Peer Mentoring: Exploring the Impact on the Learning Culture of a Business Institute in Pakistan

Shumaila Omar*, Syed Irfan Hyder**, Naziha Ali***

Abstract

University education is a new transition from school to undergraduate programs for underprivileged students. Recruiting students from rural areas of Pakistan challenge teachers to teach at a Higher Education while teaching underprivileged students struggling for a better future. The aim of this paper was to introduce peer mentoring between the Business and Professional Speech (BPS) students and the freshmen. The researcher being course faculty of both the Business and Professional Speech and Foundation English students undertook the experiential learning project. The initiative for the project was to explore the impact of peer mentoring on the learning culture of a Business Institute in Pakistan, subsequently, highlighting the skills of lifelong learners in the 21st century of global citizenship. The aim of this paper was also to investigate the strength of mentors in keeping the course objectives aligning with students' interpersonal, intrapersonal and public communication abilities, at developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Kolb's experiential learning model (1984) was implemented to carry out the project; whilst, students direct data of interviews, video clips, pictures, questionnaires and documents were used to validate the research. Findings demonstrate the beneficial impact on the cyclical learning between the faculty, BPS and freshmen in terms of their improved results, retention of reading tasks and exposure to the real-life challenges of the diverse groups at the university. Peer mentoring could be the possibility of bringing about a change in society if introduced at universities in Pakistan.

Keywords: *Business and Professional Speech Students (BPS), Business Private University, Experiential Learning, Foundation English Students, Peer-mentoring*

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents an experiential learning project involving students within the private institute to peer mentor freshmen and to explore the impact of learning on the higher education in the Business University of Karachi, Pakistan. It is often observed that the Business and professional speech (BPS) students who are about to graduate or are nearing to finish the

Correspondence:

*Institute of Business Management Karachi. shumaila.omar@iobm.edu.pk

** Institute of Business Management Karachi. irfan.hyder@iobm.edu.pk

***Emirates Aviation College, Dubai. nazihaali2005@yahoo.co.uk

BBA degree program are exceedingly confident and are ready to take new challenges; these business students opt for demanding, relevant and meaningful learning experiences. On the other hand, the freshmen face challenges in adapting to the new environment and coping up the transition from school to university. Campus involvement in different societies is an integral part of students learning and is a successful doorway within the university as well as outside the campus. Kuh (2003) is of the opinion that involvement in the collegiate culture is essential for any success in an institute.

Introducing peer-mentoring concept to the Business and Professional Speech (BPS) students can provide the opportunity to encounter the freshmen and further develop their repertoire with the faculty and stakeholders of the university. Peer mentoring also provide a platform for students to develop their own socializing skills with faculty, staff and their junior students in a less intimidating manner (Cuseo, 1991; Hart 1995). Students who involve themselves in the campus activities including networking with other senior and junior students are likely to gain success in terms of their learning and exposure to new ideas than seeking the same outside the Institute (Fischer, 2007). The peer group for any students in an organization is the most important, potent and valuable source of influence in the growth of development during the undergraduate years (Astin, 1993). The Institute where the research was conducted adheres to the mission of developing the professional life development skills along with life skills for the outgoing students.

Background of the Institute

The private business institute in Karachi strives to bring about quality education since 1994. The vision of the institute is to be one of the leading institutes nationally and internationally for imparting knowledge, skills, confidence, and values to its students thereby enabling them to become successful professionals globally, while the mission of the Institute is to foster a learning environment where students are motivated to make learning an ongoing, life-long process. For this purpose, the institute sees itself as a multidimensional educational institution. In order to impart quality education, it aims to follow some of the following criteria for teaching:

- Use the best teaching and training methodologies
- Prepare students to excel academically as well as in management skills to function ethically and take effective rational decisions in all endeavours of life
- Pursue leading-edge research
- Engage in the development of innovative ideas and analytical, interpersonal and leadership skills
- Allow freedom of thought and expression
- Encourage both faculty and students to be independent and creative thinkers
- Commit to our students and other stakeholders to create responsible future global leaders

Context

Communication and Languages Department

As a faculty, researcher and a practitioner, certain norms are followed within the vicinity of the Institute. As a prestigious Business organization, the University follows the vision and the

mission of the Institute under the umbrella of four main colleges of the institute; the college of business management being part of it. Several departments function following the hierocracy; Communication and the Languages department is led by the Head of the department with a range of full-time English and Languages faculty teaching under their expertise areas for the undergraduate and graduate programs, through effective best practices of the classroom and engaging students in the development of innovative, creative and leadership skills.

The research was undertaken with the researcher's own experience with a collaborative mentoring project with a Canadian educationist who worked for 15 months despite the time and the difference in the cultural background. Rachel (2007) contends that when researchers presume the context of research, understanding the cultural boundaries, it facilitates a rich understanding of the development of the area of research.

Keeping the stated vision and mission of the Institute, the stakeholders also play a pivotal role in encouraging the faculty to carry out the best practices not only in the classroom but beyond and are facilitated in contributing the process in development. The benefits this brings as a society paves to the economic growth of the country (OECD, 2007).

Business and Professional Speech Course (Com 202)

This is an advanced course studied in the final semesters of the BBA (Honors) program. The course is designed to improve students' interpersonal, intrapersonal and public communication abilities. It aims at developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills to enable them to argue logically in business contexts. Students learn to apply these skills in public speaking, board meetings, interviewing, and group interaction.

Students of Business and Professional Speech

The students of Business and Professional Speech (BPS) are business students who are studying in their last and second last semester at the Karachi Institute of Pakistan. As a part of their final project, they were assigned to the experiential learning project in which they had to initially observe, experience, teach providing with the useful tips to the students of foundation course. These students had an earlier background of four dynamic academic and communication compulsory courses. All the group members had an experience of teaching students at various places and different organizations in Karachi.

Participant 1 (p1) vast experience in teaching English to Japanese students at Nagoya University Japan

Participant 2 (p2) worked in a private teaching organization Aims, Karachi, where she was responsible to make tests, provide worksheets and assign different assignments to O' level students

Participant 3 (p3) worked in managing the Benazir Bhutto Youth Development Program where he used to teach short English intensive courses to children

Participant 4 (p4) had a dynamic experience in teaching students at The Citizen's Foundation and gave private tuition services

Participant 5 (p5) gave private tuition services

The Foundation English Course Students

The foundation course students at the Institute were the beginner level English language students, who were provided with the opportunity to enhance their communication, interpersonal,

and reading skills to have a better understanding in order to pursue their university education with ease. The foundation course includes various lessons and activities to engage and teach students to improve and enhance their receptive and production skills. The interview with the researcher gave insights to the business and professional speech (BPS) students of the overview of the introduction about their lesson to have a better understanding of the activity. The process was done through multimedia projectors using up to date technology by viewing and explaining related videos, pictures, worksheets and exercises to the students. These entire sessions were kept highly interactive important for the students to help keep them engaged and participate accordingly. After a brief review of the topic, students were provided with activities and worksheets to practice about what they were taught in class that helped them to retain all the information provided during the mentoring sessions. After a specific activity and task, students were allowed to discuss among themselves and solve the problem collectively. Conclusively, the students were asked to present their assigned work individually and they were provided with the home assignments for the next class as well. This type of students-support caters the needs of students who desperately need support system within the educational organization. Often, these students do not discuss their educational problems with their teachers and parents but prefer talking to their friends (Sarwar, 2016; Rachel, 2007).

The concept of Peer Mentoring

The concept of mentoring began during the 70s in relation to education (St. Clair, 1994) and is also associated with transitioning. Furthermore, it plays an important role for teachers in in-calculating intellectual and personal development of students (Daloz, 1986). Murray and Owen (1991) describe mentoring as an intentional attempt by an experienced person to help a less experienced one, be it student to student or colleagues helping one another at the workplace. The ultimate goal for rendering help is to bring the less experienced person to the level of targeted competencies. Peer mentoring at universities consists of providing advice, support and information regarding the programs and the courses taught, study skills knowledge and task accomplishments and emotional and psychological support (Terrion & Leonard, 2010).

Dominguez and Hague (2013) state that within the theory of mentoring, there is a change of thought for mentors who earlier trained mentees as passive learners. Backing this statement, Bruner (1996) describes how this affects people who are involved in teaching and learning interactions. The researcher further highlights this by an example of a child who follows instructions of what is right by simply explaining and showing the difference; the best strategy used for training children. Olson and Bruner (1996) elaborates the difference between a simple and a more sophisticated pedagogies; the simpler is more focused on the knowledge transmission, while, the sophisticated one is built through the joint efforts by the tutors and the learners (Richardson, 1997).

The system of teaching assistants for encouraging participative sessions has been highlighted in 'Managing English Teaching Outcomes in Universities: An Experiential Learning Case Study of ESL/EFL' in 2015 where Syed blogs on providing support to students through teaching assistants so as to engage students in learning activities that otherwise hinder during the regular teaching hours. He further elaborates that communication can only occur if a student can express their point of view on the subject they strongly feel about; therefore, topics that are taught in the classroom should be interesting, relevant and meaningful. Designing such

lesson under the time constraints can be challenging too, therefore, taking help apart from the main teacher could be one initiative (Syed, 2015).

Reading Skills Development through Experiential Learning

The reading habits of students from the rural areas of Pakistan are generally below the level due to many reasons; English is a second Language in Pakistan but is also a fourth Language for students who have never been exposed to the English learning environment. This is also true of the Foundation English students who are not provided with the opportunity with strong reading abilities. Moreover, reading fluently is considered a major objective for English as an Academic Purpose (EAP) and for instructions in the second Language (Grabe, 1991). Memon and Badger (2007), conducting research on traditional reading classes in one of the universities in Jamshoro, Karachi, commented on the issues dealing with the low proficiency in English literacy skills. Nevertheless, they were unaware of the methods of teachers teaching the reading classes at the public sectors. This leaves a number of unanswered questions that a researcher would want to find out. Another study shows that students face difficulties when taking admission in Pakistan colleges and universities due to lack of reading (Sultana, 2007). Moreover, Hassan (2009) highlighted the important problems faced in Pakistan while teaching English at various levels. Some of the problems include the unskilled ways of developing the curriculum resulting in faulty course objectives of the English course outline and hiring teachers incapable of teaching the Language or using appropriate methodology and resources, creating an unfavourable classroom environment and insufficient support of the library and extra reading materials. Through this experiential learning project, the researcher hoped to fill the gap in the reading skills of the Foundation English students by engaging them with their senior counterparts.

Purpose of the Study

The Purpose of this research is to measure the senior students attempt to mentor the freshmen with their reading tasks. While the specific purpose was to use strategies to develop activities to involve the junior students, the overall study highlighted the dual benefits of both senior and junior students with their learning, exposure of the genuine gap and trying to bring about a change by rendering help to these freshmen. Moreover, the experiential learning project explored the value it extended in promoting the concept of peer mentoring; uncommon amongst the students at Pakistan universities.

Research Questions

1 To what extent do freshmen develop accuracy in reading skills when engaged in a peer mentoring performance?

2 How do final year business and professional speech students benefit from playing the role of mentors in reading skills development programme?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of students helping another student is very common in the UK and USA, primarily to retain students, weak in their academic achievement (Brown, 1995). Selecting students to offer educational services within the same organization is one way of training

part for the Business students to be the leaders of tomorrow. Apart from curricular and co-curricular activities, training students as mentors of their own peers give them the opportunity of experiencing the first-hand knowledge outside the classroom, subsequently, making them autonomous learners of the 21st century. When these students are encouraged to participate in such roles, they are normally compensated in a variety of professional ways (Ender and Newton, 2000; Newton et. al 2010). Students are guided by supervisors and are constantly mentored themselves in order to mentor their peers, leading to a cyclical way of bringing about a change in society. The entire process of peer mentoring takes place outside the class (Keup, 2011). This provides a healthy exposure to practice independent and critical thinking, part of what experiential learning research intends to do.

Research shows a limited benefit to peer mentoring but the real life learning at an individual base is highly positive. This helps students to be confident about them taking the lead as mentors within the campus. Moreover, it gives self- satisfaction as undergraduates; a future success beyond their regular learning at the organization. Overall, the process connects students closer to the campus (Keup, 2011). As Good et al., (2000) puts it that peer leadership is no doubt connected with critical thinking skills, problem –solving and shapes personal development.

Peer mentoring is rewarding as it helps fill the gap from school to the first year in university. The transition which otherwise can take semesters benefit from providing in- campus mentoring, regarding the programs, societies and university courses. Moreover, mentoring is a deliberate act of involving an experienced and skilled person with lesser-experienced one (Murray and Owen, 1991). It also promotes an important opportunity for the development of mentor's relationship with the ones they have to look after to build rapport and trust, leading to highlight their own soft skills such as interpersonal and leadership skills (Rekha and Ganesh, 2012). According to Ghosh and Reio (2013), mentoring pays off in the long-term goals in career success, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Fedynich and Bain (2011) researched that mentoring is one of the key elements of a university experience and having mentored becomes a significant factor in graduate student's experience. This clearly states when students opt for internship programs, their attitude toward workplace is professional and are highly committed due to the exposure at the university. Teachers play an important role to bring knowledge to specific issues and helping students understand what roles mentoring could play in the lives of those who need to be mentored. Students who come from a rural background desperately seek guidance and providing this kind of mentoring means that they play multiple roles from being a guide to a teacher or a friend. This also means the help comes from an older, wiser, and more experienced individual (Cohen, 1995).

Universities in Pakistan recruit students from diverse backgrounds, as higher education is competitive and broadly based (Nosheen, 2012). Nevertheless, recruiting students from the rural areas of Pakistan becomes challenging for the teachers who often encounter student's struggle of adjusting to a new environment at university in terms of their inability to adapt to the system, different from what they had been tuned to for so many years. This paper intends to explore the impact of peer mentoring on the senior and junior students at a higher education in Karachi, Pakistan. The prime objective is to measure the valuable input of peer mentoring on reading tasks and students learning experience. In addition, the study discusses the experiential

learning process using Kolb model and the impact it can have on the future trends of following the non-traditional way of mentoring; uncommon amongst the universities in Pakistan (Rachel, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the research project was Kolb's experiential learning model (1984), to evaluate and develop appropriate strategies to help peer mentor for better learning opportunities. Kolb views that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can easily be developed through a range of situations. This is further backed up by Kolb's theory of the impetus for the development of new concepts provided by new experiences. According to Zuber-Skerritt (1994), the working definition of learning presented by Kolb (1984) is "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences" (p. 105). The students developed the reading techniques based on this reference. The activities included in the Lesson Plan developed by the BPS Students revolved around the model in order to ensure effective learning through these four stages (Kolb, 2010). Since the model is integrated and no single stage can be effective on its own (Kolb, 1974), the Lesson Plan's components were designed in a systematic (step-by-step) process that works together simultaneously and in tandem with each other.

For the validity, reliability and credibility of the data, the Business and Professional Speech students were instructed (with the permission from the Institute and the Foundation English students) to take interviews, video clips, develop a questionnaire, pictures and documents (see appendices). The project used mixed methods i.e. both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Participants

The Business and Professional Speech class was divided into a group of eight individuals; each group consisted of five members. For the purpose of this research project, one of the groups was selected to use their direct data for the study. The five members of this project peer mentored two students from the Foundation English class; the process required all the group members to participate and contribute in helping the students.

Process 1: the Experiential Learning Project

David Kolb, an educational theorist, published his learning styles model in 1984. He proposed two levels in his experiential learning theory, one of which is the following four stage learning cycle:

The experiential learning project was conducted at the Business University of Karachi, Pakistan. The researcher encouraged the BPS students to break through from the usual projects normally assigned to all the students and experience the real life exposure by indulging in a more meaningful learning, thereby, making them lifelong learners. To begin with the project, the students were invited to the researchers Foundation English class to observe her planned lessons and teaching methodology that they could use for the Foundation English students.

The researcher's session was about 'Reading and Storytelling' in which the students had to read a small passage that had a brief story along with the moral of the story. The students were

given an input about the topic to prepare students for a better understanding of their following activities. This process was done through multimedia projectors using up to date technology by viewing related videos, pictures and examples to the students. The session was kept highly interactive, important for the students to help keep them engaged and participate accordingly in both ways including student to student and instructor to student. Ample time was provided for class discussion and feedback.

The researcher assigned two Foundation English students to the BPS students to gain their in-depth information regarding the problems they faced in the reading tasks. The students recorded the mentees interview to identify the problems and come up with techniques for the activities they had to design for the experiential learning project. A research report on 'English Language Learners with Reading Disabilities' (Jane and John, 2009) prompted questions whether one could identify reading difficulties in individuals who were learning the English Language. How could one cater to the needs of these problems and what would one do with the information to support the English reading instructions to support students with the reading difficulties?

The questions gave mentors a clear picture of their mentees background that further helped them to analyse the reading problems and strategize their team efforts to develop reading techniques to support the freshmen. The interview also helped explore more issues related to less family –support in terms of education, living away from homes, adjusting to urban lifestyle, and efforts to broaden their access to university teaching.

Process 2: Peer Mentoring Sessions

The researcher provided a guided resource to the BPS students to begin their first mentoring lesson with the foundation students. The story, 'The Ant and the Chrysalis' was used to develop the understanding of the fable with a moral and allow BPS students to take ideas from the first lesson to come up with their own techniques of supporting their mentees. The BPS students identified the problems of pronunciation, vocabulary and intonation of lengthy sentences through a read aloud passage. For example, the senior students explained the meaning of 'superior' in the story by comparing it with the brand name 'Lux soap' as a superior brand than 'Life buoy' soap to help mentees understand the superior relationship between the ant and the chrysalis in the fable. The senior mentors also discovered the hesitation of the junior mentees in pronouncing certain words in the passage; therefore, they dissected the words in syllable for a better understanding of the word, sound and its meaning. They backed up this strategy by asking the mentees to repeat the word a few times to gain the accuracy of the word. This type of mentoring extends many skills that enable students to learn in a mutual respect for fellow citizens (Clutter, 2004).

Further, the BPS students planned for two sessions as the requirement of the project and the constraint of time. Identifying the weaknesses in the reading tasks paved way in designing the activities around it. Furthermore, vocabulary was picked as the core component of Language proficiency that was the base for all the four skills (Richard and Renandya, 2002).

Process 3: Peer Mentoring Sessions

Learning consists of many parts (Lundvall and Johnson, 1994; Simon 1991). If learning

were segmented, many hidden experiences would highlight one's capacity for critical thinking, acting and making decisions. With these experiences, one cannot avoid the successful feeling one can generate through activities that are productive (Thomeczek, 2007).

The BPS students worked around the reading tasks using 'read-aloud' techniques following the five steps in order to teach vocabulary to the mentees. The same passage was recycled, 'The ant and the chrysalises as a drill to recognize and pronounce at least 5 vocabulary words through the read-aloud strategy. The use of the recycled resource is an important part of the consolidation of learning, whilst the recycled process help retain information, the learners are pushed forward and challenged in their own learning process so as to move beyond their own learning capacity whether the process is conducted in pairs or groups (Vygotsky,1978).

The Foundation year students read the fable aloud, were asked to pause on sentences that hindered in the fluency of reading, were guided through the difficult phase through an explanation of literal and inferential comprehension. They re-read the passage drawing close attention to enunciation and five focused vocabulary words from the passage. The drilling phase moved on the deeper understanding of the vocabulary knowledge using the words in sentences. To test understanding of the passage, the mentees were asked to summarize their thoughts on the fable read a few times to estimate the content knowledge that was learned.

Actively involving, doing and constructing knowledge from events that are embedded in critical understanding is the transformational change of experiential learning itself (Chickering, 1977; Tendy & Geiser, 1997). In KELT (1984) model of Kolb experiential learning theory, it is emphasized that thinking is segregated from experiencing and actions; actions follow thoughts creating a double effect of thinking and reflection (Holman, Pavlica & Thorpe, 1997).

Process 4

Applying experiential learning model to such projects can only benefit if literacy instruction focuses on what experiences are and how they affect learning, bringing the focus on immediate learners' requirement. The integrating of experiences with pedagogical structures gradually work best with the content and skill learning (Nelson & Kift, 2005).

The BPS mentors moved to the final stage of helping their mentees after a week's gap. This further allowed the mentees to recollect past experiences with the reading tasks conducted by their senior students. Moreover, the time duration would allow the mentees to uniquely connect with content information in building upon the existing schemas.

The mentors too group planned the teaching strategies to enhance the learning outcome of their peer mentees in a short-duration of their projects. They planned techniques on teaching spellings and read aloud strategies through the reading tasks. The students selected a new reading material this time, showing their own self- confidence to practice new techniques with the mentees. The junior students were introduced to new vocabulary words with grammatical structures following the emphases on the intonation of sentences. The BPS mentors read the short passage to the mentees, highlighting on vocabulary words with correct pronunciation.

Adding the words on the white board gave clarity to the mentees on accurate spellings and repeating the words after the mentors were relevant in recognizing the correct sound. Additionally, the junior students were able to identify the intonation of sentences through

reading aloud technique where they practised to pause adhering to the rules of punctuations. The reading aloud passages were relevant to the level of language skill of learners, providing them with the opportunity to practice pronunciation without worrying particularly about what they had to say in their own words or trying to remember from a passage.

Mentors Reflection on the Project

The Business and Professional Speech students spearheaded the experiential learning project using Kolb's theory (1984) of learners' internal cognitive processes in four stages. Learning comes through experience; researchers define it as a change in individuals due to the interaction between the subject and the environment (Burton, 1963).

The four stages of the concrete process experienced by the mentors were part of their own assessment of experiential learning. The first stage of concrete experience with the junior students helped the mentors identified the gap in their reading tasks. This was the act of problem setting of reality (Dewey, 1938). To overcome this problem, the mentees were provided with the handouts and were guided through the process of learning techniques used to adapt and progress. This tangible experience for the mentors was a search for gap resolution (Moon, 2004) and the BPS students intended to fill this real-ideal gap.

The second stage of reflective observation was a macro phase of performing an analysis of the concrete stage. The mentors discussed the mentees reading problems and planned the techniques in-group to overcome those problems. The BPS mentors analysed the collected data through the initial interview and captured the insights of what could be done to help their junior mentees. The overall learning experience from the first stage is revised (Moon, 2004).

In the third stage of abstract conceptualization, the researcher intervened who otherwise guided the experiential learning project step by step. The problems in the earlier stages of the phase were worked through by exploiting the reading task twice; as a recycled component and to work on the weaker areas of mentees pronunciation, vocabulary and intonation of sentences.

The final stage of learning actively involved the mentees in the experiment; to review the whole process of the experiential learning through testing and evaluating the knowledge applied and the outcome of it. The mentors asked the mentees to use the vocabulary words in the sentences and to summarize the fable in oral production. The overall reflection completes its cycle through the learning process (Engestorm & Sannino, 2010; Cowan, 1998).

Challenges of the Experiential Learning Project

Although the concept of bringing the experiential learning project was a final marked project for the business and professional speech students, they felt the entire process of this experience as challenging. For instance, they tried to discover the backgrounds of Foundation English students to help them in reading tasks by bringing the level of cognitive skills below their own level of comprehending the same in a different way. The mentors felt their junior mentees were successful in completing the written tasks after using different techniques, however, the oral production of the same task was still challenging in terms of sentence formation, intonation and the usage of past and present tense. Consequently, there is a vast difference in the learning styles of individuals, therefore, no one instructional method is applicable which fits all (Hsieh, 2011).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education for the 21st-century citizens has become an important part of the curriculum in Pakistan. Keeping the mission and vision of an Institute in mind, peer mentoring is one way of instilling those skills that are promoted through the course objectives of a program. It is important to research and investigate the needs of students at the university and the techniques that can help in peer mentoring (Miller et al., 2005). The experience with a short-term experiential learning project on peer mentoring can pave the way to examples on students' counselling, applied in the education system in Pakistan. Moreover, as educationists, practitioners and researchers, the need to develop responsible citizens, initiatives should be taken to generate service-learning opportunities in maintaining the relationship between teachers and students. In 'Learning and Life,' blog (Hyder, 2015) mentions that current relationships are now tailored to being transactional. However, the relationships with teachers are essential for students part of learning, yet, the connectivity has been lessened due to the technological age. One way to promote and bring back that culture is to broaden the access to either informal or structured mentoring when students are recruited to begin their first year at the university. This, in turn, will bring the change in social situations and expansions of new learning and teaching strategies at the higher education.

Limitations

The BPS students were exposed to learning beyond their imaginative capabilities. This allowed each student to discover their own strengths and identify areas where they could improve their weaknesses. However, due to the time constraints for the final year project, the learning experience was intense; had these students been given enough time to mentor their junior counterparts, they would have helped them the entire semester instead of rigorous three weeks of rendering help to the mentees.

Although the project was monitored and guided by the course faculty, keeping the time line with the Business students was difficult after their spring semester came to an end. The final evaluation and the completion of the project were mostly done through the exchange of emails, Skype and motivating students to attend extra sessions for the input before submission. Due to this limitation, the BPS mentors lost track of time; the feedback on the project was expected any time during the day.

Another issue encountered was the punctuality of the junior mentees. The BPS mentors complained that constant reminders were sent to attend the mentoring sessions in order to cover the reading tasks.

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