentors, it is important to identify why they applied to become mentors. Each one had to answer this question, and the following responses are summaries of their answers (Table 6.2):

Table 6.2 Reasons for becoming mentors (102 responses)

Reason	Number of responses
I want to help others / want to explain / it is my passion	45
Personal development benefit	26
Understand the anguish of first years	13
Both personal development and desire to help others.	11
Remuneration was the motivation, at least initially.	11

Distinct themes were prevalent in the responses on why mentors applied for the SMP. One of the most salient themes was the awareness of the great demands the new environment (academically and psychosocially) makes on first years, as mentors remembered their own experiences. They now wanted to help or plough back some of the knowledge and privileges that they as senior students enjoyed. The help mentors had to offer because they understood the first-year dilemma was expressed as follows:

- *I know how difficult it was for me as a first year to adjust from being at home and in high school to being at university. When you study something completely new it's nice to have someone who's done it before and is willing to help you. I wanted to help.*
- *I wanted to help first years to cope with the academic-related problems that I had to deal with in my first year.*
- *Ek wou 'n bydrae lewer by die eerstejaars, om hulle 'n geleentheid te gee wat ek graag wou gehad het.*
- *Ek wil graag die studente help wat sukkel. Ek wil daar wees ook as 'n vriend wat hulle ondersteun, raadgee en motiveer in moeilike tye. Ek weet hoe ek gevoel het in my eerste jaar en sou 'n mentor baie waardeer het!*
- *I could help mentees with a process that I have been through.*
- *Because I know the pain of being a first year and failing even if you work hard.*

Mentors also mentioned the importance of a support structure (which related closely to the first-years' experience) comprising friends and family, and how it could affect academic performance:

- *I wanted to be part of a programme that allowed students to grow and boost their self esteem by simply giving a helping hand as well as be a support structure.*
- *I wanted to help people, since I feel privileged. My academics is good, I have support from friends and family and I wanted to have other students experience the same.*

Still with the idea of first-year support in mind, some mentors expressed the desire to convey specific subject knowledge and a love for their discipline to the mentees:

- *Ek wou studente help om oor die algemene vrees kom wat daar vir Fisika bestaan.*
- *Helping first years and showing them that Chemistry can be easy.*
- *Helping some first years with a lovely subject called Chemistry.*
- *I understand and love Maths. I also want other people to enjoy it.*
- *I wanted to help other students and I love explaining History. I also needed a part-time job which could leave me fulfilled instead of just exhausted.*

- *I had and still have a passion for Economics and I want to share that with others.*

A mentor in Physics not only wanted to help mentees enjoy the subject, but thought it would also help her/him with time management, which was one of the areas in which they were trained to advise the mentees:

- *Constructive use of time, to help people to enjoy Physics, to learn about teaching people.*
- *Om my te help ook met tydsbestuur en om eerstejaars te help want ek sukkel om aan te pas.*

Others also comment on the enhancement of their own skills, ranging from teaching people, gaining confidence as leaders and speakers, to self-knowledge and the embracing of new challenges:

- *I enjoy helping other people with academic problems. Personal experience in teaching. Improving my confidence as speaker.*
- *The fact that this is a new learning experience for me, and the fact that I would have the opportunity to help other kids. In this respect I just don't help others but I also help myself.*
- *To learn how to teach other people and how to improve my own knowledge as well as the financial reward.*
- *To gain experience in explaining certain concepts to people and thus growing as a person.*

Many students' vision for themselves and the mentees went further than just academic help and the building of their own and mentees' skills. They already had a career or profession in mind:

- *Ek leer nou om 'n onderwyseres te wees, dus is my passie om ander mense te help, dis self-vervullend.*
- *Uitstekende blootstelling aan onderwysmetodes.*
- *I gave tuts [tutorials] for PDM [Public and Development Management] in the first semester and really enjoyed it. I also have a passion for social work and wanted to help the department with the high failure rate experienced this year - it is a concern for keeping people in my profession.*

As students are often short of cash, the remuneration was an incentive, a small fee paid to mentors each month to cover costs that they may have in the programme (for example, sending cellphone messages to mentees about meetings), and to establish accountability (submitting monthly report forms and attendance records, and attending of the focus groups). However, the money was not the primary motive, especially later in the programme when the mentors started to grow and understood and felt the benefits for their mentees as well as for themselves:

- *Imparting my knowledge. Felt I could make a contribution. It's very rewarding. And the money was a nice bonus.*

- *To develop myself personally and to be more comfortable working with people and leading a group. Obviously the money was also an incentive.*
- *Aanvanklik was die vergoeding die hoofrede maar as ek weer aansoek doen sal dit wees omdat ek dit as 'n selfvervullende ervaring sien.*

Often mentors display keen insight into the essence of mentoring. They understood that it was not only about the challenge of academic work, but the building of potential - a holistic support comprising academic, psychosocial and emotional involvement:

- *I believe in building student's potential and supporting them during these years of study. Studying can be challenging and students are often in need of support, academic, social and emotional. I want to provide this support for them.*

The personal satisfaction that mentors gained when seeing their mentees achieve and grow provided strong motivation for being a mentor, which was clear from the phrases used above (such as “fulfilled”, “selfvervullende ervaring”, “make a contribution” and “allow students to grow and boost their self-esteem”). They also often mentioned “enjoyment” in helping first-years and in connection with their specific disciplines.

6.2 Mentees – basic profile

A total of 1279 mentee positions (in different modules) were requested during 2005 (this dropped to 1190 during the first semester) involving 959 actual students in 48 mentoring modules in 2005. This means that some mentees applied for support in more than one subject or module. Because some mentees have received assistance in more than one module, the data set for analysis comprises altogether 1190 mentee-by-module combinations. 303 mentee positions left the programme during the year (i.e. after initial or limited contact or sporadic visits to the groups) but 887 remained active. Eventually, 269 students had a programme attendance rate of 50% or more, which we established as the minimum for having an impact on the mentee.⁷ The sample of mentees used to analyse outcomes was thus the 269 programme participants who attended more than 50% of the mentor sessions.

The Feedback Questionnaire (October 2005) was completed by 193 mentees. Of these, 86% were first-year students. Individual interviews were also conducted with 17 mentees. The interview responses show similar trends to the information provided in the questionnaires on social interaction and on academic and psychological support. Of the 193 mentees almost two-thirds (i.e. 125 students or 65%) received mentorship in a single

⁷ This figure is also used by Koch and Mallon (1998) when they postulated attendance effect for a Supplemental Instruction programme. Guerazzi's (2002) study on student involvement (“Student Success Challenge”) shows that increased frequency of contact with interventions at college level leads to increased student success.

module during 2005. The remaining 68 students received mentorship in two (49 students) and three (19 students) modules respectively (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Questionnaire respondents: mentees receiving support in more than one module

Questionnaire respondents:	Mentees	%	Modules
Support in single module	125	64.7	125
Support in two modules	49	25.3	98
Support in three modules	19	9.8	57
Questionnaire respondents totals	193	100	280

6.2.1 Mentee distribution in faculties

The figures for mentor support exclude those for the Faculty of Engineering as they had started their own programme during 2004. The Faculties of Health Sciences and Military Sciences also run their own mentor programmes on separate campuses. The data on the mentees was derived from a baseline questionnaire in the beginning of the year (March 2005), a feedback questionnaire in October, monthly report forms from the mentors that include information about mentee attendance and participation, and individual interviews. Figure 6.7 shows the distribution of mentees in the faculties. It is interesting to note that there was a slight increase in the number of requests at the start of the second semester 2005, a tendency that was also observed during 2004 and again in 2006. Each consecutive semester showed an increase as well.

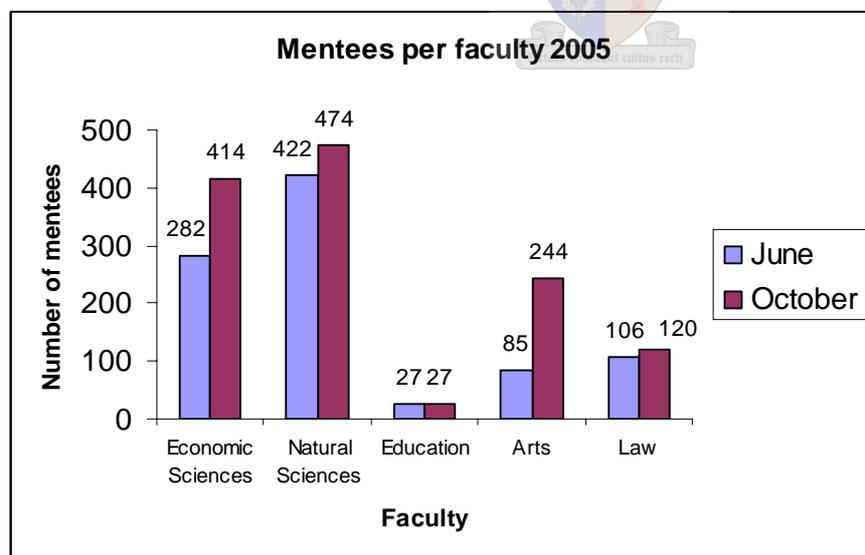


Figure 6.7 Distribution of mentee positions in five faculties, and increases between semester 1 and semester 2

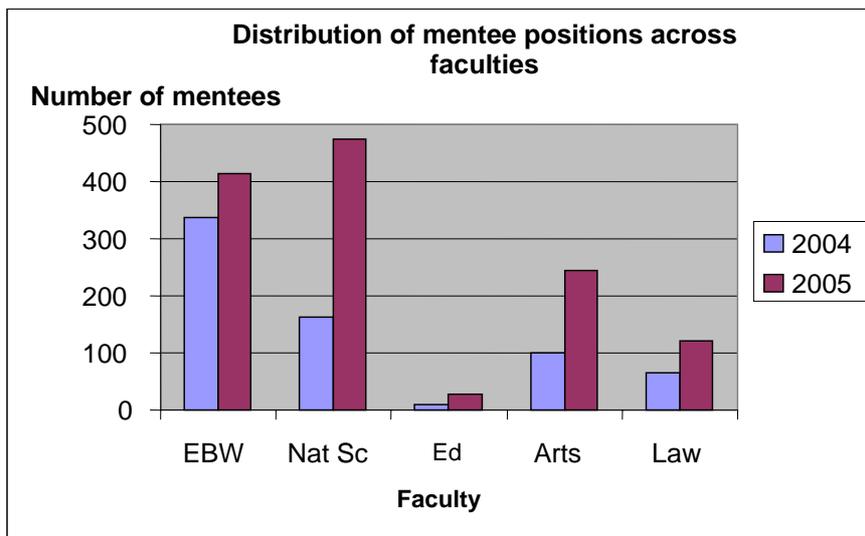


Figure 6.8 Increase in mentee support requests in faculties from 2004 to 2005

The number of mentee positions from each faculty in the programme (Figure 6.7) indicates that most of the students who asked for support came from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, even though it was not the largest faculty. This faculty has also shown a significant growth in participation in the programme, and their number of mentee positions increased from 163 in 2004 to 422 in 2005 (Figure 6.8).

6.2.2 Race, gender and language

The distribution of race of the mentees in the mentor programme shows that more than half are white (59%), and 41.5% who are black. Figure 6.10 shows the racial distribution for the whole first-year cohort for 2005, with almost 80% white students and 20% black. As Stellenbosch University is a historically white institution, the SMP helps to meet one of the University's goals of offering support to students who come from previously disadvantaged communities (Figure 6.9).

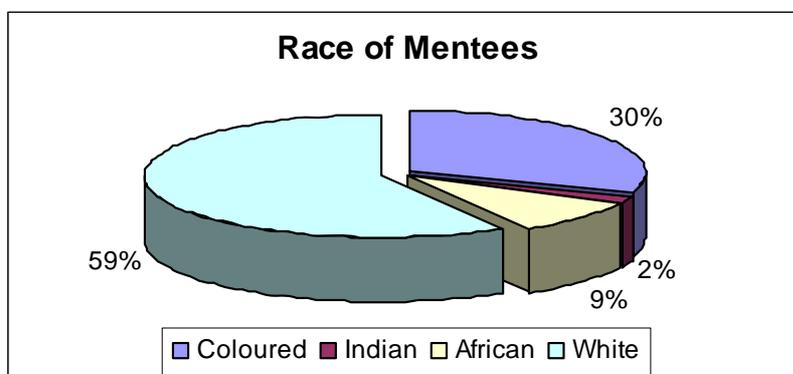


Figure 6.9 Racial distribution of the mentees in the SMP 2005 (N=761)

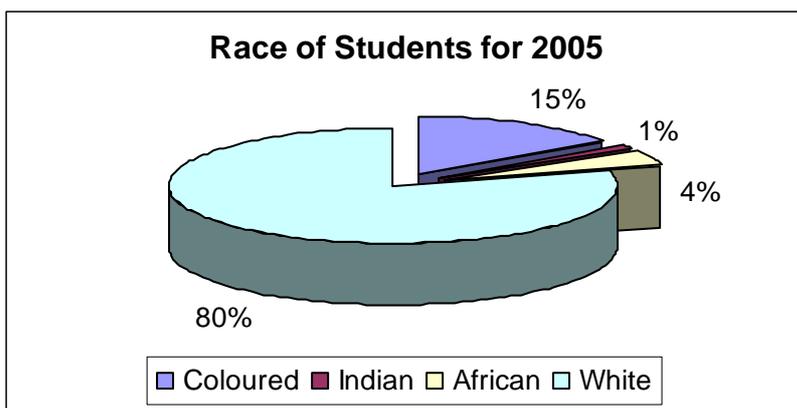


Figure 6.10 Racial distribution of cohort of first year students at SU, 2005

There are more women than men at Stellenbosch University (Figure 6.12), and this trend is obvious for both mentees (63%) and mentors (52%) with significantly more women than men in the programme (Figures 6.11 and 6.3).

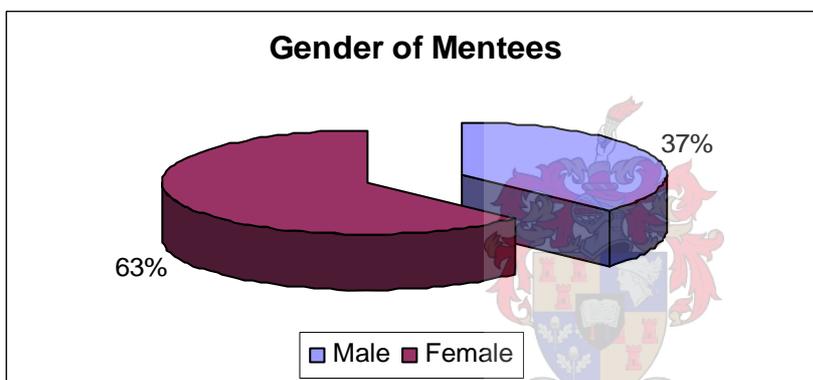


Figure 6.11 Gender of mentees (N = 761)

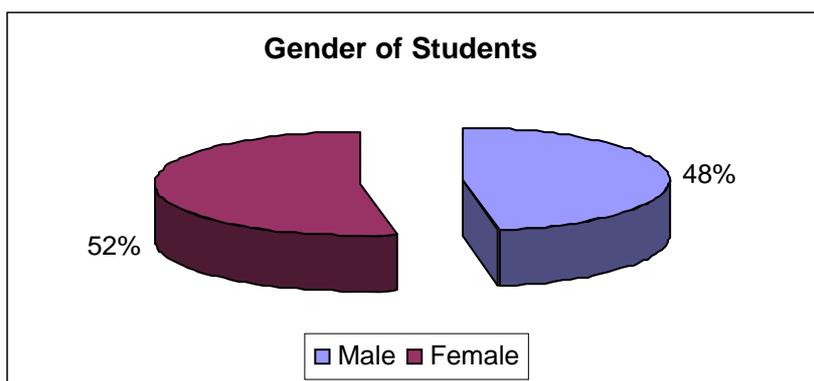


Figure 6.12 Gender for student cohort 2005 (N=22082)

The breakdown of race by gender displayed the same tendency, namely in each race group the women were in the majority, except for the Indian men in the sample (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Race by gender profile of mentees (N = 761)

Race x Gender	Count	Percentage (of 761)
White women	270	35%
White men	176	23%
Coloured women	155	20%
Coloured men	75	10%
African women	43	6%
African men	27	4%
Indian men	6	1%
Indian women	9	1%

The majority (58%) of mentees are Afrikaans speaking, and 34% are English speaking (Figure 6.13). Mentees could choose whether to have an Afrikaans or English mentor, depending on their own fluency in the language of teaching. Most mentors were able to facilitate the groups in both Afrikaans and English, but mentees generally preferred the language of their school tuition.

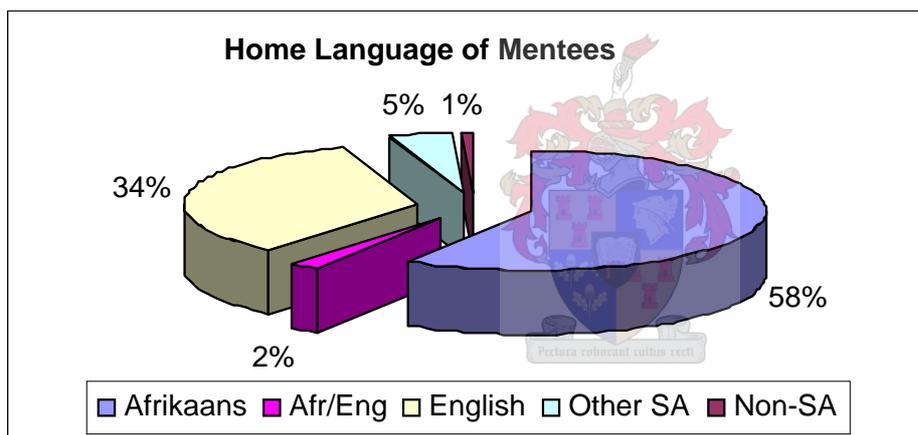


Figure 6.13 Home language of mentees (N = 761)

6.2.3 Residence and academic year

The fact that almost 60% of the mentees resided in a university residence (Figure 6.14) made contact with mentors easier, as the group sessions could take place after hours in the residence. For the remaining mentees, contact was more complicated: times and venues had to be found between lectures. Many mentees had to travel to and from neighbouring towns and areas, which impacted negatively on the amount of time they had available for extra tuition, including mentoring. (The baseline questionnaire that mentees submitted on application indicated that travelling arrangements caused stress, because of the time and financial constraints involved, Table 6.8.)

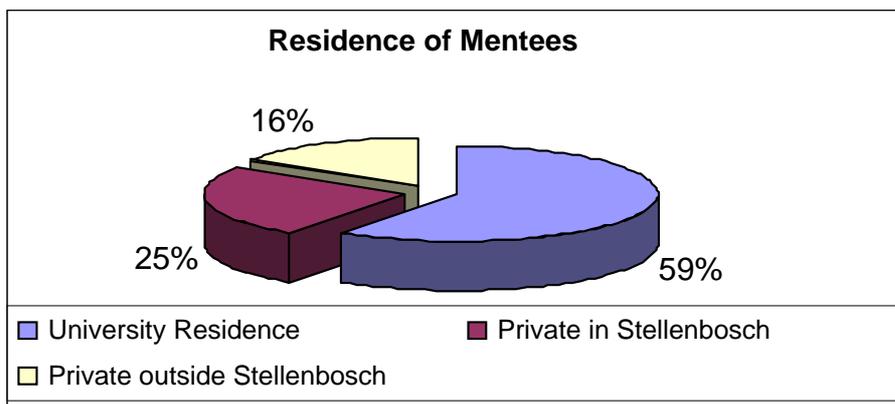


Figure 6.14 Residence of mentees (N = 191)

59% of the mentees were residential (Figure 6.14). (Figure 6.15 shows that almost half of the fulltime students at Stellenbosch University are residential (48%), which made mentoring programmes in residences particularly viable.) However, the greatest need for mentoring support is often for those who do not reside on campus. Of the 2005 group of mentees, 16% lived outside Stellenbosch, with the attendant travelling and time problems. Mentors also reported that it was often extremely difficult to find appropriate times to meet for sessions, and that the attendance of these mentees was particularly low.

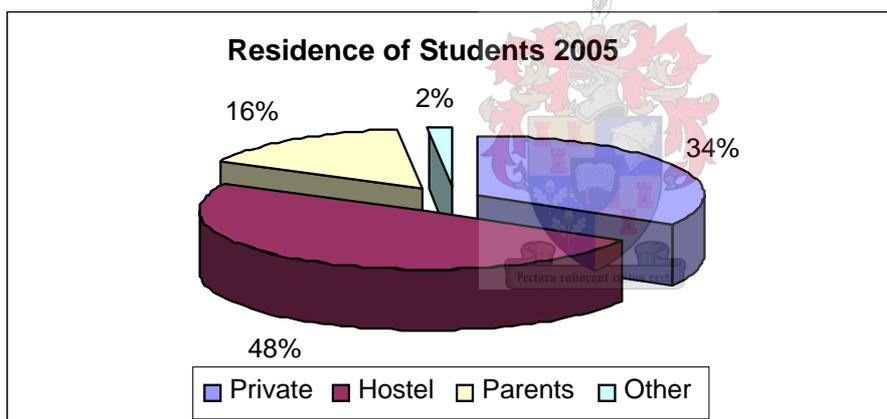


Figure 6.15 Residence of Students at Stellenbosch University

Though the SMP was originally conceived as an intervention for first-year students, some senior students were entered into the programme, often at the request of their lecturers or even their parents. Thus, the 2005 mentee intake in the SMP according to academic year was as follows (Figure 6.16):

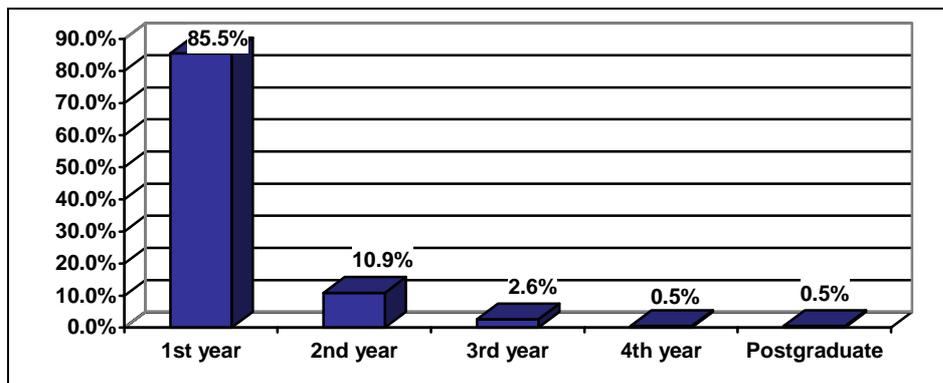


Figure 6.16 Mentees' Academic year (N = 293)

It is also important to note that not only fulltime students participated in the programme, but also those with part-time and fulltime employment (Figure 6.17). Often mentees had to have a job to be able to make ends meet. Employment made demands on these students' time that would otherwise been available for study or social interaction. 6% of the mentees of 2005 indicated that they were employed: 4% as full-time students and 2% as part-time students.

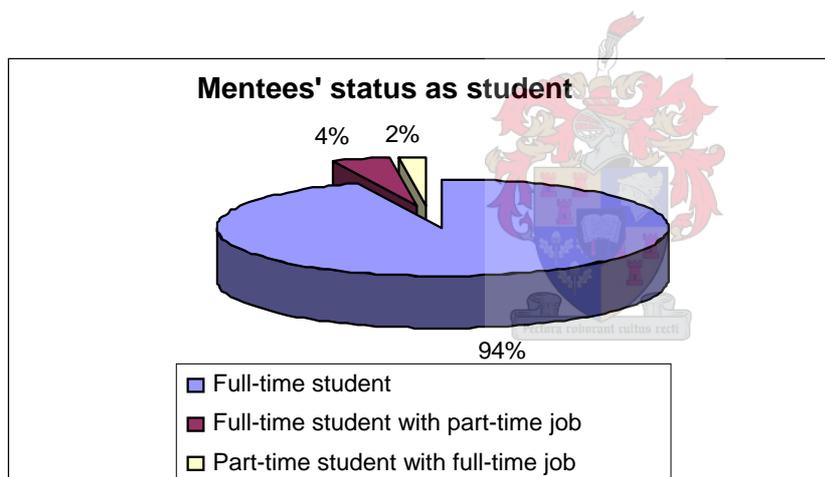


Figure 6.17 Mentees' status as student (N = 293)

6.2.4 Matric results of previous year

An interesting and unexpected phenomenon was the number of mentees in the Mentor Programme who had obtained an A-symbol average in Grade 12. Compared with the total cohort of first-year students at Stellenbosch University during 2004 and 2005, the statistics show the following (Table 6.5; Figures 6.18, 6.19 and 6.20):

Table 6.5 *Matric symbols*

	2004 Cohort first years		2005 Cohort first years	
Symbol	Matric results for all students	Matric results for <u>mentees</u>	Matric results for all students	Matric results for <u>mentees</u>
A	38.1%	20.8%	40.4%	37.2%
B	26.6%	37.5%	25.8%	26.8%
C	23.3%	37.5%	22.3%	28.4%
D	8.5%	2.8%	7.0%	6.0%
E	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.6%
F	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%

During 2004 a smaller percentage of first years with an A-average joined the Mentor Programme (21%), and many more with B and C averages, probably because the programme was marketed as a supportive intervention for students who needed help. In 2005 the picture changed, with an increase to 37% with a matric A-average - a significant proportion of the participants (Figure 6.20). It is possible that reports from 2004 group of mentees who had found the programme helpful reached the 2005 cohort. The programme was also better advertised in 2005, by posters, advertisements on WebCT and by lecturers. One could also speculate that the high achievers were also students who are generally more committed and motivated to study, and therefore used the opportunities the SMP presented.

Figures 6.18 and 6.19 illustrate mentee matric performance against the whole cohort of first-year students. During 2004, the B and C (matric) average students were in the majority. As the programme became better known in 2005, the distribution of mentee and non-mentee performance was more aligned with the first-year cohort statistics, but still it seemed that the students who needed the most academic support were those who did not participate in the SMP.

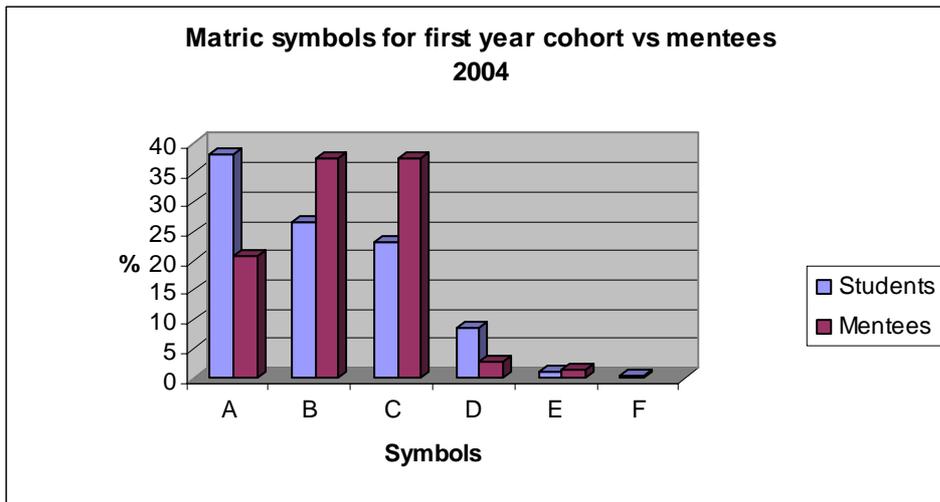


Figure 6.18 *Mentees on SMP matric symbols compared to first-year cohort matric symbols 2004*

The programme participation in 2005 of the different performance symbols, correlated with the symbols of the SU total first-year cohort, as the A symbols on the SMP increased, as can be seen in Figure 6.19:

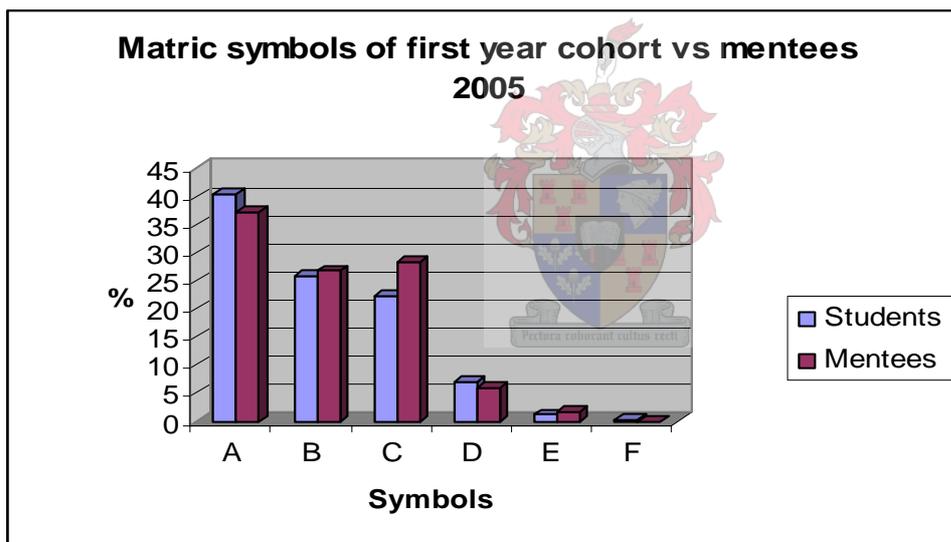


Figure 6.19 *Mentee matric symbols compared to first year cohort matric symbols 2005*

The phenomenon of the increase in high matric achievers on the programme and the decrease in B and C (matric)-symbol students is illustrated in Figure 6.20.

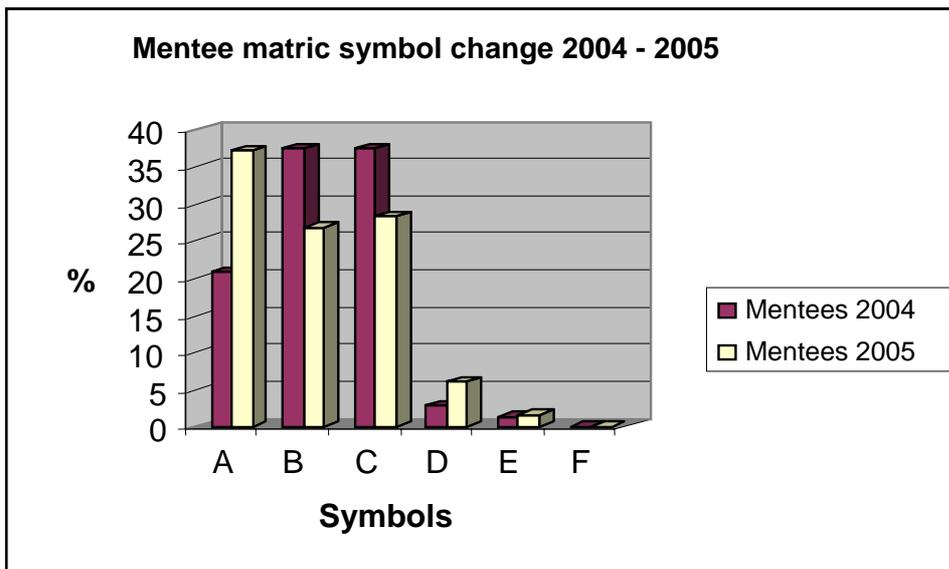


Figure 6.20 Comparison between mentee matric symbols of 2004 and 2005

Though the presence of A-aggregate candidates was generally welcomed on the programme (from the comments of both mentors and mentees) because they added a valuable dimension to group interaction, the programme is actually aimed at helping previously disadvantaged students to cope in a new (and sometimes difficult) learning environment. However, the literature emphasises that mentoring should not be available exclusively for disadvantaged students, as people at all levels need to experience growth and fulfilment. The increased participation of A-average students could also mean that all students find the demands made at university level stressful, and that even academically strong candidates found that their performance was not what they had expected it to be (Tables 6.10 and 6.12). On the positive side, it may also be an indication that participation in the Mentor Programme was free of stigmatisation. These reasons are mere speculation, and require in-depth study. The actual university *performance* of mentees is discussed in Chapter 8.

As the average A symbols per race for mentees was calculated, it was clear that white students had the majority of high achievers, namely 36% of the white mentees. Black mentees had no high achievers, with coloured and Indian at 10% and 13% respectively. These symbols are still an indication of a disadvantaged school education situation, and this decreases these students' chances on succeeding academically. Figure 6.21 is a clear illustration of academic performance of the mentees in the programme, according to their race and matric results.

Tables 6.6 and 6.7 show that the majority of A-symbol aggregates were from the White and Indian populations, with the majority of the C symbols being found in the Coloured and Black student population. A worrying factor is that for the Black population, D symbols (50-60%) were their most frequent matric symbols, more than any of the other population groups.

Table 6.6 Mentee matric symbols according to race

	N	A symbol (80%+)		B symbol (70-79%)		C symbol (60-69%)		D symbol (50-59%)		E symbol (40-49%)		F symbol (30-39%)	
			%		%		%		%		%		%
White	174	62	36	51	29	49	28	11	6	0	0	1	0
Black	42	0	0	6	14	15	36	21	50	1	1	1	1
Coloured	106	11	10	31	29	45	42	17	16	1	1	1	1
Indian	8	1	13	1	13	3	38	2	25	1	13	0	0

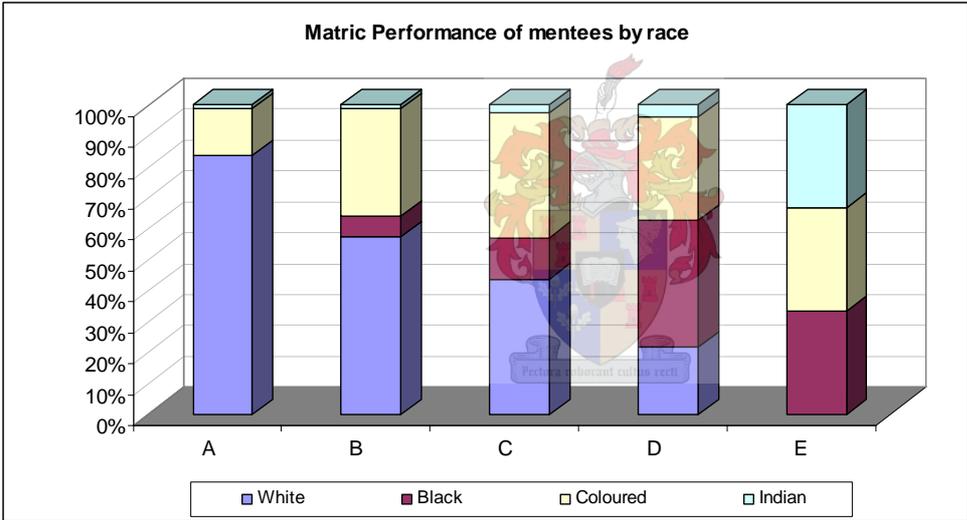


Figure 6.21 Matric performance of mentees by race

With the history of the politicising of education, this phenomenon is not a surprise, but it places severe pressure on most Black students to achieve academic success in higher education. The matric results according to race for the first-year cohort of 2005 are presented in percentages in Figure 6.22 and reflect the similar poor black performance. It would have been ideal to have all the members of the groups that show a distinct disadvantage in their schooling on the SMP, but many did not join the programme or ask for other forms of help.

Table 6.7 Matric symbols by race for 2005 first-year cohort

SYMBOLS	COLOURED		INDIAN		BLACK		WHITE	
	Number of students	%						
A (80+%)	111	20.3	16	37.2	6	4.0	1377	47.6
B (70-80)	158	28.9	7	16.3	26	17.3	776	26.9
C (60-70)	190	34.7	12	27.9	52	34.7	580	20.1
D (50-60)	76	13.9	6	14.0	40	26.7	141	4.9
E (40-50)	9	1.6	2	4.7	21	14.0	15	0.5
F (30-40)	3	0.5	0	0.0	5	3.3	1	0.0
	547		43		150		2890	

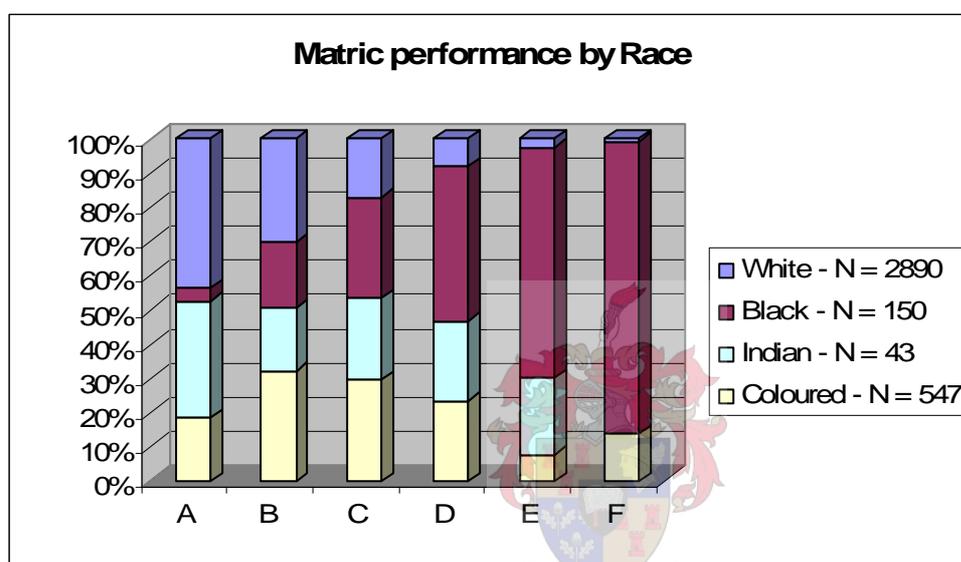


Figure 6.22 Matric performance by race for the 2005 first-year student cohort

A similar trend between the mentee matric performance by race and the student cohort matric performance by race can clearly be seen in Figures 6.21 and 6.22.

6.2.5 Mentee expectations, needs and problems in a new academic environment

To complete the mentees' profile, it was necessary to establish why they felt the need to participate in the Student Mentor Programme. The Mentee Baseline Questionnaire was completed by mentees in March 2005. A total of 296 mentees completed the baseline questionnaire, which consisted of closed and open-ended questions. 52% of the respondents indicated that they needed help in more than one subject, and 15.7% were repeating a specific module (Table 6.8):

Table 6.8: Mentees' needs and problems

Statement	% Distribution of responses				Total number of responses
	Yes, totally	Yes, to a certain extent	A little	No, not at all	
My parents support me financially.	60.3%	19.5%	11.2%	9.0%	277
My parents support me emotionally.	59.9%	25.3%	11.2%	3.6%	277
I have a good support system in other family members.	45.7%	31.1%	16.4%	6.8%	280
I have a good support structure in fellow students.	34.9%	40.6%	20.6%	3.9%	281
I did not have the necessary subject at school.	33.2%	7.4%	7.7%	51.7%	271
I was well informed about the availability of the programme.	29.3%	37.3%	26.4%	6.9%	276
I joined the Mentor Programme because I feel academically unprepared.	24.6%	44.6%	23.9%	6.8%	280
I am very stressed.	17.5%	28.0%	39.3%	15.3%	275
My accommodation contributes to effective study.	16.8%	39.1%	31.4%	12.8%	274
I find the subjects very difficult.	15.8%	45.0%	34.2%	5.0%	278
I joined the Mentor Programme because I feel the workload is too big.	15.1%	36.9%	34.4%	13.6%	279
I experience language problems.	9.0%	12.2%	28.1%	50.7%	278
My travelling to university takes longer than an hour.	8.5%	2.6%	3.7%	85.2%	271
I do not feel part of campus culture.	2.6%	8.0%	24.5%	65.0%	274
I am totally alone.	2.5%	9.0%	20.1%	68.3%	278

The statements were subjected to a factor analysis, in order to identify the underlying dimensions or components. The different factor solutions are summarised in Table 6.9. Only 12 of the original number of statements were deemed appropriate for factor analysis, based on the measure of sampling adequacy for individual variables. A principal component analysis with a varimax rotation was performed on these 12 statements. If the latent root criterion (eigen values greater than 1) is specified as stopping criterion, altogether 4 factors are extracted, explaining altogether 58% of the variance in the statement responses. If, however, an *a priori* criterion of 3 factors is specified, the percentage of explained variance drops to 49%.

In Table 6.9 factor loadings of 0.35 and higher were considered significant. This is based on a guideline by Hair, Anderson and Tatham (1998:112), which takes into account the sample size. As can be seen in Table 6.9, the attitude statements have three underlying dimensions that are clearly identifiable, namely:

- enjoying support from significant others (F1);
- feeling academically unprepared (F2); and
- feeling isolated (F3).

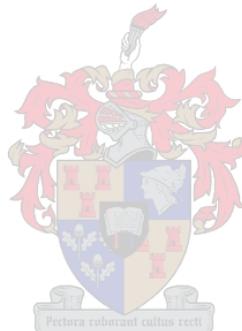


Table 6.9 Results of two sets of factor solutions

Statement	4-Factor solution				3 Factor solution		
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F1	F2	F3
I have a good support system in other family members	0.829	-0.073	-0.012	0.050	0.824	-0.049	-0.036
My parents support me emotionally	0.800	0.034	-0.019	0.024	0.789	0.059	-0.047
I have a good support structure in fellow students	0.593	0.024	-0.472	0.210	0.634	0.010	-0.387
My parents support me financially	0.545	0.129	-0.200	-0.470	0.446	0.201	-0.385
I joined the Mentor Programme because I feel academically unprepared	-0.095	0.722	-0.244	-0.006	-0.096	0.709	-0.202
I joined the Mentor Programme because I feel the workload is too big	-0.037	0.684	0.159	0.048	-0.038	0.674	0.188
I find the subjects very difficult	0.191	0.643	0.107	-0.051	0.168	0.653	0.090
I am very stressed	-0.010	0.622	0.291	-0.059	-0.036	0.629	0.267
I do not feel part of campus culture	-0.063	0.064	0.817	0.007	-0.081	0.076	0.763
I am totally alone	-0.095	0.206	0.750	0.119	-0.091	0.201	0.749
I was well informed about the availability of the programme	0.231	-0.185	-0.061	0.695	0.366	-0.260	0.187
I experience language problems	-0.117	0.409	0.124	0.563	-0.012	0.336	0.344

The qualitative responses to the open-ended questions in the baseline questionnaire reflected to a large extent the factors indicated in the analysis above. A recurring theme was stress, informed by fear, language problems, feelings of academic unpreparedness and travel and time constraints:

- *I wish the university were more supportive of English students who have Afrikaans as their 4th language, like me!*
- *Travel through from Jamestown everyday causing stress.*

- *Ek hoop net dit help my om 'n bietjie beter te vaar en om meer positief oor sommige dinge te voel.*
- *Ek is bang vir mislukking en ek voel dat ons nie genoeg tyd kry om te studeer nie. Die koshuis bied nie regtig 'n stil akademiese atmosfeer nie en daar is voortdurend ander aktiwiteite aan die gang. Dankie vir u moeite en aandag in die verband.*
- *Ek hoop net jy kan my help, want ek is soos heel verlore. Ek is opgestres net om daaraan te dink. So as jy my so gou as moontlik kan laat weet sal ek baie dankbaar wees.*
- *The problem is I have headed my way to university without my parents' consent. They have advised me to go to work after matric.*

There were also mentees who chose to participate in the programme in order to be successful in their studies, that is, they did not wait for the first test, but joined the programme well in time:

- *Ek wil 'n sukses maak van my studies en ek weet nie regtig wat om te verwag nie. Daarom voel ek die mentorprogram is presies wat ek nodig het.*
- *Al my vertroude lê in die program, ek sal alles insit. Op die oomblik voel ek heeltmaal verlore! Die feit dat ek nie skeinat op skool gehad het nie bring my onder. Baie dankie vir so 'n wonderlike geleentheid wat julle aan studente soos ek beskikbaar stel!!*
- *The real reason I'm joining this programme is as a precautionary measure. I cannot afford to fail a subject!*

The reasons mentees offered for being in the programme differ slightly, but all had academic success as their main focus. Some mentees had had a mentor the previous year with good results, but need one again for another module that they had failed. Others had heard about it from a successful friend.

- *I had a mentor last year and she raised my mark by 30% in a very short time. Had I gone to her earlier I am confident that I would not have failed the subject. If X is available this year I beg to be put in her class again. The mentor programme in general is a very good facility to have because it allows students who wish to excel at a subject the opportunity to do so.*

A number of students matriculated a few years ago and had been employed before coming to university. For them the programme offered a firmer grasp on the academic work, especially in the beginning. Other students displayed a keen insight (and even excitement) into what they could expect at university at all levels, and they wanted to be prepared:

- *I'm really excited to begin this programme. I matriculated in 2000 so am feeling overwhelmed at the moment and just need to get the basics to be on my way. Feel this programme is going to be beneficial for my development. Thank you so much.*
- *I think the mentor program is a very good idea to help those who are not prepared academically, emotionally and socially for university life. To come from High School, straight to university is extremely overwhelming because everything is different and new, and one has to start from scratch, which is not very easy. Not everyone gets a chance to do a bridging course, which I think prepares most people for the workload,*

but this programme is at least an assurance that we are not alone and that there is light at the end of the tunnel. THANKX!

6.2.6 Mentee study techniques and coping mechanisms

Regarding mentees' study techniques and their coping mechanisms for the academic workload, the following data was captured:

Table 6.10 Adjustment of study techniques from school to university

I had to adjust my study technique this year (N = 187)		If yes, how ... (N =68)
Yes	58.3%	Four most important ways: (1) Summarising (16 responses) (2) Mind maps and sketches (11 responses) (3) Timetable & better time management (8 responses) (4) Regular / continuous study (8 responses)
No	41.7%	
Total	100.0%	

58% of mentees indicated that they had to adjust their study techniques to the university environment (Table 6.10). However, 61.3% seldom prepared for class the following day (Figure 6.21) and 72.4% tended to “cram” a big amount of work into a short time period when necessary (Table 6.11).

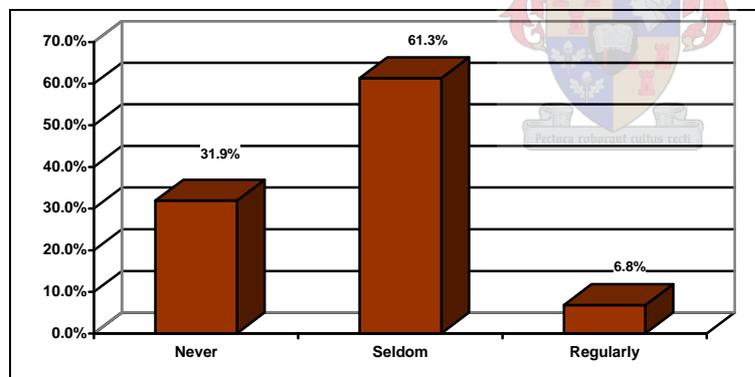


Figure 6.21 I read today what will be dealt with in class tomorrow (N = 191)

Mentors reported that when mentees came prepared to sessions, and when they worked ahead to prepare for lectures, their satisfaction and performance were highest:

- *Ek het aan my mentees verduidelik wat die mentee-mentor verhouding alles behels en dit by hulle gevestig. Almal bring hulle kant. Van my mentees bel na-ure. Ek het my mentees vasgevat m.b.t. swak voorbereiding en hulle het positief gereageer daarop.*
- *Hulle kom voorbereid klasse toe, maar dis nadat ek vir hulle gesê het hulle moet voorbereid kom of wegbly. Hulle doen die tuts [tutorials] voor die tyd.*

Table 6.11 Study practices

Study practices	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
I do a lot of writing when I study (N=189)	152	80.4%	37	19.6%
I tend to "cram" the week before and during a test (N=185)	134	72.4%	51	27.6%
I study continuously (N=187)	66	35.3%	121	64.7%

A lack of appropriate study practices and techniques lead to the use of stimulants by almost a third of the respondents, enabling them to stay awake to study. Many mentees reported having to use stimulants to stay awake, stay calm or treat their depression (Figure 6.24).

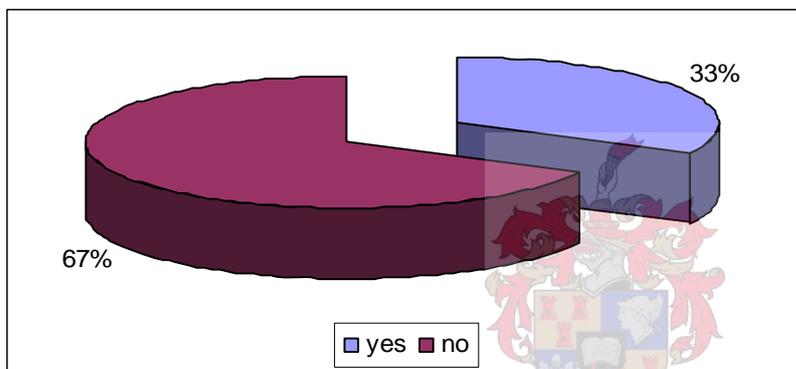


Figure 6.22 I use non-habit forming stimulants to stay awake (N=184)

Of the 60 respondents (i.e. the 33% in Figure 6.22) who said that they used stimulants, 59 also indicated the kind of stimulant(s) used. The 18 stimulants used are listed in Table 6.12:

Table 6.12 Stimulants used by students to aid studies

Stimulant	Frequency	% (of 59)
BioPlus	21	35.6%
Coffee	20	33.9%
Berocca	10	16.9%
Red Bull	7	11.9%
Supradyn	2	3.4%
Vitathion	2	3.4%
Alert	1	1.7%
Bio Vita	1	1.7%
Coke	1	1.7%
Energade	1	1.7%
Caffeine	1	1.7%
Milo	1	1.7%
Minamino	1	1.7%
Regmakertjies	1	1.7%
Turbovite	1	1.7%
Vit B	1	1.7%
Zinplex (zinc),	1	1.7%
Eye-Q (blood pressure boosters)	1	1.7%

Some prescription drugs were also indicated, but these were far less prevalent than the use of over-the-counter stimulants (Figure 6.23):

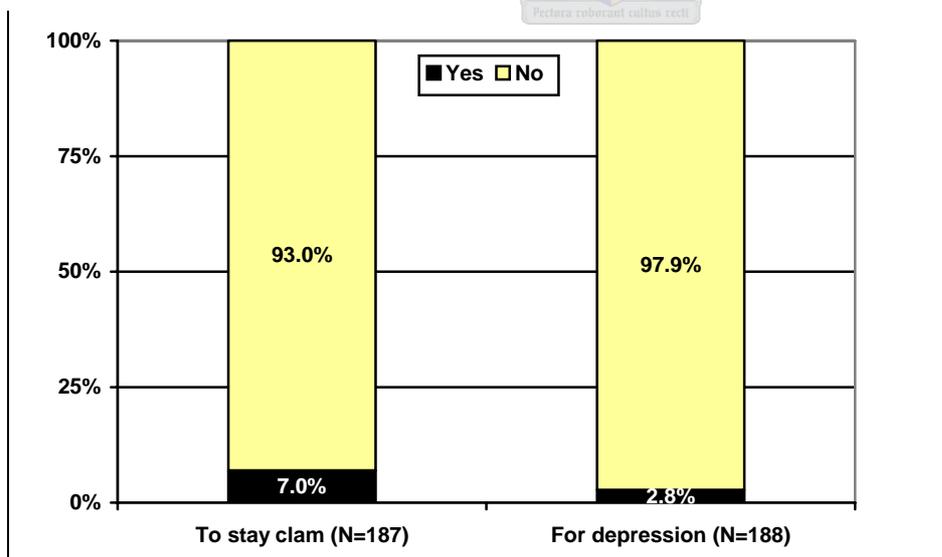


Figure 6.23 I have to use medication to stay calm and/or for depression

6.2.7 Mentee experience of the programme

Mentees were asked to give their views on their own study profiles. The following table (Table 6.13) shows that a lack of achievement made them feel stressed and that 27% even considered terminating their course.

Table 6.13 Opinions about studying and results achieved

Opinion	Yes		No	
	Count	%	Count	%
I could do better if I worked harder (N=188)	175	93%	13	7%
A lack of achievement stresses me (N=185)	147	80%	38	20%
I could do better if I use more effective study methods (N=187)	127	68%	60	32%
I could do better if I was more organised (N=189)	126	67%	63	33%
I work harder than my results show (N=191)	127	67%	64	33%
I considered terminating my course (N=184)	50	27%	134	73%
I am satisfied with my marks (N=184)	38	21%	146	79%
I can't really improve even though I work harder (N=182)	33	18%	149	82%

When asked by how much they considered themselves to be underachieving, 31% estimated by 10%; 30% by about 15%, while 16% thought by 20%. Only 0.5% considered their performance to be on par (Figure 6.24). The fact that students acknowledged their own underachievement might indicate that students were aware of having either academic or personal problems.

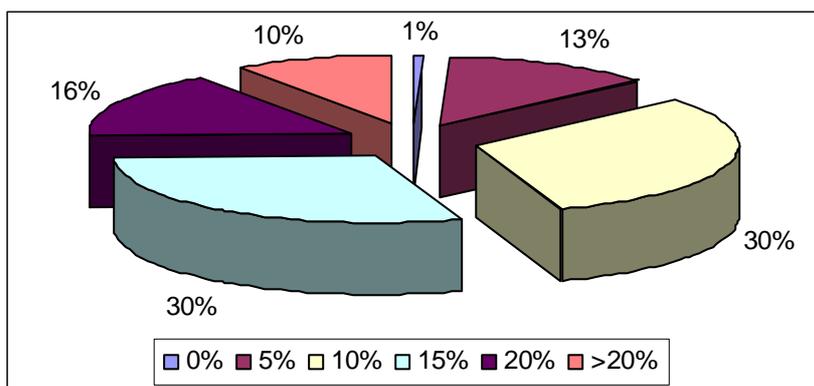


Figure 6.24 I underachieve by % (N = 183)

6.2.8 Mean matriculation performance profile

Matriculation performance results of the mentees are compared with their university performance in Chapter 8. It was shown earlier (in Figures 6.18-20) that mentees on the programme were mainly high achievers. Figure 6.25 shows that the mean matric average of mentees is 74.9%, with a standard deviation of 11.7.

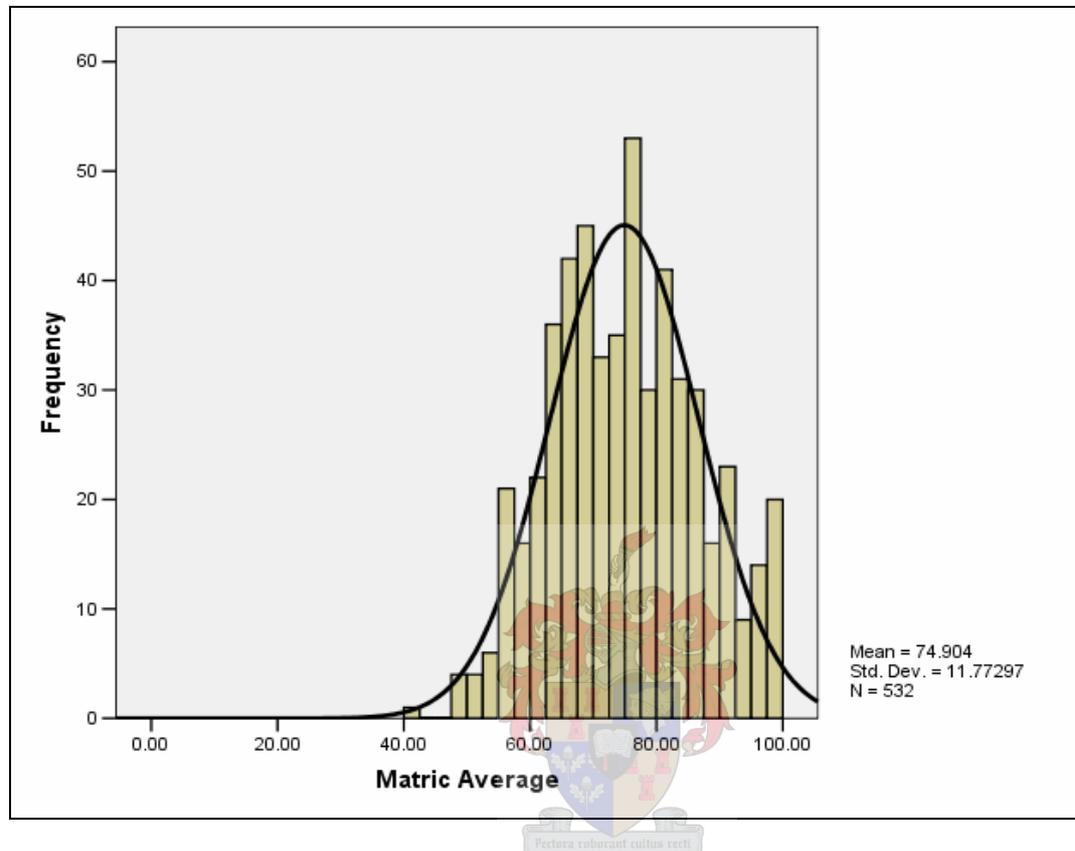


Figure 6.25 Matriculation performance of mentees (n = 532)

The profile of the average student enrolling for her/his first year is thus one of a white learner who performed well above average at school. Many factors are documented as having an impact on student performance, as indicated before (aforementioned authors: Astin, 1993; Wenger, 2000; Langer, 2001; Gresham, 2003; Bitzer & Troskie de Bruin, 2004; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Wilcox, Winn & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). These factors were especially prevalent in the black and coloured population of mentees.

6.3 Conclusion

The data presented in Chapter 6 provides the profiles of the mentors who facilitated the groups, and of the mentees who applied for the academic and psychosocial support of the Student Mentor Programme. The gender of the mentors reflects the distribution of gender of the whole cohort of students at Stellenbosch University, with 4.6% more female mentors. The gender distribution of the mentees indicates a significantly higher participation rate of 25% more women than men in the programme.

The racial distribution of mentors in the programme again reflects that of the student population to a large extent (i.e. white, coloured and Indian students at Stellenbosch University). No black mentors applied to the programme in 2005, although black mentors did participate in 2004, and again in 2006. The mentees' racial profile includes all the population groups, with 6% more African and 15% more coloured students on the programme than are represented by the student cohort. White mentees were 20% less represented on the programme when compared to the first-year student cohort. Keeping the matric results in mind, the participation of racial groups other than whites was not at the level that had been anticipated or planned for. However, the distribution does indicate that students from disadvantaged school backgrounds did utilise the programme to some measure.

With 51% of Stellenbosch University students being non-residential (though most first years are residential), it was commendable that the 40% of mentees who were not in university residences participated in the programme. This 40% includes students who had to use various forms of travel arrangements to get to campus (trains, taxis, lifts with others, or own transport) with the accompanying time and financial constraints. Not being in a residence makes attending a group particularly complicated, as this often takes place after hours.

While it is not advisable to generalise without in-depth research on the results of all the student input characteristics and environmental factors, it would seem that the average mentee on the programme performed relatively well in school, but was stressed about the academic culture and their own perceived underachievement. Many also experienced problems with their living and travel arrangements and their finances. Why students with a relatively high matric aggregate do not remain at university remains a speculative question in the current study. It is possible that some changed courses or left for another university. It is also possible that school results do not accurately reflect students' actual ability, and that some students thus had false expectations of university academic input and campus life (Funk & Kochan, 1999; Young & Perrew, 2004; Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruyn, 2004). These questions are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 where the programme outcomes are presented. The next chapter, Chapter 7, focuses on the programme implementation and monitoring.

CHAPTER 7 PROGRAMME MONITORING

In this Chapter I present the programme implementation and monitoring data, which comprise the sequence of programme activities and the participation of the two target groups, the mentors and the mentees in the programme. Programme activities were discussed in Chapter 4 but for clarification are again provided here in a summary of the roll-out sequence for the target groups and the programme management (Figure 7.1):

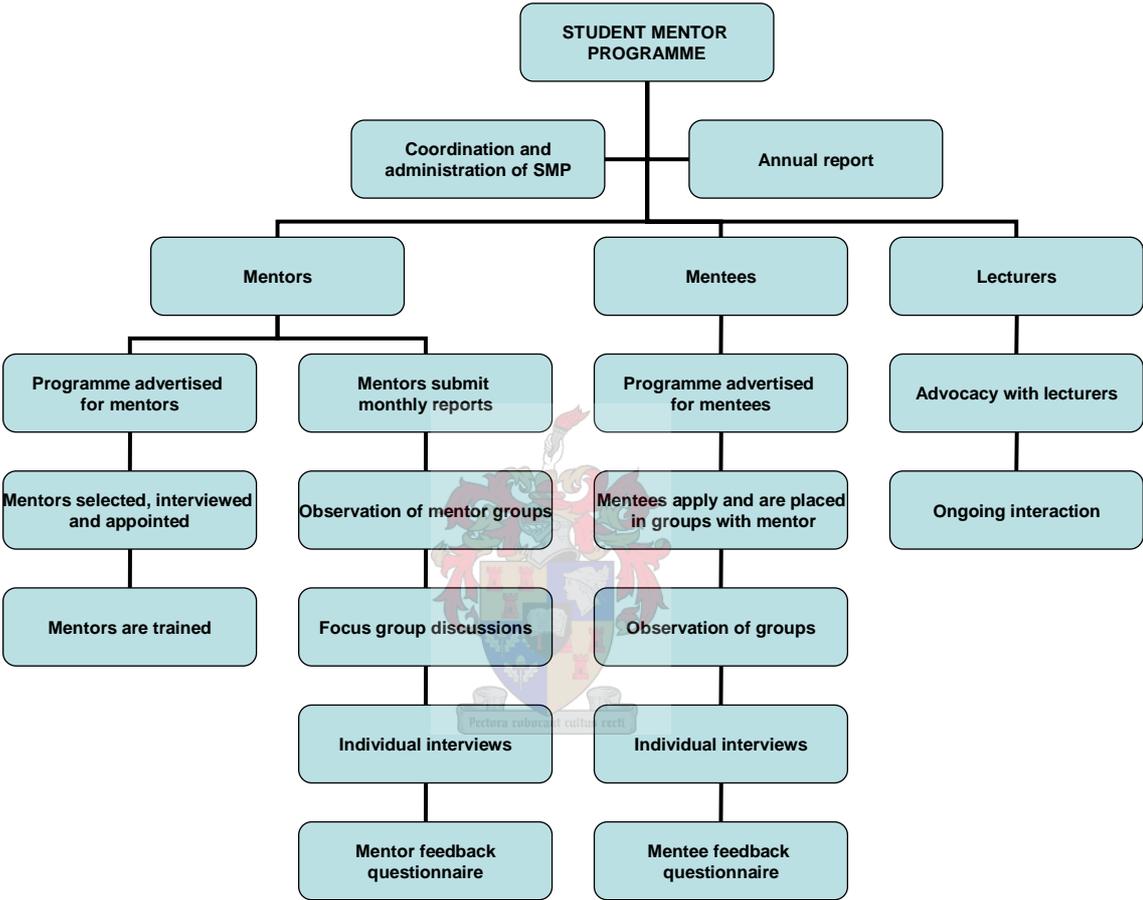


Figure 7.1 Implementation activities

Mentees were assigned to module-specific mentors when they applied for participation in the programme. That is, mentees indicated in which module(s) they were experiencing problems and were then assigned to a mentor who majored in that specific module. Mentor support was provided in 48 modules across faculties and the percentage of mentees per module is shown in Table 7.1:

Table 7.1 Distribution of mentees and non-mentees per module

Module	Mentee		Non-mentee		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	
Actuarial Science 112	16	13.0%	107	87.0%	123
Aural training 172	3	12.5%	21	87.5%	24
Biochemistry 214	28	6.3%	414	93.7%	442
Biology 124	13	1.9%	657	98.1%	670
Biology 144	10	2.1%	463	97.9%	473
Biology 154	8	1.3%	620	98.7%	628
Business Management 113	17	1.1%	1566	98.9%	1583
Chemistry 114	92	11.6%	704	88.4%	796
Chemistry 154	93	13.2%	614	86.8%	707
Computer Science 114	37	38.5%	59	61.5%	96
Computer Science 144	3	5.3%	54	94.7%	57
Computer Skills 172	6	0.5%	1114	99.5%	1120
Criminal Law 171	11	3.6%	291	96.4%	302
Decision-making & Value Studies 114	36	17.1%	174	82.9%	210
Decision-making & Value Studies 144	18	6.8%	246	93.2%	264
Economics 178	29	1.7%	1690	98.3%	1719
Financial Accounting 178	31	7.2%	402	92.8%	433
Financial Accounting 188	86	7.3%	1096	92.7%	1182
French 178	13	5.9%	208	94.1%	221
French 278	9	12.0%	66	88.0%	75
German 178	3	1.8%	166	98.2%	169
German 278	11	19.0%	47	81.0%	58
History 144	32	11.2%	254	88.8%	286
History of Music 112	5	18.5%	22	81.5%	27
Indigenous Law 171	4	2.2%	182	97.8%	186
Information Skills 172	2	0.2%	1160	99.8%	1162
Information Systems 188	18	2.1%	836	97.9%	854
Latin 114	3	12.5%	21	87.5%	24
Management Accounting 278	7	1.2%	586	98.8%	593
Mandarin 178	4	7.4%	50	92.6%	54
Mathematics (Bio) 124	101	13.4%	655	86.6%	756
Mathematics (Ed) 178	5	3.7%	129	96.3%	134
Mathematics 144	27	8.7%	282	91.3%	309
Philosophy 112	16	3.9%	393	96.1%	409
Physics 114	11	5.8%	180	94.2%	191
Physics 144	2	1.1%	172	98.9%	174
Physics 178	79	14.3%	475	85.7%	554
Political Science 112	23	5.8%	373	94.2%	396
Political Science 142	4	1.0%	377	99.0%	381
Private Law 171	98	29.2%	238	70.8%	336
Probability Theory & Statistics 114	9	9.9%	82	90.1%	91
Probability Theory & Statistics 144	18	14.8%	104	85.2%	122
Psychology 114	4	0.4%	944	99.6%	948
Public & Development Management 114	18	7.1%	235	92.9%	253
Sociology 114	7	1.0%	700	99.0%	707
Statistical Methods 176	27	5.2%	494	94.8%	521
Statistics 186	58	5.5%	989	94.5%	1047
Theory of Interest 152	35	2.2%	1530	97.8%	1565
Total	1190	5.1%	22242	94.9%	23432

The total number of mentees who had contact with the programme (including attrition from the programme) is 1279. Of this number, academic records are available for 1190 mentee modules. It is important to note that this figure does not represent the actual number of students involved, but places or *positions* in the programme (mentees per module), as students have many modules, and mentees sometimes received mentoring and academic support in as many as three modules. Of the 1190 mentee positions, 887 remained in the programme and received mentoring on a regular basis. More than 50% of the sessions were attended by 269 students, and this figure was then used as a criterion to establish programme effect. The data presented is of these 269 mentees who remained in the programme and were thus in a position to gain the maximum benefit.

7.1 Mentor training sessions

During 2005 three mentor training sessions were conducted, one in February before the start of the academic year, one in April to train the extra mentors who were appointed following increased demand after the first training session, and one in July. Attendance was compulsory. Open-ended comments from mentors were captured from the feedback after the training sessions. Three distinct themes emerged from their training feedback, of which the first was their appreciation of the various participants:

- *Baie dankie vir n baie goeie werkwinkel!! Ek het lanklaas, wat ek 5 ure moes luister na een groep mense, myself so baie geniet! Dit was uitstekend voorgedra en uiteengesit! Die mense wat u gekies het om met ons te kom gesels, was ook uitstekende keuses!*
- *Oor vandag se gebeure kan ek sê dat dit baie interessant was. Daar was pioniers op hulle verskillende vakgebiede wat ons 'n heel ander perspektief oor dinge soos luister, diversiteit en vooroordeling geleer het. Ek dink ek het vandag vaardighede geleer wat my die res van my lewe sal baat.*
- *I found the guest speakers interesting and inspiring. The session has cleared any uncertainties I might have felt.*
- *The training program was entertaining and worthwhile. It provided the necessary guidelines and focus needed to be an effective mentor. The speakers were all great and interesting to listen to.*

A second theme was the mentors' realisation of the challenge, and the aspects of mentoring and ideas that they could apply during their sessions:

- *Ek het nou baie tips gekry by opleiding, so ek sal hulle van nou af baie besig hou.*
- *Ek het al soveel seminare bygewoon, maar ek kan definitief sê dat vandag het ek baie geleer.*
- *Daar is soveel dinge bespreek waaraan 'n mens so dikwels nooit eens dink nie en dis so uiters belangrik om te weet ten einde die mentees te volle te kan verstaan.*
- *Die uitdaging is na vandag ook net soveel groter!*
- *I found the training session incredibly entertaining and informative, but more importantly VERY INSPIRING!! Thank you!!*

Some mentors admitted that the training session changed their mindset and preconceived ideas, and filled them with enthusiasm for the task ahead.

- *Dit het in 'n groot mate my idee van die mentorprogram verander. Ek sien nou geweldig daarna uit om my eerste mentees te kry en ek kan nie wag om te begin nie! Ervaring was baie leersaam en het jou verseker toegerus vir wat voorlê. Baie dankie.*
- *'n Positiewe ervaring. Goed georganiseer en aangebied.*
- *This seminar was exactly what I needed to hear, since it addressed problems and challenges that we will face as mentors, and it really filled me with enthusiasm for this wonderful task/privilege that lies ahead of me.*
- *Dit was werklik 'n verrykende ervaring. Ek het so baie geleer...dinge wat ek glo ek lewenslank sal baat. Ek glo dat die "kursus" mens werklik sal toerus om 'n verskil te maak. Dit verander jou "mindset" en laat jou die wereld anders sien.*

It was clear that the mentors found the training valuable and applicable. They felt that they were equipped for the task and were excited about the challenge. It was interesting to compare their initial enthusiasm after the training with their responses at the first focus group discussions six weeks later, where they indicated that their task was indeed not easy. At the following focus group discussions the mentors' growth and expertise became apparent; and they showed insight and appreciation for the concept of mentoring and their own growth.

- *I personally did not know how to handle mentor groups at the beginning of the year. As time went on I tried different approaches. Today, I only use one approach but it took me so long to find the right way to handle sessions.*
- *Ek kry die indruk dat my mentees altyd ryker wegloop van die sessies. Ek weet dat die sessie van nou af lekkerder gaan wees omdat die fundamente nou gelê is.*

Mentors reported that after a while they felt that the foundations (of their group facilitation techniques obtained at the training sessions) were laid, and they were able to do justice to the mentees.

In response to the question of what they thought the most important function of the Student Mentor Programme is, their responses were as follows:

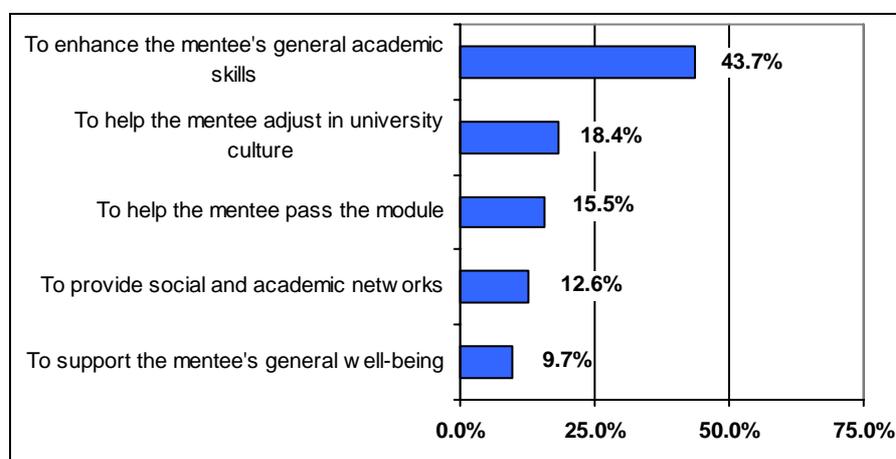


Figure 7.1 Most important functions of the Mentor Programme according to mentors

The figure above clearly illustrates that the single most important factor or function of the programme, as understood by the mentors, is the enhancement of mentees' academic skills. The next two functions identified as also being important (adjustment to university culture and assistance in passing) are also related to academic matters. In total, therefore, nearly 80% of mentors identified the academic functions of the programme to be paramount.

As one mentor stated:

It is no use the mentee is well adjusted and happy with a roaring social life, and he fails all his modules.

7.2 Participation of mentors and mentees

Participation in the Student Mentor Programme centred around the attendance of groups by mentees, as well as their growth, enthusiasm and work ethics. Apart from the facilitation of mentor sessions, mentors had to submit reports and attend the focus group discussions.

7.2.1 Attendance

By far the most important instrument for measuring the reach and delivery of the programme are the monthly report forms that the mentors submit. Mentors list attendance and participation of the mentees, as well as the main aspects of their work and problems encountered. The monthly report forms provided valuable information on mentee profiles as well, as the mentor also reported on their participation and enthusiasm in the group. This included their work ethics, based on preparation (rated on a scale of 3, where 1 = poor and 3 = good, Table 7.3). Report forms were submitted and the data captured on a monthly basis. In this way steps could be taken immediately when attendance or participation seemed unsatisfactory. Mentees were contacted and the problems addressed, both academic and psychosocial.

From these monthly report forms data was also obtained about the inputs of each mentor as well. These are presented in Table 7.3 and Figures 7.1 - 7.3. For example, the reports from mentor A were compiled, captured (Table 7.3) and presented in a graph (Figure 7.2) to indicate the attendance of the mentees each month, as well as the test marks obtained in three consecutive tests.

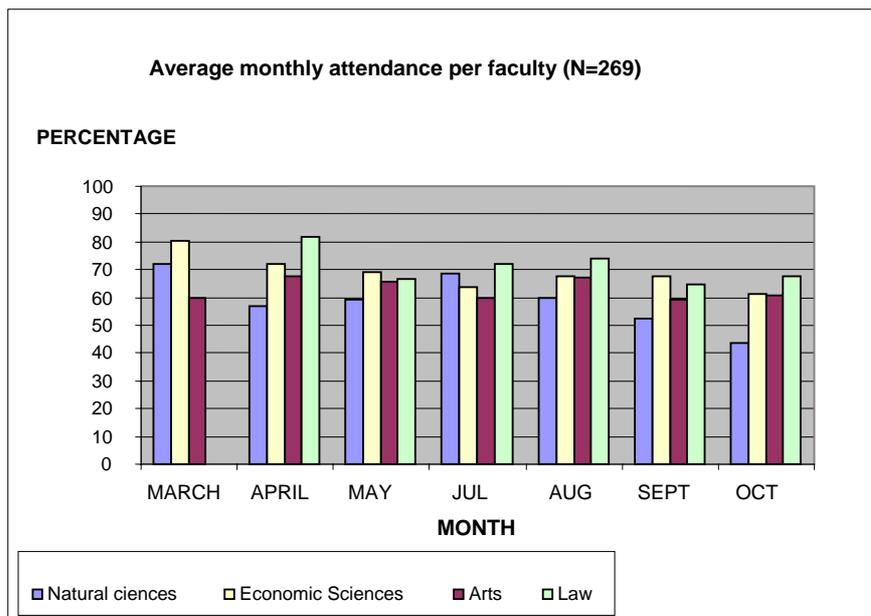


Figure 7.1 Average monthly attendance of mentees from four faculties

Figure 7.1 gives an indication of how the average monthly attendance of mentees in the different faculties were analysed. Only the attendance figures for the 269 mentees who attended more than 50% of the time are reflected here. Attendance from these mentees was relatively stable across all faculties, though it seemed that Natural Sciences showed a decrease from above 70% attendance to just over 40% by the end of the year. The Faculty of Law joined the programme only in April, and after initial attendance figures of more than 80%, showed an average attendance figure of around 70% for the remainder of the year.

Individual mentee performance was captured and analysed in a similar way, and a graph for each mentor (such as the one in Figure 7.2) was produced. First the data was captured in a table (Table 7.3). Mentors rate mentee participation, work ethics and enthusiasm according to a scale of 3, where 1 is poor and 3 is excellent:

Table 7.3 Presentation of attendance, test results and general motivation of mentees for Mentor A Physics 178

Mentees		Attendance as a % for the month					Test result	Rating by mentor		
		May	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		Participation	Work – Ethic	Enthusiasm
1	May	25	0	0			25%	1	1	1
2	Ma	25	50	0			36%	1	1	1
3	Ng	50	50	0			43%	1	1	1
4	Ns	100	100	40	43	0	30%	1	2	1
5	D		100	40	14		41%	1	1	1
6	E		100	60	71	71	51%	3	3	2
7	T		50	60	86	86	70%	3	3	2

The test results are marked in the shaded column of Table 7.3. The functioning of each mentor group in the programme was captured in this way. The difference between the attendance and performance of mentee 1 and mentee 7 is highlighted in Table 7.3, and clear in Figure 7.2 below. It also reflects the attendance of the first three mentees as sporadic, with no attendance after July, even though Physics 178 is a year subject. Mentee 6 in Table 7.3 had the second best attendance, good ratings from the mentor for participation, work ethic and enthusiasm, and scored the second best test results for the group.

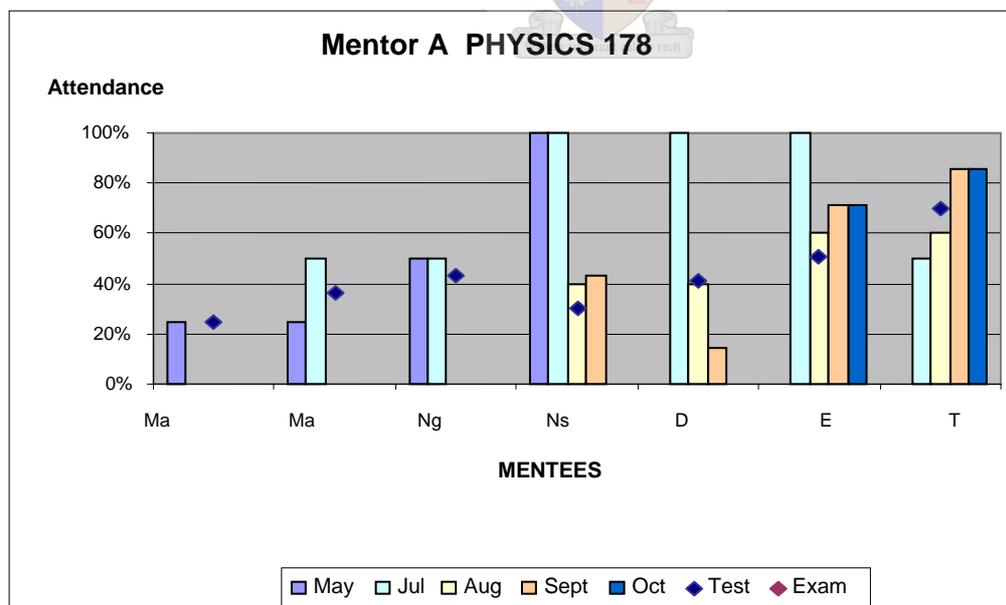


Figure 7.2 Mentor monthly report form data analysis: Physics 178

The graph in Figure 7.2 is a visual presentation of the information presented in Table 7.3 above, where attendance is correlated with test results. Figure 7.2 captures three sets of data: On the horizontal axis, the months of the year are shown as each mentee (indicated in

the initials) attended; on the vertical axis, the percentage of meetings attended is shown and the diamond-shaped marker displays the actual test score or scores. (In this case, the test was in August, and it is clear that mentees 1, 2 and 3 did not attend at all in August.)

From this figure it is clear that mentee 1 attended only 25% of the sessions in May. The mentee did not attend again, and obtained only 25% in the test in August (having given up attending the mentor group). The ratings by the mentor of this mentee's participation, work ethic and enthusiasm were equally low (a score of 1 – see highlighted row in Table 7.3). Though mentors were equipped to support students academically and socially (when they attended the groups), student input characteristics as well as environmental factors (discussed in Chapter 1) play a role in student persistence. The ratings that mentors gave mentees in the group often clearly correlate with the attendance and with general achievement, as is the case with mentee no 7, highlighted in the Table. Though this mentee only joined the programme in July, his/her attendance increased up to 86% (which could be an indication that she/he found the programme valuable), the ratings from the mentor (scores 3, 3 and 2) and the test result (70%) were both high.

Similar graphs were obtained from the reports for each mentor. The following two examples are of interest as they show a range of attendance, participation and results. Figure 7.3 shows that attendance in this group is exceptionally high and some test results are even above 80%. All the mentees passed, except mentee P (shown in the last column). This mentee came to the programme only in September and October and had a test result of 20%. At the time of the first test she/he had not yet joined the programme, and though there was a slight increase for the next test, it was clearly too late for the intervention to make a difference to this performance.

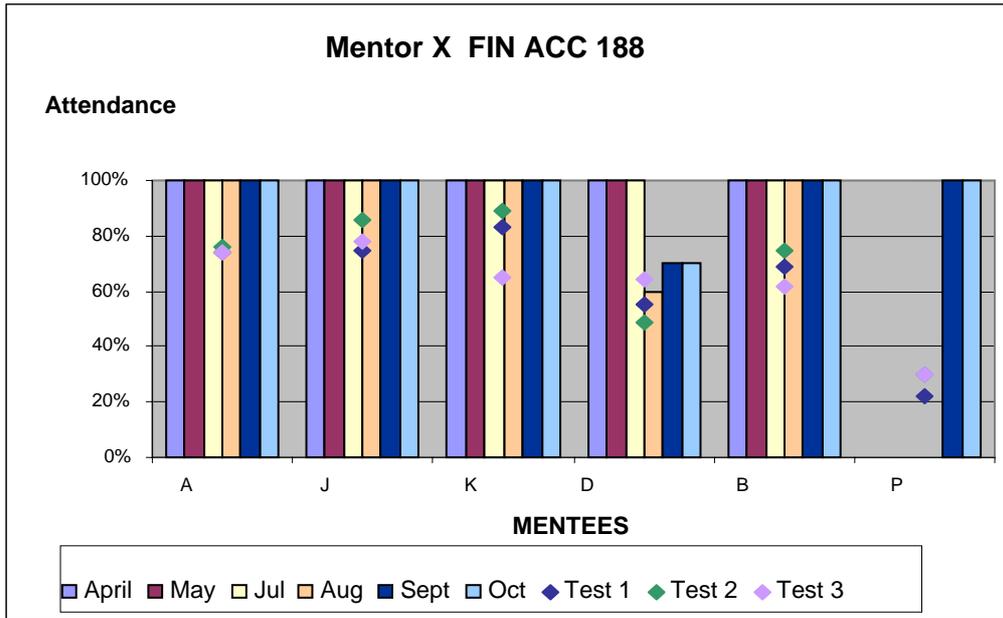


Figure 7.3 Mentor monthly report form data analysis: Financial Accounting 188

From Figure 7.4 (below) it is clear that the irregular attendance seems to correlate with lower test marks. Three of the mentees attended only during September, too late to make a significant difference, as examinations start in October. This graph also shows that the mentees only started attending during the second semester, though Economics 178 is a year course that had started in February. Mentees were cautioned that the programme could not offer “a quick fix” for their academic problems, but was instead a process of growth, and that continued attendance at and input in the sessions were of the utmost importance.

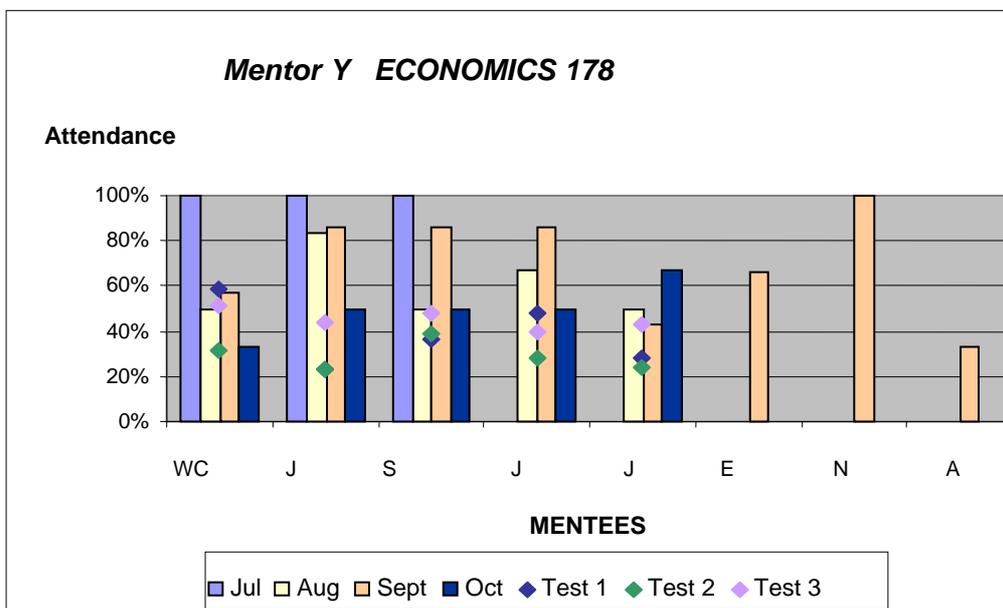


Figure 7.4 Mentor monthly report form data analysis: Economics 178

Though it was assumed that mentees would remain in the group and attend regularly until they had a valid reason for leaving the programme (for example, that they were confident about their studies and their social adjustment at university), the attrition rate from the groups was still high. Mentee reasons given for this (and provided by mentors during focus groups and in the feedback questionnaire), vary to a large extent and can be summarised in the following broad categories (Table 7.4):

Table 7.4 Reason(s) why mentees did not remain in their group (N = 54)

Reason	Responses
Academically sufficiently prepared	12
Never showed up	10
Lack of interest and dedication	5
Changed course	9
Discontinued studies	8
Time constraints	5
Language problems	2
Other	3
TOTAL	54

The fact that only 12 of the 54 reasons offered for leaving the programme are due to academic competence is significant. This is one of the programme aims - to equip mentees (or support them) until they feel they are able to cope with campus life and academic demands on their own.

7.2.2 Focus group discussions

Mentors attended one focus group discussion per term per faculty. They met as a faculty group with the coordinator, and positive as well as negative aspects of the programme and their experiences were discussed. These discussions took place during the evenings, and attendance was compulsory. Here they could give their opinions and ask for advice. Mentors felt strongly that the mentees should join the programme earlier in the year:

- *We should begin from the beginning of the year. First years join too late.*
- *Have more focus group meetings.*

The desire to have more focus group meetings as expressed above was a clear indication that mentors themselves also needed support. The literature on mentoring emphasises that mentors do need regular interaction with programme coordinators, and that interaction does encourage and motivate mentors to do their work which is not always easy. Mentors

expressed the further request to meet with their fellow mentors or peers in a specific subject, in order to exchange ideas on mentoring in that specific module:

- *Maybe have a meeting with all the mentors for a specific subject, to help each other with problems more effectively.*

The personal benefit and growth that mentors experienced in the programme is discussed as an outcome in Chapter 8.

7.3 Programme experience of mentors and mentees

Feedback on the programme from both mentors and mentees were obtained in questionnaires completed towards the end of the second semester. Interviews and focus group discussions provided qualitative data on programme experience.

7.3.1 Mentee experience

Mentees who stayed in the programme offered the following opinions on the programme (Table 7.5):

Table 7.5 Mentee responses: opinions about the mentor programme

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The mentor programme must continue in 2006 (N=183)	86.3%	12.6%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%
The programme should include all faculties (N=184)	70.7%	19.0%	9.2%	1.1%	0.0%
High achievers can also improve by participating in the programme (N=183)	47.0%	33.3%	16.9%	2.2%	0.5%
Talks on how to study should be presented more regularly (N=184)	46.2%	26.1%	25.5%	2.2%	0.0%
Students obtaining <60% should be on the mentor programme (N=180)	19.7%	26.8%	35.0%	12.6%	6.0%
Talks on personal problems should be presented more regularly	16.4%	26.2%	47.0%	8.7%	1.6%
Mentors should receive better training (N=183)	10.6%	17.8%	48.3%	19.4%	3.9%
High achievers should not be on the mentor programme (N=182)	6.0%	9.9%	29.7%	28.0%	26.4%
Only students who achieve <50% should be on the programme (N=183)	4.9%	6.6%	17.5%	33.9%	37.2%

Mentee responses can be grouped into three broad categories indicated by the shaded clusters in Table 7.5, namely very positive, neutral and negative. One aspect that mentees feel most strongly about (99%) is the continuation of the programme in the next year. This response clearly signifies that they found the programme useful. They also indicate that the programme should include all the faculties (89.7%) and that high achievers could also improve by participating in the programme (80%). A significant group (72.3%) indicate that talks on study methods should be presented (probably by their mentors). This comment triangulates with their responses in the data in Chapter 6, where 58% indicate that they had to adjust their study techniques, and 67% state that their test results do not reflect their hard work. A further 80% of these respondents indicate that the lack of achievement was a source of stress.

Mentees were neutral (Table 7.5) about the suggestion that students who obtained less than 60% should be on the programme. One can only speculate about the reason for this as many of them performed below 60% (see Chapter 6). It could well be that pinpointing the performance mark may stigmatise the participants of the programme, which would affect participation levels. They were also quite neutral about talks on personal problems, which when compared to their strong feeling about talks on study methods, is a clear indication of their ideas about the programme's focus. Mentees' neutrality about mentor training could indicate uncertainty about the value of the mentors' input in the group sessions, but when this is correlated with their ratings of their mentor in Figure 7.6, it seems that the responses are significantly positive (a mean of 79% "good"). Mentees' responses in Table 7.5 confirm their positive response about the participation of high achievers in the programme.

In the following section, the mentor module (and not the mentee) is used as the unit of analysis. Each module is evaluated in terms of a number of criteria that almost exclusively pertain to the skills, conduct and interest of the mentors. These criteria are:

- activities presented by the mentor;
- interest of mentor in individuals;
- mentor preparation;
- mentor availability;
- mentor punctuality; and
- mentor ability to help.

From Figure 7.6 it is clear that the mentees were satisfied with the input from the mentors - their activities and preparation of the module content and, on a more personal level, their interest in the mentees, their general ability and preparedness (availability) to help them. The relatively low score of 63.2% for activities presented by the mentors could be ascribed

to the fact that mentors were not required to present activities but rather to facilitate discourse. Mentees apparently valued mentor availability and punctuality most, followed by the mentors' interest in them as individuals. This type of interaction was particularly appreciated by a student who had apparently failed the previous academic year:

- *Last year I didn't have much of a clue what was going on with my modules and I needed someone to give me some guidance on what is expected of me in classes and the stuff I must produce. I found it helpful in that I knew how I could go on about what I have to achieve, doing the research and the readings and class.*

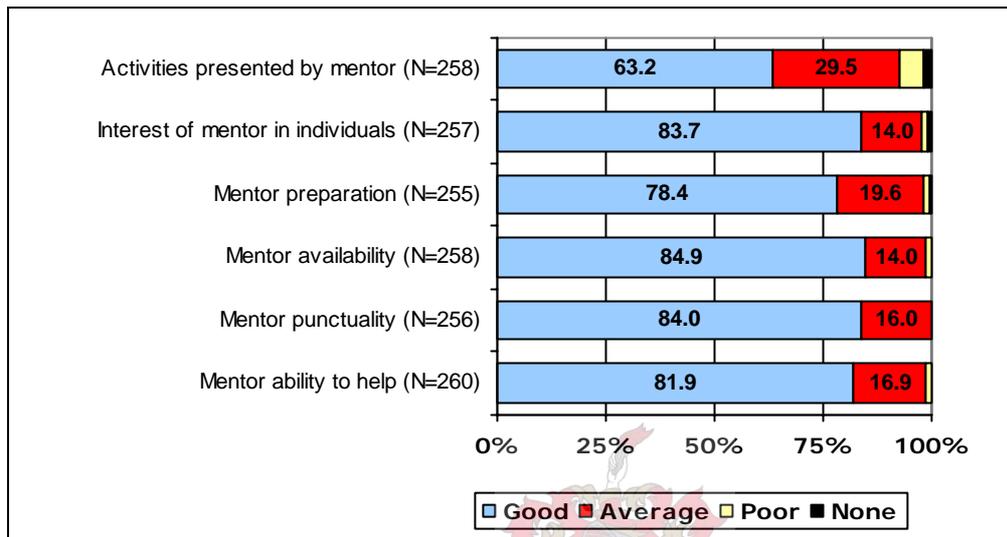


Figure 7.6 Rating of mentor input in the programme

As the process of mentoring took place in groups, the interaction of the participants was of prime importance to the proper functioning of this type of mentoring. Group facilitation skills formed part of the mentor training, and mentors were also sensitised to be aware of the non-participation of individuals. Questions on the nature of the group interaction were included in the feedback questionnaire, and addressed in focus group discussions and interviews. Observations of the groups in action were used as formative assessment, and during feedback from the coordinator mentors had been provided with more suggestions and ideas to encourage group participation.

7.3.2 Mentor experience

The following responses were received from mentors on their feedback questionnaires about how the programme functioned (Table 7.6):

Table 7.6: Mentor statements about SMP 2005

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The mentor programme should continue in 2006 (N=107)	96.3%	2.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Focus groups with coordinator should happen once a term (N=107)	44.9%	33.6%	18.7%	0.9%	1.9%
High achievers can also improve by participating in the programme (N=107)	36.4%	45.8%	13.1%	2.8%	1.9%
Talks on how to study should be presented more regularly (N=106)	19.8%	42.5%	32.1%	5.7%	0.0%
Talks on personal problems should be presented more regularly (N=106)	12.3%	41.5%	39.6%	6.6%	0.0%
Mentees obtaining <60% should be on the mentor programme (N=106)	9.4%	37.7%	38.7%	9.4%	4.7%
Mentors should receive better training (N=107)	5.6%	18.7%	47.7%	24.3%	3.7%
Only students who achieve <50% should be on the programme (N=107)	3.7%	9.3%	11.2%	30.8%	44.9%
High achievers should not be on the mentor programme (N=107)	2.8%	5.6%	20.6%	39.3%	31.8%

The mentor statements in Table 7.6 give an indication of their mentoring experience on the programme. As the majority (99%) agree strongly that the mentor programme should continue the following year, it is clearly evident that they feel that the programme has value for the mentees. When this statement is triangulated with their qualitative responses, it shows the same trend, namely that mentors feel that mentees did grow and adjust, and that the programme played an important role in accomplishing this.

A second comment that was strongly supported was the need for regular focus groups discussions with the coordinator (79%). This recommendation seems to underline the importance of supporting the mentors in this programme, as they are the primary target group. During observations at focus group discussions, it was evident that mentors often come to the groups fairly tired and listless, but leave with new energy. During the week after

a focus group discussion, visits to the coordinator's office also increase, as mentors want to share some experiences they have had with the mentees.

Mentors also feel strongly about the participation of high achievers in the SMP (82%) and agree that these high achievers' input in the mentor sessions is valuable to all concerned. To support this sentiment they related instances of mentees helping each other solving problems and discussing issues. Mentor opinions about talks on study methods and personal problems range from strong to neutral. The facilitation of discussions on personal problems (41.5%) (usually the contribution of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development at training workshops) might indicate that mentees with personal problems are a recurring issue at the mentor sessions. However, it is interesting to note that the mentee responses did not place much value on these sessions (47% felt neutral about it - Table 7.5). The mentors' responses confirm their positive feelings (as do the mentees' responses) about the participation of high achievers in the programme.

Mentors' opinions on their own contributions correlate with their statements about the programme. They indicate their concern for the mentees (as they remember their own struggle), their passion for their discipline, and the need to make a contribution to society

- *I felt that the mentor programme gave me the chance to work with people who may be struggling, as I was in my first year, as well as the fact that I needed to share my passion for Political Science with others in need.*
- *I know how difficult it was for me as a first year to adjust from being at home and in high school to being at university. When you study something completely new it's nice to have someone who's done it before and is willing to help you. I wanted to help.*
- *It may sound lame, but the main reason was that I wanted to contribute some of the things I learned at varsity to society, because my course is pretty much about what you gain individually.*

7.4 Conclusion

Chapter 7 highlights the activities and the monitoring in the Student Mentor Programme. Programme delivery took place according to the programme activities set out in Figure 7.1 and the various instruments used to measure participation and feedback were administered during the course of the year (Appendix A). Observations and focus group discussions ensured that the coordinator stayed in contact with the mentors, and through them, also with the mentees.

Mentor responses on the training workshops indicate that they found the inputs useful, and that they approve of the variety of presenters, which made a five-hour workshop exciting and informative. They also indicate that they felt equipped to handle the sessions. The feedback from the first focus group discussion of the year (six weeks after the initial training) shows that the mentors were still finding their feet, but by the last discussion of the year they

show confidence and insight, and voluntarily tell of the benefits they have received from the programme. They also display a keen awareness of their roles, functions and relationships. Academic support was offered in 48 modules, and nearly half of the mentors indicate (43.7%) that they feel that the academic input they made in the mentor groups was one of the most important functions of their interaction.

One of the most important measures of programme delivery was the level of participation achieved – evident from the attendance of the mentor sessions by the mentees. Monthly report forms captured attendance figures together with the mentors' ratings of the mentees' work ethic and participation in the group. Attendance data for each mentor's mentees were captured and analysed. The reasons for the attrition from the groups range from mentees who left the programme because they felt able to handle the academic workload or the culture on their own, to students who changed courses or left the university. Some just left the programme and gave no reasons. Mentees who did participate in the programme rated the capabilities of their mentors and the value of the programme very highly. They also report that they now know more about the university environment, their subject and what is expected of them.

The next chapter, Chapter 8, presents the final part of the results, namely the key outcomes of the Student Mentor Programme.



CHAPTER 8 PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

In this chapter the outcomes for the two target groups are discussed according to the two main foci of mentoring, namely academic and psychosocial support. The outcomes for the mentors were mainly obtained from qualitative data during interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended questions in the feedback questionnaires at the end of the year. Mentee outcomes are multi-level, as qualitative results as well as test and examination marks were linked to the inputs mentors made in the sessions. Mentee attendance also played an important role in their performance.

During 2005, 1279 mentees (that is, module requests, or mentee positions) applied for the programme, of which 1190 became involved and had some contact for part of the academic year. These mentee positions represent 887 active mentees with various degrees of participation. Attrition from the programme was substantial, and eventually, only 269 students attended more than 50% of the sessions, which was the minimum required for the programme to have any effect on the mentee. Thus, some of the results show effects for the whole group (useful for indicating interesting trends), while in other instances only the results of the 269 with regular attendance are presented and discussed.

8.1 Outcomes for mentors

Participation in the focus group discussions was compulsory for all mentors. Their responses were documented, and feedback was given at the next focus group. The qualitative responses from mentors in this section of the study were obtained from focus groups, individual interviews, monthly reports and the feedback questionnaire. The feedback questionnaire was completed by 107 mentors (out of 155 = 69% response rate). Interviews with mentors (17 interviews) revealed similar trends to the remarks made in the questionnaires. The feedback focused on the way the programme was experienced by the mentors, and their evaluation of their own input to address the feeling of isolation among first years. The responses also assessed the mentors' awareness of group dynamics and mentee participation in the group. The qualitative outcomes of the mentors are discussed according to the key evaluative questions set out in Chapter 5. Themes prevalent in the qualitative data are highlighted and discussed as they pertain to the overarching question.

8.1.1 Academic outcomes

The key outcomes in this section all relate to academic support, including motivation, transfer of study techniques, awareness of possible academic problems, group facilitation and the recognition of mentee participation and performance.

Key outcome 1: Mentors have acquired knowledge of mentor functions, roles and relationships

Mentor responses indicate that mentors have insight into their roles and functions. Good communication and a keen interest in their subjects are mentioned. The following comments also emphasise the growth of mentees' self-confidence.

- *Both students communicate well and are interested in the subject. I feel that when they know they understand the work correctly, their confidence grows and this shows from their results.*
- *As studente het hulle almal mooi gegroei deur die loop van die jaar. Hulle het al hoe meer in hulself begin glo, en die selfvertroue opgebou om akademies suksesvol te kan wees. Hulle kan baie trots wees op hulself! Ek dink my mentor-klas was baie sinvol gewees.*

The mentors are also aware that their roles have limits, and that the mentee also has a responsibility. The rules of the relationship should be understood from the start. Mentors shared their concern about their own role and mentees' own responsibility in such a relationship:

- *I would suggest that mentees be told to attend each session with the mentor unless something really urgent comes up. They must also contact the mentor when they will not be attending. These simple rules should be made clear to the mentees before they start with the programme.*
- *I personally feel that it does help to be able to talk to someone, for somebody to give you some advice and try and guide you in a direction. At the end of the day it is up to the mentee to do the work and to apply the suggestions.*
- *I am still enjoying my class but they need to understand that there is only so much that I can do for them. Attendance and participation is satisfactory.*

The following comments show a reciprocal relationship as the outcome, which also indicates that mentors learned some subject skills as well. Another highlights the joy of being a mentor:

- *Net 1 mentee kom altyd, hy is baie slim en ek leer SO baie van hom. Maar hy stres baie, so ek laat hom gewoonlik minder panic deur vir hom te sê: "Jy kan dit doen". Hy kom hoofsaaklik vir ondersteuning.*
- *Ek het dit regtig geniet om 'n mentor te wees hierdie jaar. Dit het sekerlik nie net die mentees gehelp nie, maar ook vir my. Al probleem wat ek grotendeels ondervind het is dat van die mentees onder die indruk is dat die mentorsessies 'n substituuat vir klasbywoning of selfstudie is (ten spyte van die feit dat ek dit herhaaldelik beklemtoon het dat mentorsessies ter aanvulling is).*

One of the most salient aspects of mentoring mentioned is the relationship between the mentoring partners, or between the peer mentor and the group. Mentors fully realise that the relationship with a mentee is a reciprocal one, and that mentee growth and academic achievement are not the only benefits of the programme. Thus the realisation of the mutual benefits to both parties is an important outcome of the Student Mentor Programme. The

realisation of the value of the programme for mentees with academic problems was stressed by mentors during focus groups and in open-ended feedback. It was clear that improvement in mentee academic performance gives mentors satisfaction:

- *At the end of the day, the enjoyment of University comes with passing your subjects successfully and this directly affects the other options given. It also gives me as mentor great satisfaction when my mentees improve as the time goes by. It's really a very effective way to reap the fruits of hard work.*
- *I feel that the programme should be made compulsory to those students that receive bursaries or bursary loans from the university. This is the specific group which is most at risk of failure, not because they are not capable but because they struggle to adjust to the pace which is vastly different to the disadvantaged schools most attend. This would help the university keep track of the people they empowered and make sure that there is less academic failure. I myself am such a student and I also struggled and changed courses. The personal relationship one can develop with your mentor could help you realise your full potential or the fact that you are studying the wrong course.*
- *I found this programme to be of great value. I believe that regardless if a mentee did not manage to pass his or her module that they still benefit from the programme as they are now aware of their weaknesses and when they receive another opportunity to better their grade, they can do so. There are so many individuals though who could use the mentor service to benefit but they are not always aware of this service. Personally, this programme has allowed me to become stronger in my communication skills and allowed me to give back to those who might not have the same strengths as me. I have learnt a lot and hope that if I get the opportunity again next year that I will be even more prepared and able to take the challenge on with even greater gusto. It has really been a rewarding experience and I commend you all on all the time and effort that you put in. Thank you.*
- *Mutualism. Both for the training that I would receive (skills development etc.) as well as for my contribution (hopefully) to help others become passionate about my subject (French) as I am.*

Mentors believe that academic support is one of their main objectives, and that is also why mentees are placed with module specific mentors in groups. The lack of attendance of the mentees is a recurring theme in all the key outcomes. Mentors are often very frustrated when mentees do not show up for the sessions. Some successes were also reported, but at focus groups, and from the monthly report forms, it was obvious that mentee attendance was erratic. Some mentors report excellent attendance, but others are truly concerned about mentee behaviour. Attendance impacts on mentee performance:

- *Die studente wat nie daar was nie, se punte het erg verswak. Die wat daar was het uitdruklik verbeter.*
- *100% bywoning. Die mentees vind dit die moeite werd.*
- *20% bywoning, mentees is baie dankbaar vir wat ek doen vir hulle, die wat wel opdaag.*

- *Hulle sms my as hulle nie kan kom nie. My mentees doen baie goed (punte is 90%). Baie van my mentees berei voor en het gereeld vrae. Mentees werk veral goed na hulle swak toetspunte ontvang het.*

While mentors reported on the attendance and the marks, they are aware of the importance of motivating students to stay and try harder, even though their marks were very low initially:

- *I have four mentees for Maths. They all got around 45% pred [predicate] and wanted to quit. I convinced them to stay, and we worked extra hard. They all got 50% in the exam, and they are over the moon! One had 52% - we call him the clever one!*
- *Vir die eerste twee vraestelle het sy 'n 25 en 'n 33 en die laaste een amper 'n 60 gehad. So uitstekende vordering eintlik.*
- *Hulle kom entoesiasies na die klas toe so ek neem aan hulle vind baat daar uit, maar oor die algemeen lyk hulle punte aansienlik beter.... ek bedoel eerste, tweede, derde toets kan 'n mens 'n progressiewe lyn sien.*
- *Ek is so trots op hulle! Almal se punte het omtrent verdubbel!*
- *Ons werk regtig lekker saam met die groep, hulle is gemotiveerd en doen hul deel en wil goeie punte kry en gaan dit ook kry. Hulle sal die vrugte van hul harde werk pluk.*

Key outcome 2: Mentors apply small group facilitation techniques in their sessions

Facilitation took place in small groups with a peer mentor. Mentors were urged at training sessions and focus group discussions to facilitate and not to lecture. The participation of all the group members is of the essence, and mentee creative thinking, problem solving and subject discourse form the important corner stones of the facilitation. From the comments made by mentors it would appear that they did apply these facilitation skills:

- *Ons het soos 'n klein familie geword. Hulle ruil werk uit en help mekaar baie goed. Uitstekende groep-dinamika.*
- *They think out of the box, they really understand their work after the mentor sessions. They feel they can manage their subjects better. They feel they can accomplish more. They anchor themselves in peace and they feel focused.*
- *Aan die begin kon hulle nie eens wiskunde LEES nie, maar dis nou darem beter. Hulle het groot vrymoedigheid om my vrae te vra.*

The following quote also refers to the small group facilitation process. The mentor also highlights an important aspect about the mentor programme, namely the fact that it is a voluntary, open intervention with no stigma attached. This apparently made it easier for mentees to participate:

- *Mentees het baie gegroei. Aanvanklik was hul baie geïntimideer, maar daar is nie meer 'n stigma daarom nie. Nou werk hul hoofsaaklik op hul eie. Groepsdinamika het verbeter: hulle is baie interaktief, hulle praat met mekaar en hulle dink vir hulself, werk self probleme uit. 1 mentee spesifiek help graag vir die ander.*

The essence of small group facilitation was the envisaged interaction, with the intention of mentees being able to talk about the subject, solve problems and discuss issues of

academic relevance. In the following quote from a mentor the growth of the mentees that took place both academically and socially is apparent. At the same time the satisfaction and growth of the mentor is also obvious:

- *My mentees is heeltemal ander mense as wat hulle verlede semester was! Ek hoef amper nie meer te praat nie. As die een 'n vraag vra, beantwoord die ander dit. Hulle werk saam die probleme uit en argumenteer voor die witbord. Dis 'n ervaring wat ek vir niks ter wêreld sal verruil nie.*

Mentor reports on group interaction show a correlation with their skills as facilitators, and also show that they keenly observe what actually happens to the mentees. Mentors were able to recognise increased participation and development of skills of the mentees:

- *Lionel neem ook nou op eie stoom deel aan klasbesprekings, waar hy in die eerste semester skaars 'n woord gerep het. Met die res van sy bedrywighede gaan dit goed.*
- *Dis vir my baie goed want hulle het mekaar glad nie geken in die begin nie en nou is hulle ... hulle praat oor hulle naweek planne met mekaar, ek bedoel dit is ongelooflik, hulle vul mekaar se antwoorde ongelooflik goed aan. Daai een het daardie deel van die werk en daai een daardie deel en saam sit hulle dit bymekaar. Hulle is baie self – sufficient, hulle kry die werk gedoen. Hulle neem verskriklik goed deel en die kennis wat in daardie kinders is is ongelooflik, ek dink nie ek het so veel in eerste jaar geleer nie, ek het nie.*
- *Ook die mense wat min te sê het, het nou ietsie te sê van hoor hier ek dink jy het daai vergelyking verkeerd gebruik, of ek dink jy moet so. So daar is soveel inputs wat kom. Een persoon doen die som, maar dis 'n groeppoging. Dit werk regtig goed.*
- *Hulle word sterker, in die begin het hulle nie geweet wat gaan vir wat nie. Hulle het voorberei, maar het nie gepraat nie. Hulle het net geluister en net ja en ja gesê, nou sal iemand sê ek het dit gedoen en die ander sê ek het nou dit gedoen, dan werk ons die vrae uit, dan hou ons dit sommer vir die eksamen en nou voel hulle hulle werk nou rêrig.*

The following mentor was aware that his/her facilitation technique was not yet satisfactory, but was trying to adapt and give the mentees more responsibility.

- *I still feel that I talk and lecture too much in the sessions, but have changed my strategy the last three sessions and asked them to prepare sections. It works better and we get through more work.*

Key outcome 3: Mentors transfer study techniques (e.g. mind maps) to their mentees

Mentors are aware of the increased work load at university, and that the study methods and time management that students used while still at school might not be adequate to deal with new subjects and more content. Different approaches to studies are now required, as knowledge must often be applied and problems solved.

- *I chatted to one of the girls today and I found out as most of us probably do when you start off at varsity, you start off with a very linear style study method, as in studying, reading through the text book and underlining the important parts... so what I personally tried for myself was to change to the mind map style of studying which basically results in having the various sub-divisions of the chapter with just the relevant points from your class notes confirmed by the text book, this makes it much*

easier to associate the various points with each other as opposed to them being on separate pages in a linear style format.

- *Ek het 5 mentees wat gekies is deur die departement agv moontlike swak punte, hulle is almal op die VGP [Verlengde Graadprogram/ Extended Degree Programme] Wat toetspunte betref is almal baie tevrede want almal se punte is tussen 70% en 80%. Ek het in my mentorsessies veral EquipU4-tegnieke toegepas.*

The EquipU4 technique mentioned above is a set of study skills and self-motivation techniques to enable students to study successfully. It was developed at Stellenbosch University and is available for students' use. It was mentioned at the training sessions, as it could benefit both mentor and mentee. Some mentors did complete a course of EquipU4, and transferred those skills (and others, such as mind maps) to their mentees. Other mentors spoke about the mindset of their mentees about their own input and perceptions, and the demands of academic workload:

- *Ek moes sukkel om my mentees hul mindset te laat verander: vanaf skool na universiteit. Ek het my eie tegnieke oorgedra aan hulle. My mentees doen gereeld mindmaps_en hulle is baie opgewonde. Ons het one eie community geskep: ons praat soms meestal oor nie-akademiese goed, oor sosiale probleme.*
- *I think that there is a problem of as the years go by the quantity of work increases and the study method does not allow for this change in work.*

Apart from the study techniques, mentors report that mentees have problems with time management, and tend to postpone studying for tests until it is almost too late:

- *They mostly need encouragement concerning how to study effectively and work continuously, not only just before a test.*
- *Mentees studeer verkeerd en verstaan nie die handboek nie. Mentees besef nie dat die mentorgroep beteken hulle moet ook self harder werk nie.*
- *Almal sukkel nog met tydsbestuur. Al die mentee's blyk meer selfversekerd te wees en verstaan al beter die werk.*

It is not only the mentees' mindset and lack of time-management skills that concern the mentors, but also their lack of focus in relation to the volume of work. Comments about the workload also underline the responsibility that the mentees need to assume and what kind of relationship one should expect between mentor and mentee:

- *Students seem to battle with the volume of work and are not sure what to focus on.*
- *Mentees need to work on realisation of the fact that they really need to start working and pulling their weight. They need to focus!*

The interaction with lecturers increased during the year, and some lecturers met regularly with the mentors for discussions, and also gave them access to their WebCT expositions, to see what content had been covered. Some mentors were also grateful when a lecturer supplied them with free textbooks to prepare from:

- *He gave each of us a brand new textbook for free, because he knows how valuable the first years find the group! [Chemistry 114].*
- *The professor meets with us every second Friday at her office [Private Law 171].*
- *The lecturer of this module (DMVS 144) has been overwhelmingly supportive.*

Mentors are encouraged to make themselves known to the lecturers whose modules they mentor, as it is important that the lecturer is aware of the extracurricular support. Lecturers often refer mentors and mentees to the programme, and sometimes also insist on getting a list of the mentees. In this way lecturers can also keep track of mentee performance and behaviour.

Key outcome 4: Mentors work more reflectively on their own input to the programme

The following insights from mentors in the Programme indicate that they are thinking about what they are doing, as well as about the effect of their actions and activities on the mentees. They report on their own growth as well, but also reflect on the system of support at a higher education institution, and the importance of participation for any intervention to be effective:

- *It is a system whereby mentees can benefit only if they participate and attend meetings. I think it is very successful in helping first years that make use of the system.*

Mentors are able to see the growth in their mentees, and the ease with which they are now able to speak not only about themselves and their problems, but also about the academic content:

- *Ons praat oor hulleself. Aan die begin praat ons oor hoe die week was en so, en dan sê hulle hulle sukkel met hierdie area en so, maar dit gaan goed met hulle en ons kan sien hoe hulle gegroeï het deur die jaar, veral met die vakke. Ek kan net sien hoe hulle nie skaam is om te praat nie en hulle sal sê as iets pla, en nee dit is verkeerd. Ek is net bly hulle is gemotiveerd om te kom.*

The mentors' keen insight into their own role and function and into the mentees' needs and expectations is evident in the following comment:

- *I think in the beginning of the programme you want to assist the mentees in every aspect of their lives, whether it is time management or social or financial problems or anything to that effect. But the real reason why they join the mentor programme in the beginning is to improve their academic results. What I have gathered is from the improvement of their academic life, the other aspects of their lives automatically improve as well, because they realise the amount of work that needs to go in and with that then the time management falls into place and with that the sleeping patterns fall into place and everything is sort of connected to the academic progress.*

In agreement with this quote, the following comment also shows an equally important insight into the dual role mentors play, namely to offer support for both academic and psychosocial

issues, and how the general well-being of the mentees is linked to their academic performance:

- *My mentees had to cope with a lot of issues. I have never seen so much crying in my whole life! During the first semester one girl was crying every time. She did not want to be here, and she was doing badly. The other lost her grandfather to whom she was very close. The other girl's boyfriend cheated on her and the other just came from a broken relationship. I had a hard time motivating them, but the strange thing, is, they all attended almost every time. I was so proud that they actually all wrote the tests, but was devastated to see the decline in their marks. But I went to see the marks of the whole group [Private Law 171], and all marks showed a sharp decrease. This semester [second semester] they are totally different! They are lively and happy, and they all passed. Last term they had one request. They are all in res[idence], all English speaking, but they wanted to come to my house to watch 7de Laan! They also wanted to braai, because in res they don't get red meat. Isn't that sweet? They slowly started to adjust and understand, and now everything is fine. Most of them only get around 50%, but that is what they are capable of, and 50 is still a pass.*

The above remark highlights another point that many mentors made and are keenly aware of, one which was also reflected in the sessions, namely the improvement of the mentees' marks. A common misconception about academic mentoring is that mentees will automatically perform exceptionally well.

- *Ek was 'n bietjie teleurgesteld met van hulle punte veral vir die laaste toets. Maar dan kyk ek na ander goed, soos hulle gee nie op nie en daar is lig aan die einde van die tunnel.*

Most mentors are, however, pleased when their mentees manage to increase their marks. Initially one only increased from 20% to 33% but the mentee later obtained a predicate and passed the examination. An earlier quote from a mentor shows his pride in his mentees in Mathematics who all passed with their 45% predicates. Another mentor put it succinctly:

- *I think unfortunately at the end of the day people look at the results and not the work that has gone into the results. The mission now is just to get them all above 40% to at least get them exam acceptance, which I don't think will be a problem as they are all very positive.*
- *I think the fact that they have got somebody that they can talk to whether it is improving their marks drastically or not I think makes a big difference. I know that is something I didn't have and it would have helped a lot to have somebody to tell me don't worry it is difficult in the beginning, it is not you, it is not the fact that you are not smart or that you are studying the wrong thing. It is difficult to suddenly just come to university and to automatically understand what to do.*

As seen above, mentors are fully aware that the aim of the Mentor Programme is not only to improve the mentees' marks, but to offer continued motivation and support towards passing the subject and academic year, which shows a great deal of insight, understanding and maturity from the mentors.

8.1.2 Psychosocial support

Evidence that the Student Mentor Programme comprises a holistic approach is already apparent from the mentors' comments in the previous section on academic support. In offering psychosocial support, they were expected to build friendships, motivate and involve mentees, and also to be aware of possible problems, and to know when to refer problems. Mentors also often reported an unexpected benefit - their own satisfaction in mentoring a group of first-year students.

Key outcome 5: Enhanced mentor skills and knowledge through shared experiences

In commenting on what they experienced during the sessions, mentors said that the knowledge they gained about the importance of psychosocial support was significant. They were able to form relationships, to listen and observe, and were able to put mentees at ease. They could talk about more than just the module content. Motivation and discussion were important factors in the group interaction:

- *Ons vorm 'n lekker groep en praat oor baie behalwe net die vak. Dit is 'n voorreg om van hulp vir hulle te wees.*
- *I have really enjoyed the mentoring so far and I am very optimistic about the progress of the mentees. We have already established a good relationship and hopefully this will continue to grow from strength to strength.*
- *Die mentee's is nou eers gemaklik om hulle persoonlike probleme met my te deel. 'n Nuwe fase in ons verhouding! 'n Tekort aan motivering om te leer is al wat in die pad staan van goeie punte.*

Mentors also mentioned that once a foundation of trust had been laid, the group members became friends and motivated each other:

- *Dit gaan baie goed met die groep. Almal het hegte vriende geword en motiveer mekaar om beter te doen. Hulle hou my op my tone, maar dit is n fees om vir hulle te help. Almal se punte het verbeter.*

Key outcome 6: Mentors have acquired valuable and appropriate knowledge of psychosocial problems and behaviour

Mentors are now able to recognise individuals with particular problems, behaviours or learning styles. Participation in discussions and sharing experiences have started to develop. Mentors also recognise mentees with time-management and stress problems, as well as improvements in behaviour patterns. They know their mentees by name:

- *Gedurende die tweede semester, het ek opgemerk dat Lionel begin "ontdooi". Hy deel nou ook alledaagse besonderhede oor sy lewe en agtergrond.*
- *Chere het skynbaar ook 'n probleem met haar tydsbenutting en ek vermoed dat dit lei tot die opeenhoping van werk en die kansellering van afsprake. Dit is ook nie 'n geïsoleerde geval nie: die ander onderwysstudente lyk ook uitgeput en gespanne en kla almal oor die werkslading.*

- *Byvoorbeeld Judy is 'n skaam meisie en sy het maatjies gemaak in die klas. Selfs ook Shakira is nie die mees outgoing mens in die wêreld nie. En vir die laaste toets het hulle saam geswot. Hulle het so sterk geword as 'n groep en ek is seker hulle sal ook saam swot vir die Januarie toets. Judy, Shakira en selfs Toby het uit hulle doppe geklim, waar in die begin was hulle so stil. Hulle lewer ook insette en hulle is deel van die groep.*
- *Most of the time was spent in personal issues, but once we got to know each other we could focus on the work. I am meeting each mentee individually for coffee to get to know them better.*

As can be seen from the above comments, the individual mentees are mentioned by name and the mentors seem to have benefited too from their interaction with them. Their comments also indicate that the mentors know their mentees and their circumstances in some depth. Mentors display an understanding and empathy for the mentees' feelings of isolation and actively encourage them to participate in the group. Many cases like these were mentioned during the focus groups discussions. From the qualitative evidence it is clear that the mentors realise the value of the group sessions for general mentee support, and feel that they have now gained the appropriate knowledge to provide such support.

Key outcome 7: Mentors are able to refer mentees for specific help as and when required

Closely linked to the previous key outcome is the ability of mentors to not only recognise problems but also to realise when and where to refer mentees who need more specialised and specific help. The problems they encountered ranged from stress-related issues, which were addressed by workshops at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), to specific learning difficulties for which specialist attention was needed:

- *The mentees are complaining of being over-worked/feeling pressure for deadlines. I attended a stress-workshop and aspects of this were discussed with the group. Some of them did feel they needed extra help with stress-management and have visited the SSVO [CSCD].*
- *I mentioned to you that A may have certain learning difficulties, and that G may experience difficulties with concentration. I have given them the necessary details regarding the SSVO, where such difficulties can be attended to in a supportive and most professional manner. I have again encouraged G to apply for extra time during tests and exams, as he was granted extra time at school, and by the Educational Department in grade 12.*

Some mentees were also referred to the Language Centre to get help with writing problems and formulation:

- *Hy woon ook altyd sy groepklasse by en is intelligent – hy sukkel egter om sy insigte te verwoord in 'n koherente betoog en sou in meer detail kon omgaan met tekste. Verder het hy ook 'n formuleringsprobleem.*

Referral by the mentors is a very important aspect of the Programme. It was stressed at the training sessions that the mentors should not try and solve serious problems that mentees may present. Instead, mentors were given a list of all the support structures and their contact numbers, and also had to bring this list to their mentees' attention. One example of a problem that was brought to the attention of the coordinator during the course of the Programme was certain students who were actually faint with hunger due to severe financial constraints. Fortunately, the coordinator was able to intervene and provide them with the necessary assistance.

Key outcome 8: Mentors are able to recognise possible problems and share information with peers in focus groups

A recurring theme at the focus group discussions was the attendance of the mentees. Attendance at the group sessions varied from mentor (and module) to mentor, and sometimes they expressed frustration about the mentees' lack of consideration, preparation or responsibility.

- *Somehow get mentees to attend more regularly.*

Often the mentees' did not only miss the mentor sessions, but the lectures as well, and this was thus a problem that was not only due to the mentor's inability to motivate or inspire, but of fundamental motivation. In cases such as these, the student's "input characteristics" (Astin, 1993) might have played a role.

- *After another month of very poor attendance I went to see the lecturer. She confirmed with me that the mentees' not attending sessions are also students that don't attend class.*

The comment above highlights a recurring problem, or misconception on the mentees' part, namely that the mentor sessions were a substitute for attending lectures. Mentors were made aware of this problem at training sessions and at focus groups, and were warned not to tolerate such behaviour. Mentors shared the reasons that mentees had offered for joining their groups, and also why in some instances they did not attend:

- *Mentees that joined my group mainly did so because they were scared and uncertain about what is expected at university. Now that they found their feet more, they don't attend as much.*

Recommendations from mentors about attendance problems were also offered at the focus groups. The concern was expressed that mentees often came into the Programme too late. Some feel that departments should be made aware of the Programme, and that it should be well advertised so that it can get off to an earlier start in the academic year. In fact, departments are made aware of the Programme via their Departmental Chairs, and first years are introduced to the Programme during the Orientation Week. Flyers are distributed and posters are put on the notice boards for the duration of the first term. The real problem,

however, seems to be that first-year students simply do not realise that they are going to need help and therefore do not take an interest in the Programme until after they have received their first test results, which is often only in the second term:

- *Students should be encouraged to join the mentor programme much earlier. The SSVO programme [regular workshops throughout the year] could either be more directed at the mentor training or be part of the mentees' programme.*
- *The mentoring programme is effective in assisting students on a more holistic level, but I feel that certain faculties / departments should be made more aware of the presence and service that mentors provide.*
- *They only received their test results in May, three weeks before the end of the term.*

Another concern was the number of mentees per group. Mentors feel that in subjects such as Mathematics, Financial Accounting and Statistics, the maximum should be four mentees to a group, and eight in the Humanities. In reality, the attrition from the groups (especially in the Humanities) was such that mentors often ended up with less than five mentees.

- *Less mentees per group.*
- *If the mentee group size could be reduced, then more attention could be paid to individual mentees, which would be more fruitful. Otherwise everything works well.*

General comments from the mentors indicate that they found the programme of value, not only for the mentees, but also for themselves:

- *The mentor programme is a good and positive initiative. Keep it going! It makes a difference!*
- *Ek dink die program beteken vir beide mentee en mentor baie en moet nog vir vele jare aanhou!*
- *Ek geniet die mentor klasse baie. Alle voorstelle is bespreek in die fokusgroep. Dit is fantasties om nuwe vriende te maak en terselfdertyd hulle ook te ondersteun en te help.*
- *Dit was n fantastiese jaar en al my mentee's is wonderlik. Hulle is baie dankbaar vir die program. Almal het in alle opsigte gegroei. Dankie!*

Key outcome 9: Mentors display willingness to participate in the mentor programme in future, should they have the opportunity again the following year

Mentors were asked whether they would consider being a mentor again the next year. As many of the mentors were third year students, some would have completed their studies by the end of the year. In spite of this, 70.3% were willing to participate again. What is interesting though, is that 92.2% would like to participate again, even though circumstances may prevent them from doing so (Figure 8.1).

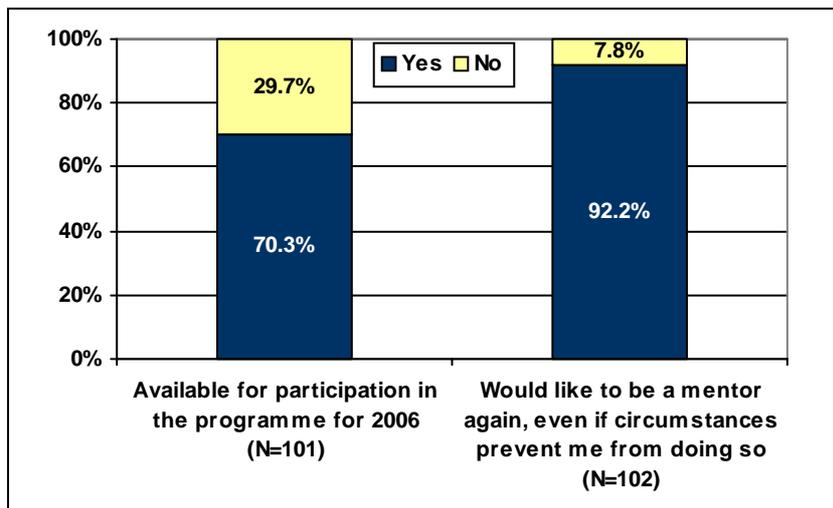


Figure 8.1 Future participation in mentor programme

8.2 Outcomes for mentees

Outcomes for the mentees are divided between academic outcomes and psychosocial outcomes. The academic performance of mentees were assessed according to their test and examination results, and triangulated with their qualitative responses. The psychosocial outcomes were interpreted according to their reported involvement, participation and responses.

8.2.1 Academic performance

The results in this section are presented for two distinct mentee groups, namely for the whole cohort of 1190 mentee positions, (subdivided in some instances into smaller samples where information for all is not available), and for those mentees who attended more than 50% of the mentor sessions (269). Mentoring was provided to mentees in 48 modules.

Key outcome 1: Percentage of mentees that passed their module exams

Table 8.1 shows the performance of the whole cohort of mentees compared to non-mentees, by module (n=1190). Where mentees did better than non-mentees, the difference scored is marked as positive; where they did worse, the score is negative.

Table 8.1 Performances of mentees and non-mentees compared, broken down by module

Module	Mentee or non-mentee	Total number of students	% of students who passed	% Difference
Actuarial Science 112	Mentee	16	69%	-5%
	Non-mentee	107	74%	
	All	123	73%	
Aural training 172	Mentee	3	100%	10%
	Non-mentee	21	90%	
	All	24	92%	
Biochemistry 214	Mentee	28	86%	4%
	Non-mentee	414	82%	
	All	442	82%	
Biology 124	Mentee	13	54%	-15%
	Non-mentee	657	69%	
	All	670	69%	
Biology 144	Mentee	10	50%	-18%
	Non-mentee	463	68%	
	All	473	67%	
Biology 154	Mentee	8	25%	-40%
	Non-mentee	620	65%	
	All	628	64%	
Business Management 113	Mentee	17	82%	16%
	Non-mentee	1566	66%	
	All	1583	66%	
Chemistry 114	Mentee	92	42%	-7%
	Non-mentee	704	49%	
	All	796	48%	
Chemistry 154	Mentee	93	76%	0%
	Non-mentee	614	76%	
	All	707	76%	
Computer Science 114	Mentee	37	41%	-8%
	Non-mentee	59	49%	
	All	96	46%	
Computer Science 144	Mentee	3	67%	-2%
	Non-mentee	54	69%	
	All	57	68%	
Computer Skills 172	Mentee	6	33%	-37%
	Non-mentee	1114	70%	
	All	1120	70%	
Criminal Law 171	Mentee	11	82%	4%
	Non-mentee	291	78%	
	All	302	78%	
Decision-making & Value Studies 114	Mentee	36	72%	-2%
	Non-mentee	174	74%	
	All	210	73%	
Decision-making & Value Studies 144	Mentee	18	83%	7%
	Non-mentee	246	76%	
	All	264	76%	
Economics 178	Mentee	29	38%	-22%
	Non-mentee	1690	60%	
	All	1719	60%	
Financial Accounting 178	Mentee	31	84%	3%
	Non-mentee	402	81%	
	All	433	81%	

Module	Mentee or non-mentee	Total number of students	% of students who passed	% Difference
Financial Accounting 188	Mentee	86	53%	-8%
	Non-mentee	1096	61%	
	All	1182	61%	
French 178	Mentee	13	54%	-9%
	Non-mentee	208	63%	
	All	221	62%	
French 278	Mentee	9	100%	21%
	Non-mentee	66	79%	
	All	75	81%	
German 178	Mentee	3	100%	33%
	Non-mentee	166	67%	
	All	169	68%	
German 278	Mentee	11	45%	-40%
	Non-mentee	47	85%	
	All	58	78%	
History 144	Mentee	32	56%	19%
	Non-mentee	254	37%	
	All	286	39%	
History of Music 112	Mentee	5	40%	-33%
	Non-mentee	22	73%	
	All	27	67%	
Indigenous Law 171	Mentee	4	25%	-39%
	Non-mentee	182	64%	
	All	186	63%	
Information Skills 172	Mentee	2	100%	23%
	Non-mentee	1160	77%	
	All	1162	77%	
Information Systems 188	Mentee	18	44%	-12%
	Non-mentee	836	56%	
	All	854	56%	
Latin 114	Mentee	3	67%	-14%
	Non-mentee	21	81%	
	All	24	79%	
Management Accounting 278	Mentee	7	29%	-45%
	Non-mentee	586	74%	
	All	593	74%	
Mandarin 178	Mentee	4	50%	-2%
	Non-mentee	50	52%	
	All	54	52%	
Mathematics (Bio) 124	Mentee	101	49%	-7%
	Non-mentee	655	56%	
	All	756	55%	
Mathematics (Ed) 178	Mentee	5	100%	16%
	Non-mentee	129	84%	
	All	134	84%	
Mathematics 144	Mentee	27	44%	-9%
	Non-mentee	282	53%	
	All	309	52%	
Philosophy 112	Mentee	16	69%	10%
	Non-mentee	393	59%	
	All	409	59%	
Physics 114	Mentee	11	73%	5%

Module	Mentee or non-mentee	Total number of students	% of students who passed	% Difference
	Non-mentee	180	68%	
	All	191	68%	
Physics 144	Mentee	2	50%	-10%
	Non-mentee	172	60%	
	All	174	60%	
Physics 178	Mentee	79	43%	-16%
	Non-mentee	475	59%	
	All	554	56%	
Political Science 112	Mentee	23	96%	21%
	Non-mentee	373	75%	
	All	396	76%	
Political Science 142	Mentee	4	75%	10%
	Non-mentee	377	65%	
	All	381	65%	
Private Law 171	Mentee	98	60%	-1%
	Non-mentee	238	61%	
	All	336	60%	
Probability Theory & Statistics 114	Mentee	9	67%	2%
	Non-mentee	82	65%	
	All	91	65%	
Probability Theory & Statistics 144	Mentee	18	56%	-16%
	Non-mentee	104	72%	
	All	122	70%	
Psychology 114	Mentee	4	50%	-24%
	Non-mentee	944	74%	
	All	948	74%	
Public & Development Management 114	Mentee	18	83%	8%
	Non-mentee	235	75%	
	All	253	76%	
Sociology 114	Mentee	7	29%	-39%
	Non-mentee	700	68%	
	All	707	68%	
Statistical Methods 176	Mentee	27	78%	7%
	Non-mentee	494	71%	
	All	521	72%	
Statistics 186	Mentee	58	43%	-12%
	Non-mentee	989	55%	
	All	1047	55%	
Theory of Interest 152	Mentee	35	57%	-8%
	Non-mentee	1530	65%	
	All	1565	65%	

Table 8.1 indicates that in 18 of the 48 modules presented in the SMP the mentees performed better than the non-mentees (marked in bold face), based on the percentage of the group (mentee or non-mentee) that passed the module. In one module (Chemistry 154) they scored the same. Where mentees performed better, it was by a mean of 11.5%. Where the mentees did worse than the non-mentees, they showed a mean decrease of 17% (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 Mean difference in mentees and non mentees' gain scores

Mentee performance in modules	Mean
Increase (18 modules)	11.53
Decrease (29 modules)	-17
No difference (1 module)	0

The overall performance of the mentees (i.e. the whole group of 1190 who had some contact, even if only one or two sessions of mentoring) is illustrated in the next figure (Figure 8.2). The pass rate for this group was 58.4% (Figure 8.2).

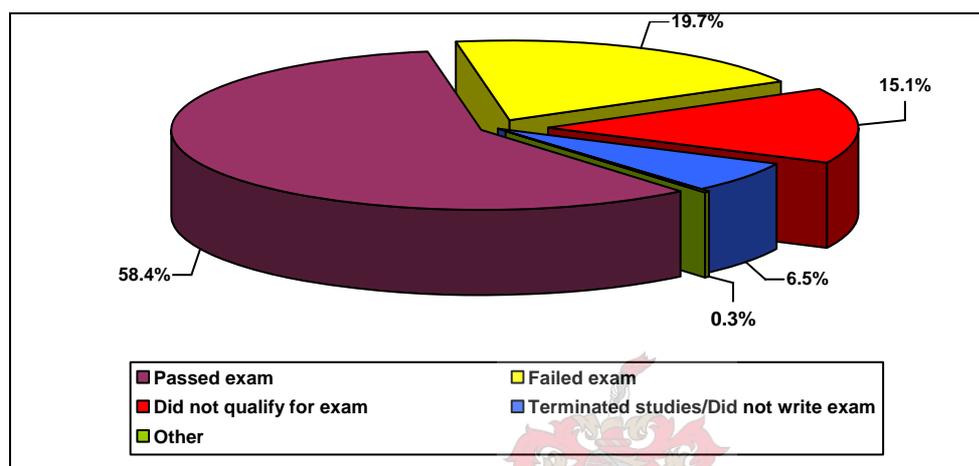


Figure 8.2 Performance of cohort of mentee positions in the different modules (N = 1190)

Figure 8.2 represents the performance of all the mentees, including all those with varying attendance rates. It shows that even though the pass rate is only 58.4%, at least another 19.7% attempted the examinations, that is, they obtained a predicate to write, but did not pass. 15.1% did not qualify or obtain a predicate, while 6.5% either terminated their studies or chose not to write. (This includes those who decided to change courses.) A pass rate of 58% may seem quite low, but as this figure represents the students who came to the Programme for support, it must be recognised that they were already students who felt uncertain or had fallen behind with their studies for some reason. As will be seen in the next section, their attendance of the mentoring sessions played a crucial role in mentee performance.

Key outcome 2: Differential programme effect (attendance/performance)

It is important to look at the performance of the whole cohort of mentees in conjunction with their attendance at the mentor sessions (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 Mentee attendance per performance category

Module performance	Mean attendance
Mentees who passed exam	58%
Mentees who failed exam	45%
Mentees who did not qualify for exam	42%
Terminated studies/ Did not write exam	45%
Mean attendance of whole group of mentees	53%

When the performance of only the 269 “active” mentees (that is those who had a programme attendance of more than 50%) is calculated, the results are very different (Figure 8.3):

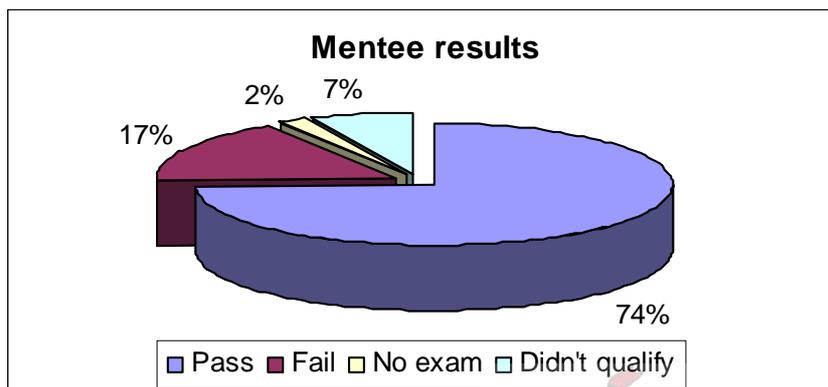


Figure 8.3 Performance of mentees with more than 50% attendance (N=269)

The pass rate of the group who attended more than half of the mentoring sessions was significantly higher than the group with irregular attendance. The percentage of those who wrote but failed the examination of this group was also 3% smaller, which indicates a further advantage of regular attendance. It is also significant that only 7% of this group did not qualify to write their exams, compared with the 15.1% mentees with irregular attendance who did not qualify for examination entrance. This amounts to a difference of 8%. Only 1.9% of those who attended regularly chose not to write, changed courses or terminated their studies, compared to 6.5% of the irregular attendance group, which is a difference of 4.6%.

These results show that regular attendance at the mentoring sessions thus had an overall positive effect on mentee performance and retention at the university. It is interesting to compare the performance of male and female mentees within the group of regular attendees. From this group 80% of the women passed, compared to 62% of the males. This result is supported by the finding of Guerazzi (2002) that women involved in programmes that enhance student involvement generally perform better than men, and have a greater chance of succeeding in higher education.

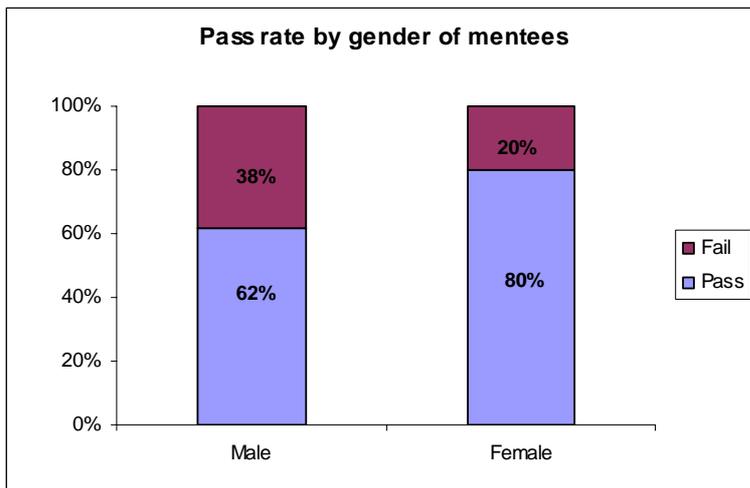


Figure 8.4 Gender of mentees who passed (regular attendance =50%+, Male N=100; Female N=169)

Key outcome 3: Mentees improve their marks

The improvement in marks was calculated by comparing the predicates or progress marks of the students with their final examination marks. It is not a very reliable way to indicate actual increase or decrease, as the average of the two marks (progress plus examination mark) is calculated. Thus, for a student to show an increase of 5 percentage points with a predicate of 50%, she/he should have scored 10% more, or 60% in the examination.

Predicates for all students were not available because some year-courses only provide a final mark. However, 887 of the mentees who attended irregularly and wrote the examination had a progress or class mark (predicate). Where the examination mark was higher than the progress/class mark (predicate). Where the examination mark was higher than the progress/class mark, the difference was interpreted as a positive change. Where the examination mark was lower than the predicate, the difference was interpreted as a negative change.

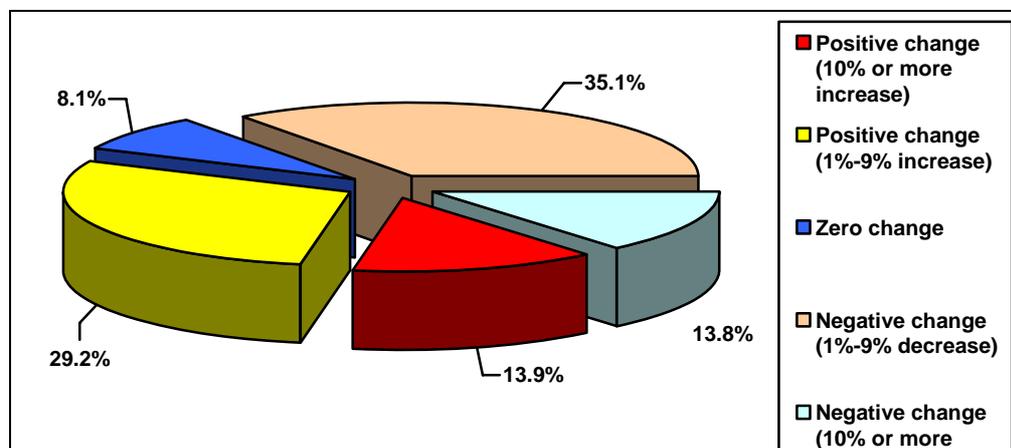


Figure 8.5 Direction of change between progress/class mark and exam mark (N = 887)

Figure 8.5 shows there was a total positive increase (29.2% plus 13.9%) for 43.1% for the mentees who attended irregularly. If no difference in the progress and exam mark (8.1%) is indicated, it may be seen as positive (i.e. they maintained their performance). Thus, the positive increase for the whole group is 51.2% and the total negative change is 48.9%. For all mentees the difference between an increase and decrease of marks is only 2.3%.

The following figure (Figure 8.6) indicating the decrease and increase in marks should be seen in conjunction with Figure 8.2 (illustrating the pass and failure of the mentees). Figure 8.6 shows the increase in marks of those mentees (695 or 58%) who passed their exams, and the decrease in marks of those who failed (234 or 19.7%). A significant number of mentees who passed also managed to actually increase their marks (55.7%), while those who failed showed a massive 80% decline in marks, which could again be linked to attendance. Of this cohort, 180 students did not qualify for examination entrance; 77 terminated their studies; and for 4 students no information was available, (N=1190).

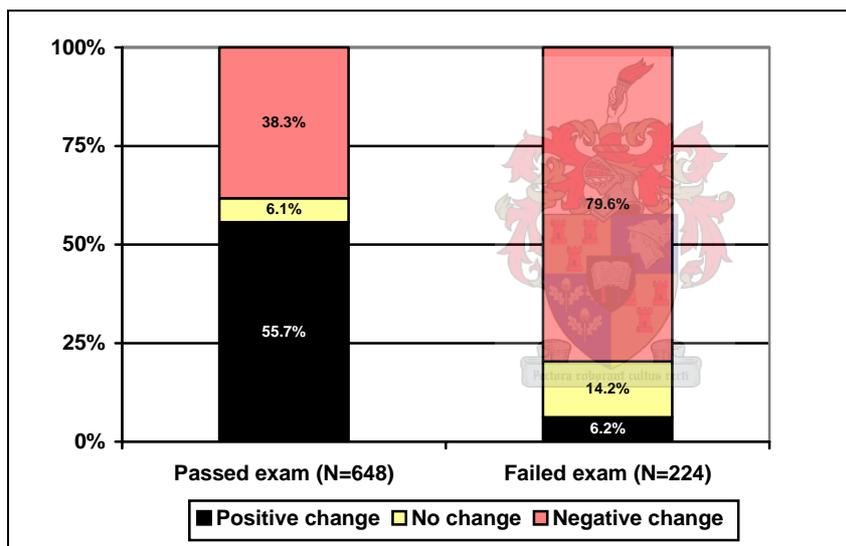


Figure 8.6 Direction of change between progress/class mark and exam mark, respectively for mentees who passed and failed the exam (N=872)

When calculating the decrease and increase of only those mentees who attended more than half of the mentor sessions, the direction of change was as follows:

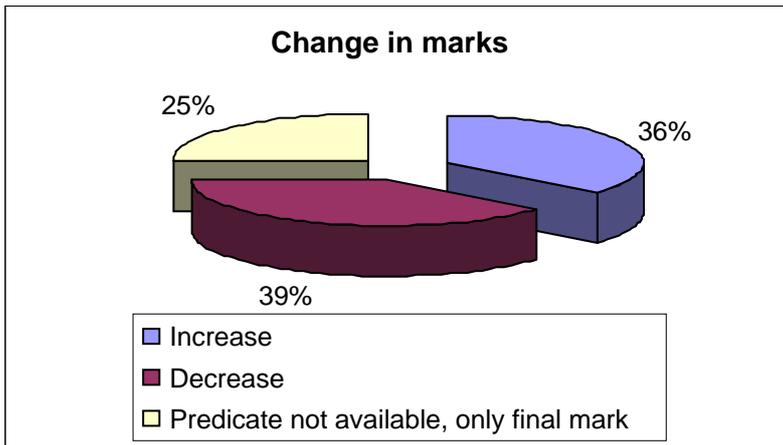


Figure 8.7 Change in marks of students who attended more than half of the mentor sessions (N=269)

Figure 8.7 illustrates that 36% of this group (regular attendees) of mentees' marks improved and 39% of the mentees' marks decreased. Of the group of 269, 202 had predicates (as some modules do not require it) and 67 mentees (or 25%) had only an examination mark. Mentees of the predicate group of 202 who had increased marks (97 mentees, or 48%) had an average increase of 6.6%. The mentees in this group who showed a decrease (105, that is 52%) did so with an average of 5.9% (Figure 8.8).

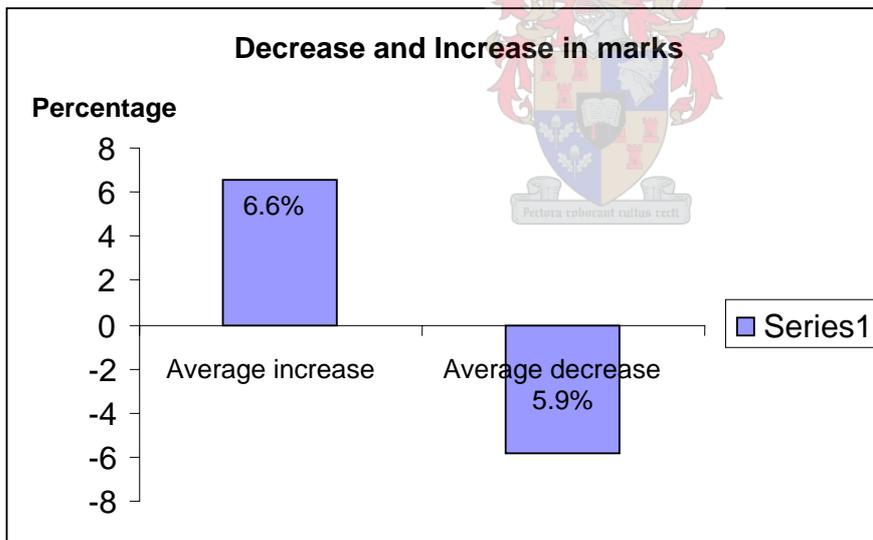


Figure 8.8 Mentee average % increase and decrease of marks (N=202)

To summarise the increase and decrease of marks, it would seem that 48% of the mentees who attended regularly increased their marks, compared to 43.1% (Figure 8.5) of the irregular attendees who increased their marks (see discussion of Figure 8.7). It could thus be assumed that regular attendance also played a positive role in the overall decrease and increase of mentee marks.

For the modules listed in Table 8.4, predicates as well as examination marks were available for 887 students. The increase and decrease in module performance include mentees who passed (58.4% in Figure 8.2) and failed. The most significant results were in Chemistry 154 where 90% of 72 mentees increased their marks. In Financial Accounting 178, which has a large group of 54 mentees, 72% increased their marks. In Private Law 171, the group of 85 mentees, however, showed a substantial decrease. Only 8% of the mentees managed to increase their marks. When the situation was discussed with the mentors, they were very concerned and had the following comments to make about Law studies:

- *Mentees are selected for the course according to their Maths and Science marks in matric. They think they are very clever, but they need a totally different mindset for Law. They must be able to formulate, and apply knowledge, not regurgitate or recite formulas.*
- *Mentees are not used to the workload, and they do not know how to answer the test questions.*

Mathematics 124 (65 mentees) and Physics 178 (51 mentees) were also big groups of mentees, and their results showed that they had a slight advantage over the non-mentees. The modules in which mentees increased their marks are shaded. The modules that showed significant numbers and results are shown in bold print (Table 8.4).

It is interesting to note that for many of the modules that require numerical ability (such as Financial Accounting 188 and 178, Mathematics 124, Actuarial Science 112, Theory of Interest 152 and Statistics 186) and that are traditionally perceived to be difficult subjects, mentees actually managed to increase their marks. Mentors reported how they persuaded mentees to work out the problems on the whiteboard while explaining it to the rest of the group. In this way they facilitated not only participation by the group, but also direct involvement with the learning material.

Table 8.4 Direction of change between progress/class mark and exam mark for mentees, broken down by module

Module	Positive change	Zero change	Negative change	Total
Aural training 172	100%	0%	0%	3
Chemistry 154	90%	3%	7%	72
Probability Theory & Statistics 114	86%	14%	0%	7
Business Management 113	80%	7%	13%	15
Computer Science 114	75%	0%	25%	16
German 278	73%	18%	9%	11
Financial Accounting 188	72%	4%	24%	54
Political Science 112	68%	14%	18%	22
History of Music 112	67%	0%	33%	3
Actuarial Science 112	64%	9%	27%	11
Financial Accounting 178	61%	7%	32%	28
Philosophy 112	58%	0%	42%	12
Theory of Interest 152	58%	13%	29%	24
Information Systems 188	55%	18%	27%	11
Statistics 186	53%	11%	37%	38
Physics 144	50%	0%	50%	2
Psychology 114	50%	0%	50%	4
Mathematics (Bio) 124	48%	6%	46%	65
Economics 178	47%	18%	35%	17
Physics 178	47%	14%	39%	51
Public & Development Management 114	44%	0%	56%	16
Physics 114	40%	0%	60%	10
Decision-making & Value Studies 114	39%	14%	47%	36
Biology 124	38%	23%	38%	13
Mathematics 144	36%	7%	57%	14
Probability Theory & Statistics 144	36%	7%	57%	14
Statistical Methods 176	36%	12%	52%	25
Computer Science 144	33%	0%	67%	3
Mandarin 178	33%	0%	67%	3
Sociology 114	33%	17%	50%	6
French 278	22%	0%	78%	9
Management Accounting 278	20%	0%	80%	5
Mathematics (Ed) 178	20%	40%	40%	5
Criminal Law 171	18%	18%	64%	11
Decision-making & Value Studies 144	17%	17%	67%	18
History 144	17%	0%	83%	29
French 178	15%	0%	85%	13
Biology 144	13%	0%	88%	8
Chemistry 114	8%	11%	81%	79
Private Law 171	8%	5%	87%	85
Biology 154	0%	0%	100%	7
German 178	0%	0%	100%	3
Indigenous Law 171	0%	33%	67%	3
Information Skills 172	0%	0%	100%	2
Political Science 142	0%	0%	100%	4
Total	43%	8%	49%	887

Two large groups where the decrease was highly significant were for the modules of Decision-making and Value Studies (DMV) 114 and Chemistry 114. In DMV mentors reported that mentees had underestimated the workload and also displayed an inability to

master the discourse required for certain modules, including Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science and History. The problems that arose with Chemistry 114 were ascribed to the fact that Science as a school subject was not required for entrance to the course, which means that some mentees had never done any form of Chemistry before attempting it at first-year level. Formal and informal meetings with Faculty staff ensued, and extra lectures were presented at the Faculty of Natural Sciences to assist such students.

In total, the 887 irregular attendees and regular attendees together show a 43% increase, on average and 8% show no change. If this 8% were to be included as a positive score (in that the marks were maintained at the same level) this would mean that a total of 51% of the mentees had increased their marks.

In Table 8.4 it is clear that the 887 mentees who asked for support in the SMP managed to increase their marks in 20 of the 46 modules above.

When the mentees' first-year results were compared with their matric results, this showed not only that attendance at the mentor sessions mattered, but also that mentees' first-year results had dropped by an average of 18% from Grade 12 (Table 8.5):

Table 8.5 Mentee performance in matric by mentee-module performance

First-year module performance	Mean percentage for matric	Number of mentees with matric results available	Total number of mentees
Passed exam	77.1%	515	695
Failed exam	69.7%	166	235
Did not qualify for exam	68.0%	144	180
Terminated studies / Did not write exam	73.5%	57	77
Other	57.0%	1	3
Total	74.0%	883	1190

A disturbing fact is highlighted by the data in Table 8.5. The mentees who passed the examination had a mean matric result of 77.1%. Those who failed and did not even qualify for the examinations with a predicate of 45%, had obtained 69.7% and 68% respectively in matric, while those who terminated their studies or chose not to write the examinations had

a mean performance of 73.5% in matric (which should have been more than adequate to pass their first year).

It is important to note that matriculation performance results were available for only a subset of the mentees, namely 883 of the 1190 non-unique mentees (mentee positions), or 74%. In Figure 8.9 the actual first-year performance results of the 269 mentees who attended regularly are indicated. It shows an interesting resemblance to Figure 6.27, where the matric results of the mentees are presented. The mean matric performance for this group was 74.9%, with a standard deviation of 11.77. The mean first-year performance of this group of mentees (with an attendance rate of more than 50%) is 56.0%, with a standard deviation of 11.77. It thus appears that the mentee performance is on average about 18% less than their matric performance.

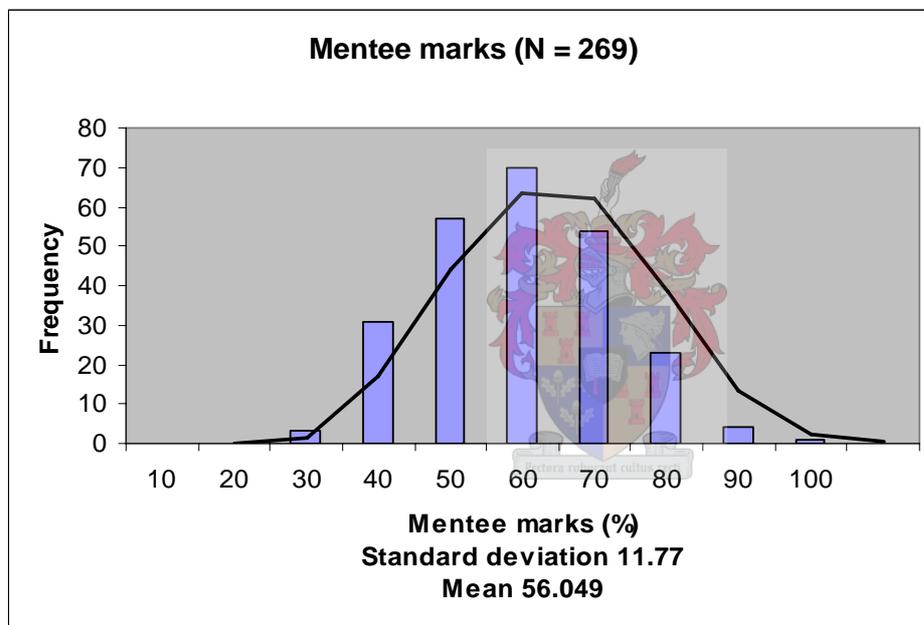


Figure 8.9 First year results of mentees with attendance of more than 50%

Key outcome 4: The programme made a significant difference in mentees' specific subject skills

Qualitative responses from mentees were obtained from the open-ended questions in the baseline questionnaires and feedback questionnaires, as well as from individual interviews. When asked about their experience of their own academic performance, they commented as follows:

- *I think the mentor group helped me a lot because now I can see the improvement in my studies so I say forward to the mentoring group!*
- *Ek het in my eerste toets wat ek vir wiskunde geskryf het, het ek 45% gekry en toe nou vir hierdie toets wat ek geskryf het, het ek 65% gekry. So dit het met 20% verbeter.*

- *Ek het nie dadelik aan die begin van die jaar ingeskakel nie en ek het baie gesukkel met my punte, ek was onder 40% en het besef dit kan nie so aangaan nie. En deur die e-mail het ek aangesluit by die mentor program en my punte het drasties met ten minste 20% verbeter.*
- *I had 71% the first semester and I got 86% now.*

The mentees not only commented on their improved performance, but also on the motivational role that the mentors played. One also mentioned that the lecturer referred her/him to the programme, which might indicate that lecturers are aware of the value of the small group facilitation:

- *I got 23% for my first test. They said they can help me but I need to put in effort on my side as well and if I practice what we've done I will definitely be alright. My second test I got 51%. Third test 65%. We're getting close to our final exam and it was a bit stressful. We went through old papers, old financial accounting papers with our mentor and I managed to get 75% for the exam.*
- *Well, it meant achievement for me because from the beginning of the year, at like the start of the timetable for the first time in my life I got 17% percent for the first test and I was majoring in accounting. So I went to my lecturer and I told him, you know I've got a problem, obviously, and I need help. So he said, go to the mentor programme. I went to Hendrick and he gave me extra classes and helped me helped me helped me and then I got 50% percent for my second test.*

Mentors also assisted with the specific skills of answering test questions and examination questions:

- *Sometimes you fail and it is not because you do not know the work, it is because you do not know how to approach the questions.*
- *Was much in need of mentoring. Without it would have failed. Best thing.*

Key outcome 5: Mentees acquired skills during group work, such as discourse

Through the interaction in the group and the input of the mentor, the mentees gained insight into the relevance of the subject, or "the big picture". By being able to understand this, the mentees were motivated to try harder, to talk about the subject and not to lose hope:

- *Very satisfied, I couldn't believe it. Everything I studied was falling together and I was getting the big picture of accounting. I don't think I would have come near that mark and I might have even started losing hope half way, because I wouldn't have ... it helps you psychologically to know that you can actually do it, you are speaking to people who have done it before and how they do it. Because it also encourages you too, it actually shows you how much you need to put in as well.*
- *Sover geniet ek die mentor sessies en dit het my aangespoor om op my eie harder te werk deur voor te berei vir sessies. Die mentorprogram is 'n baie goeie idee*

Mentees also mentioned that the small group enabled them to ask the questions that they would not have dared to ask the lecturer in a larger class:

- *I think the mentor programme plays a very important role in one's studies, such as understanding difficult concepts better because lecturers can't always help you because they are working against time. So I think mentor programmes must continue for many years.*
- *I think the mentor programme is the best thing that could have happened to students because we get to ask questions that we don't get a chance to ask in class.*

Mentees commented on how capable the mentors were and how willing they were to help them. It seems that being able to interrupt someone, and the patience and understanding of the mentors were highly appreciated. They could engage in discourse with the mentors without being afraid to ask questions:

- *He's got a way of like ... 'cause he knows what he is talking about so he like makes you understand like what he is thinking so it helped me a lot ... and he.. you can stop him, like other people you can't really stop because if you stop them they get confused where they were and they can't explain, but he really ... he's like on top, he knows his stuff, he's clever.*
- *Die mentor kan fisies van gesig tot gesig gaan en meer op 'n persoonlike basis die werk weer kan herhaal en laat jou verstaan, want wat ek ervaar het is dat hulle baie geduldig is en bereid om 'n ekstra myl met jou te stap om jou te help.*

Mentors as role models and the positive expectations mentees cultivated of themselves were apparent in some of the responses. It was clear that mentees had found someone in their mentor that they could trust, and consequently their self-confidence also grew:

- *I mean the mentors really seem to be ... they know how to help us and they've done the work themselves and seeing that they are so good at the work themselves then you can look up to them because they are more knowledgeable than you are.*
- *She loves the subject and she makes you love it too and she expects a lot of you then you also start expecting a lot from yourself and stuff ... and the exercises she gave us and stuff and how to study and everything helped a lot.*

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the mentees rated the contribution of the mentor to their studies as "good" and a further 25% rated the performance as "average" (Figure 8.10). On the whole they rated the contribution of their fellow group members as "average" to "good" (which differs from the way mentees rated their close personal friends in Figures 8.11 and 8.12). Half of the mentees rated the contribution of the group as "average", with more than a quarter rating it as "good", signifying that even this was still seen as a valuable contribution in group facilitation and cooperative learning.

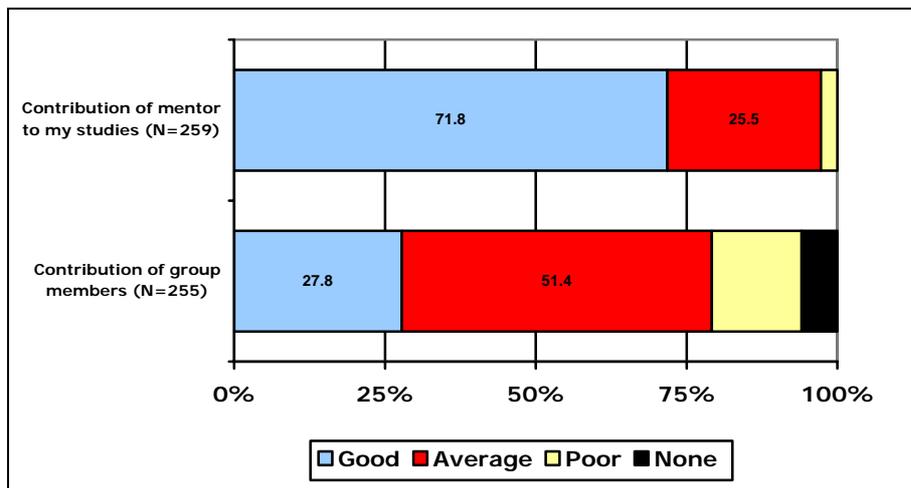


Figure 8.10 Rating of mentor and group's contribution to mentees' studies

8.2.2 Psychosocial coping skills

In this section it was important to establish whether mentees had acquired the necessary coping skills to survive their first year in a new environment. The researcher sought to establish the levels of mentor support and mentees' own resilience to being isolated and overwhelmed by academics and student culture.

Key outcome 6: Mentees are able to cope psychosocially

Mentees reported that they experienced shock when they first came to university from school, and how they needed someone to talk to, not specifically about subject difficulties, but rather someone who understood the system:

- *Well at first when I came here I just told myself that wow I can't move, now my eyes are wide open. I do cope now.*
- *Ek het dit nie net spesifiek gedoen oor die filosofie nie maar ook om net in kontak te kom met iemand wat reeds deur die hele proses is van aanpassing, en weet hoe die hele universiteit sisteem werk en na wie toe om te gaan as jy 'n sekere soort probleem het.*
- *I was on the programme last year also, I never understood the lectures. It was the difference between high school and university. At university lecturers give you the information and expect you to do the research. School you are handed the information. That forms a barrier where you need someone to help you to get to understand.*

Motivation from the mentors and the ensuing growth and independence of the mentees as the year progressed are recurring themes from the qualitative responses. The knowledge that there was "someone to talk to" and someone who could give advice seemed to be a great help to mentees:

- *She is like always motivating me supporting me even with problems she is there. I can go to her and chat to her...*

- *I don't know, you get a sense of independence and you're sure of yourself and you expect more of yourself. When you first get here it is totally different from high school because at high school you had the teachers who were there assisting you and everything and here it's like you are here on your own. You are on your own, you have to think for yourself and she was there; and for me, I kind of had that part of high school with me because I got it from her because I could talk to her about anything, I have a problem with this and then I'll just go to her and I'll talk to her and she'll help me solve it.*
- *I just wanted to have a continuity as I am growing in confidence in myself and in terms of getting better in academics. And just having someone who is going to guide me and show me some of the problematic areas you should improve on. If you work on your own you won't get an idea of how far you have progressed.*

Mentees also commented on the social interaction in the small groups and how they found this valuable, meeting new people, and supporting each other in a variety of ways, not just academically:

- *The thing is that it is a small group, it is not a big group and then you get familiar with the people and you get to talk with the mentor, so I don't think that its only academic, I think it depends on who the mentor is.*
- *It helped in both ways. We are all doing different BSc's and you then get to interact with other people in class, because we don't only share biochemistry. Even if you don't have a mentor for that other subject, you can go to one of the people because you know them and you can ask that person for help, chances are between those nine people someone will understand.*
- *In a sense that at the end of the day we forgot about each others home towns etc. and realised we are all here to study and we are all here to get a degree and we like the same things. During break times during the mentor sessions we chat about other things.*



They became aware that they were not the only ones who did not understand, contrary to what they initially believed. Mentees also realised that their purpose for being at university was to study, and they began to accept their own responsibility and role in the process:

- *When you are sitting in a class you see many people coming and going and you think that they all understand. There is no point of suffering on the inside when there is help. The university does offer help but you must just take the initiative and other people are just shy.*

An important social coping mechanism was making new friends, as is clear from a previous comment. They also talked about shyness and sharing, being familiar with their environment and interaction with other people. They related how they “chatted” during breaks in the mentor sessions about more personal things, and how amongst the group they could always find someone who understood. The group sessions undoubtedly played a significant role in the development of mentees’ coping skills at university. Even though mentees indicated that they felt the group members’ contribution to their academic success was average (Figure 8.10), they do rate friendship highly and regard it as an important part of their well-being and

their studies (Figure 8.11), and that they also played a part in their friends' success (Figure 8.12):

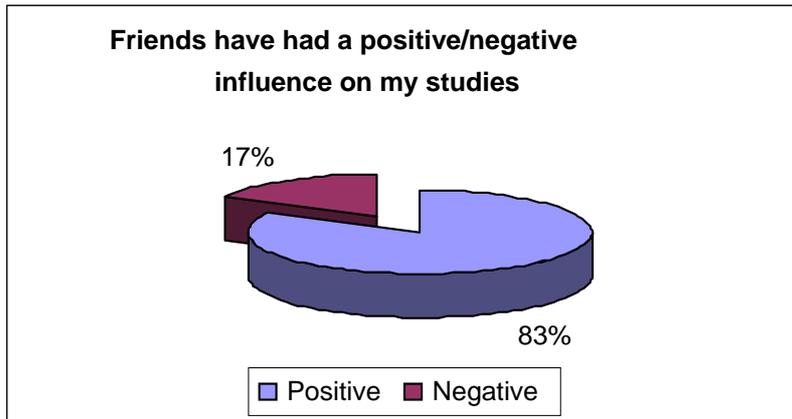


Figure 8.11 Friends have had a positive/negative influence on my studies (N = 181)

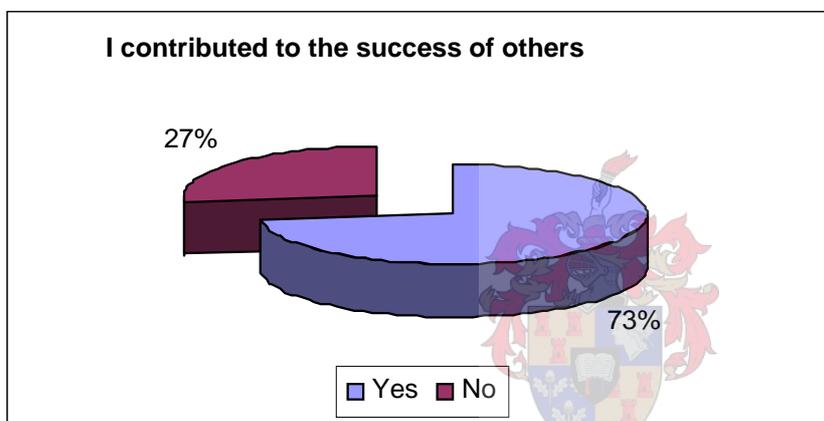


Figure 8.12 I contributed to the success of others (N = 178)

General comments and recommendations from mentees

In some instances mentees were quite outspoken in their recommendations, and it would seem that they expect a great deal (sometimes unjustifiably so) from the mentors. In group facilitation, mentors were not supposed to give notes and activities. Some felt that mentors should receive better training, although the mentors themselves seemed satisfied with their training and the skills they acquired. A common recommendation was that mentoring should be extended into their senior years (even up to the fourth-year level). They further felt that the programme should be better advertised, even though it had been introduced to them:

- *Mentors should receive better training.*
- *Mentors should give more notes if possible and do more activities, or make it more interesting with current affairs concerning the work.*
- *I think the programme should be extended up to the fourth year level.*
- *I just feel that there should be more mentors available because a lot of people have to wait for a while before they get help.*

- *Advertise or tell students about the mentor programme because a lot of people I know don't even know that there is mentor help for subjects.*
- *Miskien moet daar dalk meer ekstra oefeninge uitgedeel word waarop terugvoering gegee kan word.*
- *Individuele klasse kan soms van nut wees.*

The fact that the Student Mentor Programme has been growing since 2004 is an indication that there is substantial awareness of and need for the programme. The recommendation for extending it up to fourth-year level and individual mentoring are recurring themes, requests that the SMP is not able to comply with due to budget and staff constraints. The support that was given, though, seemed to be of value to those who attended regularly.

Many positive comments were made, which express gratitude and the realisation of their own responsibility to work on a continuous basis.

- *It's the best move I could have made so far at US. Glad I went for it.*
- *Mentor programmes are of great help I think everybody should try and obtain one. It really helps!!*
- *Die mentorprogram het my gehelp om deurlopend te werk.*
- *The mentor programme is really a good thing, because he/she can help you with what ever problem you have. You are all doing a good job.*
- *Baie dankie vir so 'n fantastiese sisteem wat my akademies ondersteun.*
- *The programme has helped me a lot and I have improved my marks.*
- *I think the mentor programme is the best thing that could have happened to students because we get to ask questions that we don't get a chance to ask in class.*
- *I strongly feel that the mentor programme should continue to assist students that are having problems in a certain area in terms of their academics. This is an excellent programme and should definitely continue.*

8.3 Conclusion

Mentors displayed concern about some mentees' lack of commitment in attending the group sessions, about preparing for sessions and working on their own. However, they also experienced the satisfaction of seeing the mentees grow and develop into independent students. Many mentors also reported that they acquired not only extra subject skills from going through the subject content with mentees, but that they also grew in confidence and inter-personal skills themselves. The mentors' referral of students with more serious problems to the relevant support services showed knowledge and insight.

Mentee academic results are more complex to interpret, as many influencing factors became apparent from the first baseline questionnaires. Factors such as their own motivation and background, their preparedness and the resources available to them were also highlighted in the literature on student performance and retention. However, there is a clear correlation between successful mentee-performance with regular attendance (74% pass rate) (compared with the mentees who attended irregularly and only achieved a 58% pass rate) in the Student Mentor Programme.

The qualitative responses point to a richness of experience gained by those mentors and mentees who participated regularly in the Programme. They were significantly positive about the Programme, the sessions, and the participants' own growth and benefits. Mentees expressed their initial shock of the transition from school to university, and their relief when they found a mentor who was not only a subject specialist, but was someone they could talk to and discuss problems with. The social interaction that the groups provided, facilitated by a capable mentor to whom they could direct questions, was immensely valuable to the mentees. Some of them reported in no uncertain terms that they would have failed were it not for the Student Mentor Programme. The repeated requests for the Programme to continue are clear indications of the mentees' and mentors' positive experience.



CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction – The rationale for a Student Mentor Programme

Student success, access to higher education and accountability are concerns of universities and communities worldwide. Newspaper articles and reports regularly express concern about high failure and dropout rates, and studies and programmes are conducted and implemented to address these problems. Universities are implementing interventions such as mentor programmes, Supplemental Instruction and resident advisors in order to provide broader access and support for a wider range of students than in the past. “These interventions reflect the belief that mentoring can improve students’ levels of academic achievement, assist students at risk for attrition to graduation... and humanize large and impersonal institutions” (Jacobi, 1991:526).

In the interest of the wider community, students, the institution and stakeholders the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme (SMP) was designed and implemented in 2003. This, in turn, necessitated a comprehensive evaluation. The need for evaluation in mentor programmes is highlighted in the literature, and the lack of rigorous evaluation of the mentoring processes is lamented (Jacobi, 1991; Kreber & Brook, 2001). While descriptions and methods of evaluating such programmes are offered (Grossman, 1999; Miller, 2002), hardly any rigorous evaluation studies of such processes or programmes could be found.

The literature on mentoring emphasises the need for research on mentoring, especially its implied success in the academic performance of undergraduates. The study of the Stellenbosch University Student Mentor Programme thus adds information to the existing pool of knowledge in the following ways:

- It provides a theoretical background for the concept, context and functioning of mentoring.
- It provides descriptive programme information for numbers of students in the programme, as well as their biographical details.
- Comparative information is provided for mentored and non-mentored student performance.
- Qualitative data that sheds light on mentor-mentee relationships, the value and the functioning of the programme is provided.
- Evaluation research of programme monitoring as well as the outcomes is presented.
- It clearly shows that involvement in a supportive intervention has both positive academic and psychosocial outcomes for students.

9.1.1 Definition of mentoring

The study of the literature on mentoring generated two important conclusions. Firstly, the concept has multiple meanings and is applied in many contexts. Secondly, the search for a definition can only be situated in a theoretical paradigm against which the programme planners' intentions can be understood. The mentor-mentee relationship, which is no longer seen as necessarily being hierarchical in nature, functions in many different contexts at institutions and organisations, depending on what needs to be addressed, and of course, on policies and institutional culture. These contexts can only be understood against the background of theoretical paradigms that may resolve the quest for a single definition.

No metanarrative or grand structure fulfils all the purposes and objectives of mentoring or provides a single basis for enhancing the understanding of the social theories that underpin the practice of mentoring. However, what is apparent is that the concept of mentoring is primarily driven by a genuine desire to support, educate or empower people. Mentor programmes often reflect managers' basic beliefs in the structured functions, roles and responsibilities of mentors/mentees (functionalist paradigm), the addressing of social justice (the radical humanist paradigm) or the highlighting of exploitative power relations (feminist theory). Emphasising the primacy of narratives or the making-of-meaning from language, and actions and transactions that take place, form part of the constructivist theory. Often combinations of the main principles of these paradigms are used to provide the rationale for a functional, assessable programme.

Mentoring in higher education implies the acquisition of knowledge and skills by students, in order to achieve academic success. Developmental mentoring, which is in essence part of all mentor programmes, includes amongst others social skills, attitudinal change, social inclusion, self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation and values. Work-related mentoring may include employability, work-related skills, and future goals and aspirations. Subject mentoring involves specific knowledge acquisition, subject-specific skills and study skills (Miller, 2002:33). The aims of student mentoring, namely academic guidance, psychosocial support and role-modelling, fits into the developmental philosophy of mentoring (Jacobi, 1991:510; Darwin, 2000; Miller, 2002:33). Mentoring also fits with Wenger's (2000:226) definition of learning as a social system within which knowledge is gained from history and experience. Because experience and history differ among communities, it makes perfect sense to involve newcomers in communities of practice in order to learn new ways and a new discourse.

9.1.2 Roles and relationships

It is important that both mentors and mentees understand their roles and duties and that formal training for both mentors and mentees is provided, especially in undergraduate education where the mentors are peers.

The expectations, perceptions and potential problems of mentors and mentees are often around academic achievement, career-related success and social support (Kram, 1983, 1985; Scandura & Williams, 2003; Young & Perrewe, 2004; Moberg & Velasquez, 2004). There is also a strong link between the perceptions of the participants and the actual outcomes of a mentoring relationship (highlighted by Foa, quoted by Young & Perrewe, 2004:106). The expectations and perceptions are in turn affected by the demographic characteristics of both mentors and mentees, such as age, gender, race, rank in the organisation, and experience (Guerazzi, 2002; Smith, Howard and Harrington, 2005). Yet, no magical transformation can be ascribed to mentoring alone (Daloz, 1999), regardless of the input mentors make. This fact is nowhere more evident than in an undergraduate mentor programme.

9.1.3 Needs and expectations

Mentee needs and expectations are informed and confirmed by the many factors discussed in Chapter 1 of this study. Among the student input characteristics are background, quality of schooling, culture of learning and motivation, which was evident from the mentor reports on mentee participation and behaviour. Examples of environmental factors that may have an impact on a student are accommodation, travel, finances, the culture of the institution, faculty-student interaction, and the peer group. Their poor judgement of the workload is an apparent reason mentees offer for joining the programme, as is the difficult transition from school to university. Students often have false expectations about their own abilities (Bitzer & Troskie-de Bruyn, 2004). On the other hand, an individual's perceptions of outcomes may also relate to his/her expectations, and serve as a powerful motivational force (Kram, 1983, 1985; Scandura & Williams, 2003; Young & Perrewe, 2004).

Reasons offered by mentees for joining the SMP range from being “totally stressed out and lost” (45.5%) to joining as a precautionary measure, because they are uncertain of what is expected of them. They also state that travelling to and from campus takes much of their time and is a source of stress. These comments concur with Astin's (1993:390) findings of factors that affect student retention. Time constraints and travel had further negative correlations with leadership development and participation in student activities or organisations, and had negative effects on emotional health: “Apparently, substantial

commuting seems to raise the level of stress experienced by undergraduate students” (Astin, 1993:391).

9.1.4 Factors affecting mentee success

Students are affected by two groups of factors, namely pre-enrolment factors and post-enrolment factors. Pre-enrolment factors are those characteristics that a student brings with her/him to higher education, and include academic preparedness (or lack thereof), background and resources, personal commitment and expectations and perceptions. These factors also include the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991, 1994; Yosso, 2005) of the student – the linguistic, intellectual, and social skills they have acquired in their communities (Wenger, 2000; Contu & Willmott, 2003).

Post-enrolment factors affecting students are those that they find when living in a new environment at the institution, such as modes of belonging, involvement or social integration. “Modes of belonging” (Wenger, 2000) include engagement with a new culture, and the student’s own alignment with changed circumstances. Involvement and social integration (Astin, 1993; Kelly & Llacuna, 2000; Guerazzi, 2002) are of primary importance, as was also shown in the current study. Astin (1993) emphasises that one of the strongest influences is the student peer group. Environmental effects also include faculty characteristics and institutional policies.

From the baseline- and the feedback questionnaires, student responses show that four main factors play a role in their overall experience and perseverance at university, namely background (socio-economic status, financial means, work while studying, travel), student input (motivation, goal orientation) environmental effects (found at the institution) and involvement (with academics, peers and faculty). Within the broadening context of higher education many students are “first-generation students” – they are the first people in their families to experience university. They lack the “intergenerational benefits of information” about university life (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005). These factors highlighted from students’ responses correlate with the student input characteristics and the environmental factors that have been discussed by various authors before.

9.2 Theoretical underpinning of mentoring

The most obvious theoretical paradigms in the field of mentoring are found at the two opposite extremes of the spectrum, namely the traditional, functionalist conception of mentoring, and the radical humanist conception with its emphasis on democracy, development and human rights. Both paradigms play a role in the current study, as can be seen in the dual roles the mentors were required to play. These mentors functioned both as

leaders into new communities of practice, and as facilitators of peer mentoring, where students also learn from each other. Mentor reports proliferate with the realisation of the mutual benefits gained in learning and personal development.

The mentoring relationship in a functionalist perspective assumes the traditional guiding role of the mentor, where knowledge and expertise are transferred from the mentor (as teacher) to the protégé (as novice). In the radical humanist perspective the relationship is more interdependent, and concepts and methods such as co-learning, or co-mentoring (Mullen & Kealy, 1999; Lick, 1999) inform the interaction. Traditional roles are transcended or new roles created, and the interaction takes place between equals to their mutual benefit (Little, 2005). Peer mentoring seems to offer a support system that is closely aligned to co-mentoring, once the mentees have gained enough confidence to use the subject discourse.

Inherent to the radical humanist paradigm are developmental models of mentoring. The functionalist paradigm also supposes developmental models, but these are centred on distinct roles and functions. Developmental models in the radical humanist paradigm involve inclusional objectives, highlighting behavioural and attitudinal objectives for socially excluded or at-risk students (Freire, 1983; 1998). The values of the radical humanist theory are reflected in mentoring programmes, as the very nature of mentoring in higher education is aimed at development, diversity awareness and democracy.

The primacy of making meaning in language and dialogue reflect a constructivist paradigm. The process of making meaning through conversation, while building relationships, is central to mentoring. Rix and Gold (2000:59) emphasise that the relationship is primary, more important than the skills and competencies of the mentor. Relationships between people are constructed by coordinating talk and actions, and different worlds and interests can be brought together. Language as it is organised in discourses, narratives and stories is central to this perspective. In interviews with mentors and mentees, and in consecutive focus group discussions with mentors, the primacy of narratives in building relationships was evident. Interaction in a non-threatening environment, such as the mentor group, provided mutual understanding and opportunities for growth and development of all parties involved.

Therefore, the kind of mentoring that benefits undergraduates in higher education will typically be a developmental model within a formal programme that assumes that the mentor is a peer. However, the peer has more experience than those being mentored and is able to assist the mentee to study successfully. The SMP is thus a developmental, formal model, with defined roles and functions (functionalist), utilising peers and striving towards

social inclusion (radical humanist), facilitating discussion and discourse by using students' own experience as a starting point (constructivism).

Feminist theory highlights the dangers found in unequal power relations and dysfunctional (mentoring) relationships. It seems that power relations have played a lesser role in the SMP, probably because of the use of peer mentors. Often mentors and mentees were also from the same residence, and the ensuing relationship was one of friendship. Gender and race did not create difficulties in the current programme, though white females were over-represented in both mentor and mentee- groups.

To conclude the section on the paradigms in which mentoring and mentor schemes function, it is important to emphasise that knowledge of the broad underlying theories enhances the understanding of the practice of mentoring in various contexts. Each paradigm makes a useful contribution to the concept of mentoring: functionalism with its emphasis on clearly defined roles, functions and structure; radical humanist theory with its sensitivity towards social justice and power relations; and constructivism with its emphasis on the primacy of meaning-making through language and the importance of narratives. Each of these paradigms informs institutions and programme coordinators, and are to a greater or lesser extent reflected in their programme theories and structures.

9.3 The Student Mentor Programme

An evaluation study on the SMP was conducted during 2005. During the previous year, 2004, the programme was implemented as a pilot project, and questionnaires and interviews were used to establish the effectiveness of programme delivery and the resulting levels of satisfaction. The evaluation was conducted with both programme monitoring and programme outcomes in mind. Programme monitoring provides valuable formative evaluation, and qualifies and quantifies the outcome evaluation. Outcomes can only effectively be assessed when the programme delivery is established (preventing the so-called "blackbox" evaluation (Hedrick, Bickman & Rog, 1993; Mouton, 2001). The current study is based on the evaluation principles proposed by Babbie and Mouton (2003), Hedrick et al. (1993) and Patton (1990) amongst others.

The underlying rationale of the programme is based on student needs with reference to social learning systems (Astin, 1993; Wenger, 2000; Northedge, 2003b; Contu & Willmott, 2003). It is further grounded in sound theoretical evidence, highlighting the paradigms in which programme managers and institutions operate. The empirical evidence of the SMP is based on quantitative and qualitative data from various measuring instruments.

The programme is highly structured and managed according to the key categories of a logic model, which also provides the relevant delivery and evaluative steps. The programme has two target groups, namely the mentors and the mentees. Mentors are senior students who are trained, monitored and supported through training sessions, monthly reports, focus group discussions, interviews and feedback questionnaires. Mentees are mainly first-year students, organised into small groups, each with a peer mentor. The mentees' academic progress and attendance at the group sessions are monitored by observation, monthly reports, interviews and questionnaires.

The SMP caters for students from mainstream academic courses who participate voluntarily in the programme to help them to adjust to the academic and social culture of the university. The SMP was initially conceptualised to assist under-prepared students from diverse backgrounds to ease their transition from a school environment to university and to involve them in activities that would enhance their psychosocial integration into university. High failure and dropout rates provided adequate motivation for the design, implementation and management of such an intervention for first-years, with small-group facilitation by peer mentors.

The primary objective of the SMP is the academic success of first-year students, where success is defined as obtaining at least 50% to pass a module. First-year students are grouped (4 to 8 students per mentor) in module-specific units, e.g. a student with difficulty in Mathematics will be placed with a mentor majoring in Mathematics. It is assumed that students will also acquire the necessary academic skills, time-management skills and discipline discourse to be able to positively influence their progress in other modules as well. In these groups they can ask questions that they are afraid to ask the lecturers in larger groups, and they are able to converse about the content in a safe place. They are urged to formulate opinions where they otherwise may have kept quiet. Though the main focus of the sessions is on academic content, the mentors are trained to play a supportive role where mentees are experiencing psychosocial problems, and are sensitised to identify problems such as substance abuse, stress symptoms and depression, and to then refer students to the relevant service providers on campus.

Initially it was thought that the best mentors would be the postgraduates in a specific field, but feedback has shown that the most suitable mentors are third- or even second-year students. The reason for this is that second- or third-year students are still close enough in age to the first-years, and they understand the circumstances of the mentee so much better on account of their own more recent experience. The concept of peer mentoring also makes much more sense when employing a student mentor who is closer in age to the mentee. A

second- or third-year student is also much more approachable and less intimidating than a postgraduate student.

9.4 Results

Authors point to the fact that the academic effectiveness of interventions such as mentor programmes and SI may be exaggerated, the only real evidence being qualitative data (Freedman, 1992; Koch & Mallon, 1998; Miller, 2002:8). A further influential factor lies in the programme structure (formal or informal), as authors (Chao et al., 1992, Mullen & Lick, 1999; Blake-Beard, 2001; Smith et al., 2005) argue that the characteristics of the mentors, their training and sensitising also play important roles in various contexts.

The pilot study of 2004 set the course of the programme for 2005 to a large extent. Though the questionnaires were adjusted, the results from 2004 gave an indication of student needs, problems, expectations and performance similar to the results of 2005. Gender, race, residence and attendance show the same characteristics of the results for 2004. However, the substantial increase in programme participants from 686 in 2004 to 1190 in 2005 was unforeseen.

9.4.1 Biographical profiles

Gender

Gender as a variable seems to play a role in the SMP participation rate. Women are over-represented both as mentors (52%) and mentees (63%) in the programme. One could postulate that female students take more responsibility for their own studies, or are more inclined to ask for help than male students. This finding correlates with the findings in Guerazzi's study, namely that white female students involved in interventions achieve more success than other categories of students similarly involved:

Also, variables that show a tendency toward increasing the likelihood of retention are gender, ethnicity, residence status, and a declared major. In essence, white, females who are involved in multiple Success Challenge interventions, with a strong high school GPA and ACT score, who live in the residence hall and have declared a major are likely to be retained (Guerazzi, 2002:55).

The pass rate for the female students who attended the SMP mentor sessions regularly was 80% compared with the pass rate of the male students, which was 62%. It is also interesting to note that concepts such as co-mentoring in supportive groups had their origins in women's movements.

Race

The majority of students at Stellenbosch University are white (79%). However, in the SMP 48% of the mentees are black. It seems that the SMP is thus fulfilling its purpose of supporting students from previously disadvantaged communities. Mentors or mentees in the SMP have not reported having any problems with racial issues. One white male mentor who mentored four coloured girls in his group, reported with enthusiasm, "I have learnt so much from them!" Little (2005:92) states that though students bring with them the "hidden rules" of the class in which they are raised, heterogeneous mentoring groups provide students with "a sense of community and security, as well as the ability to learn from other students". This statement underlines the theories of Wenger (2000) on communities of practice and that of Contu and Willmott (2003) on the importance of power relations in learning theory.

Northedge (2003b) stresses the importance of students' participation in academic discourse. Mentors and mentees are urged to learn academic material and relate effectively to one another, and to be committed to social justice (Chesler, 2003:1). Being reciprocal in essence, the relationships formed in peer mentoring groups may well prove to be prime examples of transformation at grass roots level, provided the mentors are sensitised to diverse needs and backgrounds.

Mentees: Matric results

Mentee matric results in the programme are significant. A study by Du Plessis (2004) at Stellenbosch University defines different levels of performance at school according to the symbols achieved. He found that students who came to university with a matric result lower than or equal to 60% had limited chance of success, and those with less than 50% had almost no chance at all of achieving academic success. This was borne out in the 2005 first-year cohort and in the SMP where they had performed at levels of on average 18% lower than in matric.

Mentees' matric results indicate that the majority of the 2005 group had the potential to achieve academic success, that is, pass their modules. There were, however, some very low symbols, and also many more on the programme who exceeded expectations. Those who did not qualify for examination entrance (due to a low predicate or progress mark) had had a mean matric mark of 68%. This means that such students' marks decreased in reality by even more than 18%, as 45% would have qualified the student to write their examinations. Students who came to university with E (50-59%) and F (40-49%) symbols would thus find it almost impossible to pass their first-year subjects.

However, paradoxically, it was found that the most likely candidate to participate in the programme is a motivated student, often from an advantaged background. This fact became clear when matric results of the mentees were studied (Chapter 6). The percentage of A-average students on the SMP increased from 21% of the programme participants in 2004 to 37% in 2005. The mean matric score of mentees in the SMP in 2005 was 74.9%, which does not obviously make them prime candidates for the programme. A study by Koch and Mallon (1998) on the effectiveness of an SI intervention at the University of Port Elizabeth shows a similar tendency, namely that students identified to be at-risk often do not come to the programme or do not persevere in attending. Christie et al. (2002) found evidence to the effect that once students have experienced problems they tend not to seek help from professionals within the university, such as lecturers, tutors or advisors. The struggling, disadvantaged student is thus not necessarily the beneficiary of such interventions.

9.4.2 Programme implementation and monitoring

The efficiency of the programme delivery was evaluated according to the programme outputs and mentor-mentee contact sessions. Monthly reports indicated attendance and the scope of input from mentors and mentees. Evidence from training sessions, interview schedules, focus group discussion documents and observations also formed part of the ongoing monitoring system. Examples of the documents used for programme monitoring are presented in the Appendices of the thesis.

Programme activities

Facilitating a peer mentoring programme across five faculties for a diverse student population presented some real challenges. Several strategies were followed in order to lower student attrition rates, and make the transition from school to university easier:

- A peer mentoring programme was designed and implemented.
- Mentors were trained to be small group facilitators.
- Mentor participation was advertised on a space on the university-based WebCT chatroom and notice board.
- Lecturer awareness and input were accomplished without an extra burden being placed on academic staff.
- Mentees were placed in groups with a module-specific mentor (mentees indicated which module they needed help with) to enhance academic input.
- Contact with mentors and mentees was maintained through interviews, focus group discussions, monthly report forms, observations, feedback questionnaires and e-mail.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the programme was done on a regular basis.

Programme participation

Feedback from the mentors on the processes involved in facilitating group interaction displayed insight into group dynamics, and it is clear that they made an effort to involve all the group members. They also indicated that they changed strategies as they gained more knowledge and experience, and gleaned tips and ideas from peers in focus group discussions.

The mentors reported that they considered the enhancement of mentees' academic skills as the most important function of the mentor programme (and helping the mentees adjust to university culture as the second most important function). This required making a concerted effort to help mentees to achieve academic success (passing their modules), as well as including them in the new culture, and integrating them into the social environment. The general well-being of the mentees appears last on the list (9.7%) of important functions. However, this should not be seen as an indication that the mentors did not care, but rather that they felt that academic achievement and adjustment to university would lead to the mentees general well-being. Mentor statements about the programme indicate that they experienced a sense of satisfaction (96.3%): they felt it was worthwhile being involved and hoped that the mentor programme would continue the following year.

Mentee participation in the SMP showed a steady increase from the first semester to the second, which can be ascribed to the fact that many seek support only after the June examinations. It was possible that students only then realised that they should seek help in passing their modules.

Attendance of the mentor groups was not satisfactory. Students tended to come and go as the need arose, instead of attending regularly, which would have allowed for maximum academic growth. Mentors indicated that when mentees attended regularly, their progress was then evident in all aspects of their development: academically, socially, and psychologically. There was also a direct correlation between attendance and achievement, when the results of the regular attendees were compared with those of the irregular attendees.

Mentees indicated that they had to change their study methods once at university as they found the work not only difficult to comprehend the first time, but the workload overwhelming. Some of them used techniques they acquired at school, but many only acquired solid study skills through mentoring and peer support. Underachievement was also a cause of a great deal of stress (83.3%), especially when mentees believed that they had studied intensely. Mentees' remarks about their own organisation and study methods also

indicate the real need for an intervention such as the Mentor Programme. It is highly significant that at least 26.5% of participants in the 2004 pilot study and 27.2% in 2005 indicated that they had considered terminating their course. This figure roughly correlates with general dropout figures for the first year of higher education.

A further cause for concern was mentees' mental and physical well-being, which in turn was related to their study methods and performance. Their preparation for tests and their use of stimulants and other substances indicate that they were not coping on their own. Mentors reported that they urged mentees to prepare and discuss work in the groups before attending lectures. Those who were successful, reported a positive experience from the mentees, as well as heightened motivation.

Mentees rated the overall contribution of the mentor to their studies as positive, and also placed a substantial emphasis on the contribution of friends to their studies. This finding was highly significant, as it is described in the literature as a defining factor in retaining students at higher education institutions. Mentees underlined the value of the programme by indicating that they felt it should continue (99%) in subsequent years.

Attendance

As mentees were volunteers on the programme, they could not be expected to attend every single session. Attendance figures were not only disappointing, but also complicated to interpret. For example, if a student only started in the SMP in May, and had 100% attendance for the rest of the year (until October), their attendance was still calculated for the whole duration of the programme from February, meaning that their attendance figure would indicate an absence of (the first) three months. Thus, attendance figures on paper invariably seem much worse than students' actual attendance. However, for evaluation purposes it is necessary to have a uniform benchmark figure for attendance calculated for the duration of the whole annual programme.

Attendance figures for the SMP indicate a correlation between programme participation and performance. The mean attendance for mentees who passed is significantly higher (58%) than for mentees who failed (45%). Koch and Mallon (1998) also reported a similar correlation, and they pose the question of how many contacts are sufficient to describe the attendance as beneficial. Apparently for SI, five contacts were enough to make a difference. In the SMP the maximum contact is three hours per week, and the attendance of these sessions are calculated as a percentage for each month of the programme. Thus the interaction time in the SMP is rather intense, and should a student attend regularly, academic performance should consequently be significantly enhanced.

The presence of high performers was welcomed on the programme (from the comments of both mentors and mentees) because they added a valuable dimension to group interaction. The participation of A-average students may also indicate, however, that the demands made at university level are stressful for all students involved, and that even academically strong candidates found that their performance was not what they expected. As seen before, the average matric result of mentees on the programme is 74.9%, and yet, the mean matric performance of students who terminate their studies is 73.5%. This is an alarming figure, as it indicates that much more than mere academic ability is required for success in higher education. On the positive side, the presence of high achievers may be an indication that participation in the Mentor Programme is free from any stigma.

The literature emphasises that mentoring should not be exclusively offered for disadvantaged students, as people at all levels need opportunities for growth and fulfilment. Authors (Buckley & Zimmermann, 2003; Van Wyk & Daniels, 2004) argue that although mentoring is of special benefit for students who are at risk, it also offers benefits to talented, motivated and gifted youth, and this group was indeed represented in the current study.

Group interaction

Mentors were trained at various workshops, and learned about small group facilitation, study techniques, time management and identifying of psychosocial problems. The observation of the groups showed that interaction was mostly in the form of group discussions, where the mentor posed a question based on the work that the lecturer had done, and mentees were then urged to answer and give their opinions. The mentors reported that mentees who stayed silent at the start of the programme, later became active participants. In the humanities (History, Political Science, Philosophy) group discussions were also mainly used, and when facilitating the learning of foreign languages (German, French), mentees had the opportunity to speak. In the Natural and Economic Sciences, group interaction took the form of working out problems on a white board, where students took turns to explain methods and concepts to each other. In both science and humanity modules where other tutors had already provided extra academic input, the mentor sessions offered the opportunity to work through and discuss these tutorials. Thus, mentors facilitated discussions where mentees had to engage critically with the learning material.

9.4.3 Programme outcomes

The key outcomes of the programme are discussed for both mentors and mentees on the two levels of academic and psychosocial support.

Outcomes for mentors

1. Mentors acquired knowledge of mentor functions, roles and relationships.

By training mentors as small group facilitators, a number of unexpected outcomes were realised. The role of the mentors in enhancing mentee success was valued by both the mentees and academic staff, as well as by the mentors themselves. The mentor programme of Central Queensland University, which is also designed as peer mentoring for small groups, reports similar outcomes:

The role and value of the mentor is enhanced by their participation in faculty and mainstream activities such as campus and library tours, learning-to-learn and study skills workshops... Student mentor's involvement in these activities has expedited the establishment of effective learning groups of new students in the University environment. Student mentors report that they perceive that their role and value in the University community is enhanced by their involvement in the orientation activities. Increased staff and student approval for the University orientation program has provided support for these innovations (Pope & Van Dyke 1998).

Mentors have reported that in some instances certain mentees had expected them to do their work for them, or worse, that mentees refrained from going to lectures and expected mentors to “teach” them by repeating the lecture. The literature (Astin, 1993; Mullen & Kealy, 1999; Sosik & Godschalk, 2005) highlights the real dangers of emotional (and intellectual) over-dependence on mentors, dysfunctional relationships and misguided expectations. These scenarios were discussed at focus groups with mentors, and were strongly discouraged in mentor groups.

Mentors provided evidence that they communicated well with their mentees, building up their confidence and motivating them. They also managed to instil in them a sense of their own responsibility towards their studies. The realisation that the relationship was beneficial to both parties was evident in the many responses indicating feelings of satisfaction, growth and pride in their achievement.

2. Mentors applied small group facilitation techniques in their sessions

Mentors understood that group facilitation does not mean lecturing. Some of them admitted that they struggled in the beginning, but later reported that they managed to change the group dynamics. They also reported mentees' development of creative thinking and valuable contributions to the group as a whole.

3. Mentors transferred study techniques (e.g. mind maps) to their mentees

Mentors and mentees both reported that the mentees had to adjust their study methods to encompass different ways of dealing with a larger workload. Many changed to using mind maps and also incorporated study skills programmes. Mentors also commented on mentees'

mindsets that needed to be adjusted, as well as the need to help them to manage their time better.

4. Mentors worked more reflectively regarding their own input in the programme

It was illuminating, from a coordinator's view, to see the mentors develop and grow from the one focus group discussion to the next. They realised that their role had limits, and that their real input was one of motivation. They reported how in the beginning they had tried to do everything for the mentee, but slowly, as things "started to fall in place", they saw that the real need was to improve the mentees' confidence and subsequent academic performance.

5. Mentor skills and knowledge were enhanced through shared experiences

The sharing of experiences at the focus group discussions played a dual role. Firstly, these discussions provided a valuable place and opportunity of support to the mentors themselves, and secondly, it was a place where they could share ideas and learn new techniques from their colleagues. There they related how they formed relationships and talked about ways of motivating disheartened mentees. The sharing of their experiences also motivated other mentors to persist in their valuable work with the mentees.

6. Mentors acquired valuable and appropriate knowledge of psychosocial problems and behaviour

Mentors' knowledge of behaviour patterns developed as they reported on the shyness, reticence, severe stress and exhaustion of mentees. There were also reports of drug abuse and financial constraints that resulted in hunger. This identification of problems also led to the next outcome - of knowing when and where to refer these problems.

7. Mentors were able to refer mentees for specific help as and when required

Students indeed indicated that they referred mentees with problems to services on campus, such as the CSCD and the Language Centre.

8. Mentors were able to recognise possible problems and share this information with their peers in the focus groups

A recurring problem in mentor reports and in the focus group discussions was that of poor attendance. Mentors shared the reasons why mentees joined their groups (uncertainty, scared of workload), as well as the reasons for their absence (travel arrangements, lack of time management, lack of commitment) in some instances. They identified late joining of the programme as one reason for attrition. Mentees came to the programme too late in the academic year because they were not aware of their own academic under-preparedness until the first test results were available at a much later stage. By then they had lost hope.

Mentors related how they really had to work hard to motivate these students, and in some cases managed to persuade them to write the examination, with positive results.

9. Mentors displayed a willingness to participate in the mentor programme in future, should they have the opportunity again the following year

It seems that students who receive learning support in their early years may become mentors and tutors when they are seniors (Astin, 1993:381). In the Student Mentor Programme, many mentors indicated that they were mentored in their first year, and having understood the positive outcome of such an intervention, decided to become mentors themselves, so that they could provide the same kind of support they had enjoyed. It is heartening to see that 92% of the mentors indicated that they would mentor again, should they have the opportunity to do so.

The benefits for mentors that many authors (such as Goodlad, 1998; Miller, 2002; Gilles & Wilson, 2004) mention in their research were also apparent in the feedback from the SMP mentors. Mentors reported a satisfaction with their role, as they were stimulated both emotionally and intellectually, and had enjoyed sharing their experiences and seeing their mentees succeed. They further reported that they had received new ideas from the mentees as well as from the mentor training that had enhanced their own interpersonal and leadership skills. One mentor also reported that being a mentor to students had changed her own time management and study skills for the better. This report corroborates with Astin's (1993:387) finding that mentoring or tutoring has positive correlations with all academic outcomes and leadership.

Another reported benefit or positive outcome for the mentors was in instances where there was lecturer involvement. Mentors reported that interest from the lecturers (for example in Private Law 171, Chemistry 114 and Statistical Methods 176) enhanced their own feelings of worth and purpose, and gave them extra motivation for their own studies.

Thus, not only is being a peer mentor or tutor an opportunity to effectively practice leadership skills, but it also brings mentors into more contact with faculty. According to Astin (1993:384) student-faculty interaction also has significant positive effects on the perceptual outcomes of diversity and social awareness, and this was clear from the mentor reports in this evaluation study too.

Outcomes for mentees

A tangible outcome for undergraduate students is the passing of their modules, and eventually, graduation. As stated before, the perceptions and expectations mentees have

about the mentoring process also influence the outcomes (Young & Perrew, 2004). An ideal outcome for the mentees would be a commitment to their own learning. Though some of the mentees in the SMP claim that they now understand how and when to learn, commitment to study still is an elusive element of student behaviour (even more so when matric results indicate an above average intelligence or capability).

1. A significant percentage of mentees passed their module exams

Regular attendance, that is, attending more than half of the mentor sessions, played an important role in final mentee academic performance. When the performance of the whole group (1190) who had had some contact (but less than 50%) with the SMP was taken into account, their pass rate was 58%. However, the pass rate for those who attended regularly (269) was 74%. These figures agree with Guerazzi's findings in her study of the Success Challenge programme. She reports that

...the retention rate for those involved in 2-5 Success Challenge programs (2101) was 76% and the [pass] rate for those involved in 6-10 programs (84) was 93%. On the other hand, only 53% of those students in the 2000-2001-cohort group who were not involved in Success Challenge re-enrolled (Guerazzi, 2002:56).

Studies conducted in Supplemental Instruction and peer tutoring (Koch & Mallon, 1998; Smuts 2003) claim that even five contacts are sufficient to make a difference. Contact sessions in the SMP were rather intense and frequent, namely three hours per week. It was quite possible that a positive effect could also be ascribed to less than 50% attendance, but this was not investigated.

2. Differential programme effect (attendance/performance)

A differential effect in mentee performance could again be ascribed to attendance. Those mentees who passed the examination had 58% mean attendance. Those who failed had 45% mean attendance, while those who did not qualify for the examinations had only 42% mean attendance. This difference in pass and failure rate illustrates clearly the effect and importance of participating in an intervention.

3. Mentees improved their marks

The calculation of a decrease or increase in marks of the mentees in total shows only a 2.3% positive difference. However, of the 58% of the whole cohort that passed a positive increase of marks for 55.7% of the mentees is indicated, with a further 6.1% who maintained their marks at the same level.

4. The programme made a significant difference in mentees' specific subject skills

Mentees reported on their improvement in their subjects. There were instances where the improvement was more than 20%. Not only did they improve their performance, but also their insight and understanding: "Very satisfied, I couldn't believe it. Everything I studied was falling together and I was getting the big picture."

5. Mentees acquired skills during group work, such as discourse

The mentors reported at the focus groups how their mentees were beginning to participate in the discussions. This was an important outcome of the programme, as it indicated mentor facilitation skills, as well as mentee growth and increasing confidence. In the literature this way of interacting is also referred to as peer coaching and collaborative teaching, and includes the concept of co-mentoring, as discussed in Chapter 2. What happened in the mentor programme was that undergraduate students started to mentor and support each other in the groups. This constitutes a powerful approach in the human dynamics and learning accomplishments of groups of people, because it involves the creation of synergistic relationships across traditional boundaries of rank, status, gender and experience (Lick, 1999; Mullen et al., 2000).

6. Mentees were able to cope psychosocially

Mentees mentioned that they had experienced the difference between school and university as a shock. The mentor group, however, provided a place where they could talk to others, where they could "get familiar with the people", talk about "not only academics" and be with people willing to "go the extra mile". Mentees consequently gained the confidence and coping skills they needed for the challenge of higher education: "...I am growing in confidence in myself and in terms of getting better in academics".

The small group facilitation where mentees were urged to engage in subject discourse with each other was such that the outcome was one of increased independence and goal setting: "...you get a sense of independence and you're sure of yourself and you expect more of yourself". Another mentee comment shows the close link between psychosocial well-being and academic success: "I might have even started losing hope half way... it helps you psychologically to know that you can actually do it, you are speaking to people who have done it before and how they do it". The qualitative and the quantitative results indicate that mentees found their mentors' input valuable, which agrees with the outcomes of Capel's (2003) study.

9.5 Significance of the study

Apart from programme evaluation information, many important educational issues can be addressed from the data gathered from a study of the Student Mentor Programme. At this stage there are limitations in the data (such as follow up statistics for mentees for the whole duration of their study, the long term effects on mentors and mentees), and it is not possible to make conclusive inferences. However, the short-term outcomes give an indication not only of the effects of the programme, but also of student experience and performance. Although the main aim in the design, implementation and evaluation of the SMP was to address the high dropout and failure rates of first-year students, many other advantages became apparent, and the outcomes of the programme indicate a positive effect on more than one terrain. Broadly speaking, the success of the programme can be seen as an important value-adding strategy to the university's teaching and learning environment, as well as a cost-effective intervention to retain students.

9.5.1 Contributions

The design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SMP produced some tangible and intangible outcomes, or made contributions in various ways. The study on the evaluation of this mentor programme contributes to the existing knowledge of the functioning, activities and outcomes of such interventions. It also highlights the benefits of group interaction among students, and shows the positive academic outcomes for students who attend regularly. As an intangible contribution, it may also enhance the culture of learning at an institution, as the discipline discourse is carried from the lecture hall to the residence, the library and the study centre in small groups of cooperative learning, situated learning and shared communities of practice. As seen in the current study, the group in a mentoring situation fulfils an important developmental, synergistic role with strong links to the concept of co-mentoring, as presented by various authors since 1999.

As more tangible outcomes, the SMP contributed to the following:

1. A mentor programme model

A replicable programme or intervention with clear expected outcomes was developed and evaluated that could be used in other institutions.

2. Growth in programme participation

The continuous growth of the SMP is a clear indication that there is a real need for student support. The requests for help in the different modules in five faculties grew from 686 in 2004, to 1279 in 2005, and to 2917 by August 2006. Clearly, word of mouth about the value of the programme has been instrumental in its growth.

3. Database and electronic management system

The management of the SMP led to the realisation that an electronic database that could handle a growing body of data was needed. The necessary features of such a database were identified and its construction was started and tested for operation during 2006. The development of such a database enhances data collection and capturing, as well as lightens the burden of the administrative tasks of the coordinating team.

4. Cost effectiveness

Apart from the obvious supporting role that peer mentors play, peer mentoring (also called peer tutoring, peer coaching, peer learning and supplemental instruction) may have the added advantage of being a cost-effective means of providing academic support to fellow students (Beasley, 1997). Although the current study on the evaluation of the Student Mentor Programme was not intended to be a study of cost effectiveness, I took the opportunity to make a calculation for the mentees on the programme who indicated that they had considered terminating their courses (the 27% indicated in Table 6.13). There were 70 students, of whom we managed to retain 40 in the programme, and eventually 38 of them passed. With the help of the Division for Institutional Planning at the Stellenbosch University, we made an accurate calculation about the financial gain for the University regarding subsidies and class fees. The exact figure was calculated for the specific programme of each of the 38 students who indicated that they actually stayed and passed because of the Mentor Programme. If we are able to retain them in the system for the remainder of their studies, the amount gained by the University would be **R3.276 million**. Thus the question may well be asked what the monetary gain would be for 200 students, or 1000 who may not make it without the intervention of a Mentor Programme. In the light of this figure, the budget of the programme, R331 000 for 2005, then pales into insignificance.

9.5.2 Limitations

The limitations of the study seem to be on two levels. The first limitation that was controlled for was the fact that the programme was evaluated by the designer, implementer and coordinator of the intervention. Furthermore, as this was a retrospective study, an evaluation of programme activities and outcomes was only possible after the academic results for the whole year were available. To control for possible memory lapses about activities, rigorous documentation had to be kept, filed and interpreted.

The second limitation was the irregular attendance of the mentees. This decreased the sample size for which conclusions could be made from the quantitative evidence. As this was only the second year of the intervention (the first being a pilot project) no longitudinal data was available to detect trends in Stellenbosch University's first-year experience. Data

was also collected and captured by hand, which necessitated checking and double-checking, as well as causing some oversights in essential information. Variables such as natural adjustment and maturation could also play a role in academic performance, and this was triangulated with qualitative data.

The current study focused primarily on the evaluation of this intervention, but in the process a range of factors impacting on student retention in higher education were uncovered that could not be explored in any depth. There are a multitude of student input characteristics and environmental factors within higher education institutions that affect students. The literature suggests that the implementation of an intervention is already a “stage 2” (of three stages) critical effort to reach out to students through mentoring and advising, to transform the environment and residential halls (Richardson & Skinner, 1991; Kleeman, 1994; Taylor & Bedford, 2004). The emphasis with such an intervention is on students’ change. In a “stage 3” critical effort staff buy-in is essential to improve curriculum content and teaching practice. For a mentor programme to already be considered a stage 2 critical effort, it means that a concerted effort is essential for finding and addressing the basic barriers to higher education.

9.5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations, like the limitations, also seem to generate two distinct levels: recommendations *from* the study, and *for* further study.

Recommendations arising out of the study are related to the findings, and often are in accordance with studies in similar fields. These findings include the inputs of mentors and mentees in the programme:

- Mentorship for second-years should also be considered (McLearn, Colasanto & Schoen, 1998).
- Mentors should be supported at all times, also through more informal activities.
- Mentors should be more integrated into the Orientation Programme for first-years at the beginning of the academic year.
- The training and mentoring activities should be an accredited course for mentors.

The following recommendations pertain to the administration of the institution:

- The expected pass and failure rates should be calculated according to the matric performance of previous years and the ensuing trends in student performance. These students should be kept track of and suggestions should be made about their involvement in an intervention such as the SMP. The findings from the current study show (and are confirmed in the literature) that certain students are not only

academically at risk, but also socially, but they could be retained if they became involved in other activities.

- Properly managed interventions need to be put in place to support students, keeping in mind the various backgrounds, preparedness, diversity and environmental factors that have an impact on students. The commitment of people to manage or coordinate these interventions is essential.
- Data on intervention implementation, monitoring and outcomes must be captured and maintained. An electronic database, carefully developed to address the management needs, is essential, especially for such large, campus-wide programmes.
- An early warning system should be put in place, in the form of (for example) early tests in modules, so that mentees realise in good time that they need academic support. A recurring comment from the mentors was that mentees do not realise early enough that they are going to experience academic difficulties, because the first test results are available too late for effective intervention.
- An in-depth study should be conducted into the reasons why students who are at risk do not participate in the SMP, or why they find it difficult to ask for support they need.

Finally, the evaluation of a mentor programme provides valuable insight into the student experience, and offers excellent opportunities for research into the specific institutional factors that may influence the non-completion of studies, or those that constitute good practices. Research into these areas is growing worldwide, as the problems of attrition are highlighted globally at higher education institutions. Studies and evaluation of interventions create opportunities for networking with regional, national and global institutions.

9.6 Conclusion

The “deviation” from the application of the functionalist meaning of the term “mentor” in the current study, namely one-on-one in an older-younger relationship, is partly due to institutional financial and human capacity constraints, but mostly because of the value of group interaction in the integration and involvement of first-year students on campus. I do believe that students feel part of a structure in a new environment much sooner when involved in a group and supported by peers. Astin singles out the following factor in his extensive study on student experience, supporting the rationale for the current study:

Finally, the single most important environmental influence on student development is the peer group. By judicious and imaginative use of peer groups, any college or university can substantially strengthen its impact on student learning and personal development (Astin, 1993:xiv).

Involvement in programmes with a network of support systems, friendship and a positive learning environment may prevent students leaving the university prematurely. The evaluation of these programmes will contribute to the understanding and development of practices conducive to achieving student success in higher education.

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University of Stellenbosch
Mentor Programme 2005
Application Form

Send to aloots@sun.ac.za

Criteria for Applicants: - Academic Achievement \geq 65% (Official study record must be attached to application)

Section A: Personal Particulars

Surname		Initials		Title	
Name		Student No.		Course & Year	
Address					
Tel. No.		Cell No.		E-mail Address	
Subject in which you can be a mentor:					
Have you previously participated in the Mentor Programme? (tick appropriate box)				Yes	No
If yes, please indicate when (year) and which group (year-group e.g. 1 st years)			Year	Group	
Why do you want to be a mentor?					
Give a brief description of your characteristics that would enable you to be a good mentor.					

Section B: Academic Achievement, Non-Academic Activities & Language

Efficiency

Have you attached a copy of your latest official record of academic results?		Yes		No	
Please indicate your involvement in non-academic activities:	Leadership				
	Community Service				
	Cultural Activities				
	Sports Achievements				
	Previous / present employment				

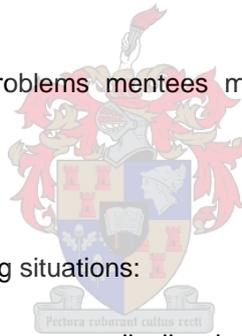
Language efficiency 1 Poor 2 Average 3 Good	Home Language (mark with an x)	Spoken (assign a number)	Read (assign a number)	Written (assign a number)
English				
Afrikaans				
IsiXhosa				
IsiZulu				
Other				

.../2

Section C: Problem Solving Skills

What do you believe to be the most important attribute of a mentor?

What do you consider to be main problems mentees might experience that would require the assistance of their appointed mentor?



State how you would handle the following situations:

1. One of your mentees attends meetings sporadically, does not participate in discussions when in attendance, and appears disinterested in his / her progress.
2. A mentee confides in you that he / she is experiencing family problems.
3. A mentee in your group works very hard, puts long hours into his / her studies, but shows little progress.

Thank you!

If you feel that you are an eligible candidate, please submit the application to aloots@sun.ac.za together with your academic record, and fill in your name in a time table on my office door at 15 Bosman Street, for a 20 minute interview. Dates for interviews: 21 September to 6 October 2005.

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

MENTOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

12 FEBRUARY 2005

(Geology Building: Kamer van Mynwese 1004)

Facilitated by Centre for Student Teaching and Learning,

with assistance from MESAB

08:30-08:45	Welcome and introduction	Dr Ansie Loots
08:45-09:45		What is a Mentor Programme? Mr Yusuf Dinath
09:45-10:30	Interactive session: The first year student: possible problems & how to identify, anticipate and handle them in small groups	Dr Ansie Loots and experienced mentors
10:30-10:45	Juice and pizza	
10:45-11:45	Selecting and developing mentors	Mr Yusuf Dinath
11:45-12:30	Diversity	Ms Natasha Kritzas
12:30-12:50	Managing your programme	Dr Ansie Loots
12:50-13:10	Programme Evaluation	



THANK YOU!!

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL WORKSHOPS

NAAM: _____ STUDENTENO. _____

ONDERWERP VAN WERKSWINKEL	
Verbeter jou Studie en Denkvaardighede	
Verbeterde jou Leesvaardighede	
Kry die Meeste uit Lesings	
Effektiewe Voorbereiding vir Toetse & Eksamens	
Hantering van Stres tydens Toetse en Eksamenangs	
Algemene Riglyne in die Hantering van Stres	
Verbeter jou Selfvertroue en Sosiale Vaardighede	
Effektiewe Tydsbestuur	
Effektiewe Finansiële Beplanning	
Ontwikkeling van Leierskapsvaardighede	
Vroue in Leierskap	
Verbeter jou Selfkennis	
Die Hantering van Verhoudings en Seksualiteit	
Riglyne ten opsigte van Alkohol- en Middelmisbruik	
Riglyne vir Voorkoms, Gewig en Dieet	
Riglyne in jou Verhouding met jou Gesin	
Verbeter jou Interkulturele Vaardighede	
Ondersteuning vir Swart Studente	
Ondersteuning vir Gay Studente	
Ondersteuning vir Studente wat Tesisse moet Skryf	
Om te Leef in 'n Wêreld met HIV/VIGS	
Die Hantering van Depressie	
Verbeter jou Aanbiedingsvaardighede	
Hoe om 'n CV te Skryf	
Hoe om voor te berei vir 'n werksonderhoud	
Effektiewe werksoekvaardighede	
Entrepreneurskap	

(Merk toepaslike kursus, en gee aan SSVO, Victoriastraat 37)

APPENDIX D: MENTEE BASELINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Vraelys / *Questionnaire*:
 MENTORPROGRAM

Die inligting is vertroulik, en word slegs gebruik om die program te verbeter.
The information is confidential, and is used only to enhance the programme

1. Van / *Surname* _____
2. Naam / *Name* _____
3. Studentenommer / *Student number* _____
4. Huistaal / *Home language* _____
5. Kursus / *Course* _____
6. Mentorvak 1 / *Mentoring subject 1* _____
 Mentorvak 2 / *Mentoring subject 2* _____
7. Adres tydens akademiese jaar / *Campus address during studies*

8. Huisadres / *Home address* _____

9. Is jy 'n beurshouer van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch? _____
Are you a University of Stellenbosch bursary holder? _____

10. Wanneer het jy aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch geregistreer? (Merk met 'n X)
When did you register at the University of Stellenbosch? (Indicate with an X)

1. 2003	2. 2004	3. 2005	4. Ander / <i>Other</i>

11. Herhaal jy die vak waarin jy aansoek doen vir hulp?
Do you repeat the subject in which you require help?

Ja / Yes	
Nee / No	

12. Wat is jou huidige situasie?
What is your current situation?

1. Voltydse student <i>Fulltime student</i>	2. Voltydse student met tydelike werk <i>Fulltime student with parttime job</i>	3. Deeltydse student met voltydse werk <i>Parttime student with fulltime employment</i>

Gebruik asseblief die skaal van 1 tot 5 om die volgende vrae te beantwoord.

Dui u antwoord met 'n **X** in die toepaslike blokkie aan.

1 = Stem volkome saam

2 = Stem saam

3 = Neutraal

4 = Stem nie saam nie

5 = Stem glad nie saam nie

Use the following scale to evaluate each of the following statements

Indicate with an X in the relevant square

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree.

3 = neutral.

4 = disagree

5 = strongly disagree

13	Ek voel akademies onvoorbereid <i>I feel academically unprepared</i>	1	2	3	4	5
14	Ek voel die werkklas is te groot <i>I feel the workload is too big</i>	1	2	3	4	5
15	Ek ervaar taalprobleme I experience language problems	1	2	3	4	5
16	Ek ervaar die vakke as baie moeilik I find the subjects very difficult	1	2	3	4	5
17	Ek ervaar baie spanning I am very stressed	1	2	3	4	5
18	Ek voel nie deel van die kampuskultuur nie <i>I do not feel part of campus culture</i>	1	2	3	4	5
19	My ouers ondersteun my finansiëel My parents support me financially	1	2	3	4	5
20	My ouers ondersteun my emosioneel My parents support me emotionally	1	2	3	4	5
21	Ek het goeie ondersteuning van familieledede I have good support from family members	1	2	3	4	5
22	Ek het 'n goeie ondersteuning van medestudente I have good support from fellow students	1	2	3	4	5
23	Ek is heeltemal alleen I am totally alone	1	2	3	4	5
24	My verblyf dra by tot effektiewe studie <i>My accommodation contributes to effective study</i>	1	2	3	4	5
25	My reistyd na die universiteit is langer as 'n uur My travels to university takes longer than an hour	1	2	3	4	5
27	Ek het nie die nodige vak op skool gehad nie <i>I did not have the necessary subject at school</i>	1	2	3	4	5

28. Dui asseblief aan waar u gehoor het van die mentorprogram

Please indicate where you have heard about the mentor programme

1. Dosent <i>Lecturer</i>	2.Vorige deelnemers aan program <i>Previous participants in programme</i>	3.Verwelkomings-week <i>Orientation week</i>	4.Kampus kennisgewing-borde <i>Campus bulletin boards</i>	5.Ander <i>Other</i>

Enige ander kommentaar:*Any other comments*

Wat is jou verwagtinge van die mentorprogram?

What are your expectations of the mentor programme?

Baie dankie vir u samewerking!
Thank you for your cooperation!



APPENDIX E: MENTEE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

MENTEES

COMPLETE THIS FORM BY PUTTING AN (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX OR TYPING IN THE CORRECT ANSWER

A BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE

NAME: _____ **ST. NO** _____

1. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

2. Age _____

3. Academic year

1		2		3		4		5		Post grad	
---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	-----------	--

4. Module(s) for mentoring

1.	
2.	
3.	

5. Residence

University residence	
Private in Stellenbosch	
Private outside Stellenbosch	

6. Are you part of the Extended Degree Programme (ADP)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

7. Are you repeating any module?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If yes, please indicate which

--

8. Matric symbol

A		B		C		D		E	
---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--

B GROUP ACTIVITIES

9. Did you remain in your original group?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

10. If not, why not? _____

11. Which other group did you join? _____

12. Did you attend other group meetings? _____

13. If yes, why? _____

14. Which group(s)? _____

C PERSONAL PROFILE – STUDY HABITS

15. I study an average of ____ hours per day.

< 2		2		3		4		>4	
-----	--	---	--	---	--	---	--	----	--

16. I find it

Easy		Difficult	
------	--	-----------	--

 to remember what I learn.

17. While studying, I make use of

	Yes	No
mind maps		
summaries		
sketches		
study timetable		
old exam papers		
buddy learning		
library		
working out model answer		
oral with a buddy		
Other Specify:		

18. I need to repeat work before I remember it.

2x		3x		4x		>4	
----	--	----	--	----	--	----	--

19. I tend to “cram” the week before and during a test

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

22. I work harder than my results show

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

23. I underachieve by

5%		10%		15%		20%		> 20 %	
----	--	-----	--	-----	--	-----	--	--------	--

24. I use non-habit forming stimulants to stay awake

None		BioPlus		Red Bull		Alert		Other (Specify:)	
------	--	---------	--	----------	--	-------	--	------------------	--

25. I have to use medication to stay calm

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

26. I have to use medication for depression

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

27. I do a lot of writing when I study

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

28. A lack of achievement stresses me

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

29. I am satisfied with my marks

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
30. I could do better if I worked harder

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
31. I could do better if I was more organized

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
32. I could do better if I used more effective study methods

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
33. I can't really improve even though I work harder

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
34. I study continuously

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
35. I read today what will be dealt with in class tomorrow
- | | | | | | |
|-------|--|--------|--|-----------|--|
| Never | | Seldom | | Regularly | |
|-------|--|--------|--|-----------|--|
36. I had to adjust my study technique this year

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
37. ...by using (name new technique) _____
38. Friends have had a

Positive		Negative	
----------	--	----------	--

 influence on my studies.
39. I contributed to the success of others

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--
40. I currently perform at (? %)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|
| 50% | | 60% | | 70% | | 80% | | 90% | |
|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|
41. I would have liked to obtain (? %)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|
| 50% | | 60% | | 70% | | 80% | | 90% | |
|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|-----|--|
42. I considered terminating my course

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

D MENTOR PROGRAMME

Make use of the following scale to evaluate each of the following statements
(one set for each of your modules)

0 = none

1 = poor

2 = average

3 = good

Mentor module 1	None	Poor	Average	Good
43 Contribution of the mentor to my studies	0	1	2	3
44 Contribution of the group members	0	1	2	3
45 Activities presented by the mentor	0	1	2	3
46 Interest of mentor in individuals	0	1	2	3
47 Mentor preparation	0	1	2	3
48 Mentor availability	0	1	2	3
49 Mentor punctuality	0	1	2	3
50 Mentor ability to help	0	1	2	3

Mentor module 2	None	Poor	Average	Good
51 Contribution of the mentor to my studies	0	1	2	3
52 Contribution of the group members	0	1	2	3
53 Activities presented by the mentor	0	1	2	3
54 Interest of mentor in individuals	0	1	2	3
55 Mentor preparation	0	1	2	3
56 Mentor availability	0	1	2	3
57 Mentor punctuality	0	1	2	3
58 Mentor ability to help	0	1	2	3

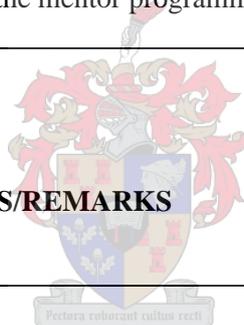
Mentor module 3	None	Poor	Average	Good
59 Contribution of the mentor to my studies	0	1	2	3
60 Contribution of the group members	0	1	2	3
61 Activities presented by the mentor	0	1	2	3
62 Interest of mentor in individuals	0	1	2	3
63 Mentor preparation	0	1	2	3
64 Mentor availability	0	1	2	3
65 Mentor punctuality	0	1	2	3
66 Mentor ability to help	0	1	2	3

Use the following scale to evaluate each of the following statements

- SA = strongly agree
- A = agree
- N = neutral
- D = disagree
- SD = strongly disagree

67. the mentor programme must continue in 2005	SA	A	N	D	SD
68. the programme should include all faculties	SA	A	N	D	SD
69. talks on how to study should be presented more regularly	SA	A	N	D	SD
70. talks on personal problems should be presented more regularly	SA	A	N	D	SD
71. only students who achieve <50% should be on the programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
72. high achievers can also improve by participating in the programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
73. mentors should receive better training	SA	A	N	D	SD
74. students obtaining <60% should be on the mentor programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
75. high achievers should not be on the mentor programme	SA	A	N	D	SD

E SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS/REMARKS



Thank you

APPENDIX F: MENTOR FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

MENTORS

A BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. Name _____
Student Number _____
2. Gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------
3. Age

_____	years
-------	-------

 |
4. Academic year

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post grad	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------	---	--------------------------	---	--------------------------	---	--------------------------	---	--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------
5. Residence

University residence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private in Stellenbosch	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private outside Stellenbosch	<input type="checkbox"/>

B GROUP ACTIVITIES

6. How many mentees on average attended your group? _____
7. Did your original mentees all remain in your group?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------
8. If not,
How many moved to another group? _____
How many left the programme? _____
Why? _____
9. Did mentees from other groups attend your group meetings?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------
10. If so, why?

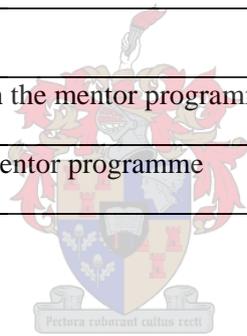
11. What was your main reason for joining the mentor programme as mentor?

C THE MENTOR PROGRAMME

Use the following scale to evaluate each of the following statements (mark choice).

- SA = strongly agree
 A = agree
 N = neutral
 D = disagree
 SD = strongly disagree

12. the mentor programme should continue in 2006	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. focus groups with coordinator should happen once a term	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. talks on how to study should be presented more regularly	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. talks on personal problems should be presented more regularly	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. only students who achieve <50% should be on the programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. high achievers can also improve by participating in the programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. mentors should receive better training	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. mentees obtaining <60% should be on the mentor programme	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. high achievers should not be on the mentor programme	SA	A	N	D	SD



D What, in your opinion, is the single most important outcome of the mentor programme? (Mark only ONE)

21	To help the mentee pass the module	
22	To enhance the mentee's general academic skills	
23	To help the mentee adjust in university culture	
24	To support the mentee's general well being	
25	To provide social and academic networks	

E. SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS/REMARKS

F NEXT YEAR

26. Indicate whether you are available for participation in the programme for 2006.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

27. Please indicate if you would like to be a mentor again, even if circumstances prevent you from doing so

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------



Thank you

APPENDIX H: ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORT

Akademiese Vorderingsverslag / Academic Progress Report

Mentor name and surname/Naam en van: _____

Mentor Stud nr: _____

Jaar / Year: _____

Mentor Module: _____

MENTEE DETAILS:

Van en Voorletters Surname and Initials	Stud nr	Punte behaal voor aangesluit by mentorprogram Marks achieved prior to mentor programme				Punte behaal voor aangesluit by mentorprogram Marks achieved prior to mentor programme			
		Test 1 in %	Test 2 in %	Test 3 in %	Exam in %	Test 1 in %	Test 2 in %	Test 3 in %	Exam in %
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									

APPENDIX I: YEAR PROGRAMME

JAARPROGRAM 2005

12 Februarie	Opleiding
25 Februarie	Maandelikse verslag inhandig
14 Maart	<i>Fokusgroep Lettere (Biblioteek)</i>
15 Maart	<i>Fokusgroep Natuurwetenskappe, Landbou/Bosbou</i>
16 Maart	<i>Fokusgroep Ekon/Best</i>
17 Maart	<i>Fokusgroep Regte, Teologie, Opvoedkunde</i>
24 Maart	Maandelikse verslag
4 April	Lesings hervat
29 April	Maandelikse verslag
26 Mei	Maandelikse verslag, Akademiese vorderingsverslag SEMESTER 1 Mentee/Mentor-Evaluering VRAELYSTE
27 Mei	Lesings eindig
18 Julie	Lesings hervat
30 Julie	Maandelikse verslag
22 Augustus	<i>Fokusgroep Lettere</i>
23 Augustus	<i>Fokusgroep Natuurwetenskappe, Landbou/Bosbou</i>
24 Augustus	<i>Fokusgroep Ekon/Best</i>
25 Augustus	<i>Fokusgroep Regte, Teologie, Opvoedkunde</i>
2 September	Lesings eindig
12 September	Lesings hervat <i>Aansoeke vir Mentorskap 2005</i>
19 – 30 Sept	<i>Mentoronderhoude en aanbevelings</i>
30 September	Maandelikse verslag
28 Oktober	Maandelikse verslag, Akademiese vorderingsverslag SEMESTER 2 Mentee/Mentor-Evaluering

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