

To assess the feasibility of constructing
“Developmental Relationships” as a relevant
mentoring model for the Diploma in Business &
Social Enterprise

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ABSTRACT

This thesis arises from a personal conviction that education transforms not only the intellect, but can inspire a change of heart and values, towards the betterment of self and society, and that the process of mentoring offers this transformational potentiality. Hence, the concept of mentoring is examined and expanded beyond that of the traditional mentor, to “developmental relationships” which recognises the different significant individuals that could potentially influence the development of a mentee. This notion forms the basis of the construction of a mentoring model in this thesis.

Situated within the diploma in Business & Social Enterprise at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic of Singapore, the research adopts the qualitative case study approach. The aim of the study is to explore in an evidenced fashion the feasibility and efficacy of constructing a mentoring model based on developmental relationships; this could, I argue, enable students from the course to integrate formal learning with experiences encountered beyond the classroom setting. Social entrepreneurial traits were highlighted as some of the desirable attributes of a graduate from the course, which could be nurtured by the proposed network of developmental relationships. The thesis discusses findings from focus groups and interviews conducted with management, faculty, students and business partners (particularly social entrepreneurs), that would help shape the construction of the model.

I conclude by reviewing the ways in which the proposed mentoring model offers a unique multi-dimensional mentoring approach, capable of being implemented in a flexible manner, to accommodate a diversity of learners.

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Above all, I want to thank God for His providence, and for the vision of transformation through education and mentoring.

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Madam Lilian Wong Kit Yoke, whose conviction that education transforms has benefitted many, including especially me.

I hereby declare that except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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THE 2,000 WORD STATEMENT

I enrolled for the EdD course some six years ago with the aspiration to study and develop transformative educational models that work in practice. At that time, I had joined the field of education merely four years earlier, and felt I needed to be more grounded both in the professional practice and theoretical underpinnings of education. My personal conviction is that education transforms not only the intellect, but can also inspire a change of heart and values, towards the betterment of self and society. I struggled with teaching theories that had little impact on both the student, and his/her environment. I also observed that what seemed to be the most critical learning experiences happened mainly outside of the classroom, for example during field trips and projects where my students had the opportunity to engage with the community, and identify and help solve real problems that their communities encountered.

I was further inspired by the convictions of Sherman and Torbert (2000) as they discussed social inquiry and social action that engaged scholarships, curriculum and involved partnerships with communities.

“How to interweave inquiry and action – passion, compassion and dispassion – subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity – will never be a technical question that someone can answer for others. It will be a question that more and more persons take on as an aspect of their own living inquiry, if it is to transform persons, organisations and scientific inquiry on a society-wide basis.” (p. 8)

This kind of perspective is akin to Boyer’s (1990) notion of “engaged scholarship”.

Having joined the EdD, I found that one of the unique and invaluable components of the EdD International programme is that its cohort typically represents more than ten different countries, which added a multi-cultural dimension, contributing to a rich learning environment. The four taught courses were well positioned to introduce in turn important areas of focus. The course “Foundations of Professionalism” set the stage for the EdD programme by introducing concepts of professionalism in education. We examined how professionalism has evolved, and its changing dynamics in modern societies; the theoretical perspectives of education and how the common-sense

practitioner understandings have been challenged over time. We also explored the meaning and significance of social transformations, as “post-modernity” and “globalisation” that have been considered to have changed the lives of professionals in education. We had engaging discussions about how key issues around professionalism and developments in education impact on both professional and personal lives, sharing our critical incidents, issues arising from moral dilemmas and the relevance of codes of ethics. The course concluded with the examination of the challenges of understanding and developing educational practice in the new millennium, and how “professionalism in education” would continue to evolve with the changing times. These realisations were particularly relevant as I reflected on my role and those of my colleagues at the workplace, and how we are attempting to cope with an educational and policy landscape that seems so alien especially to those who have been in education for a long period.

In “Methods of Inquiry 1 (MOE1)”, I found the readings and writing of the section on the “Epistemological and Theoretical framework” most intriguing. We were introduced to authors with different world views, some of whom I had never previously encountered, as my basic training was in the field of Accountancy, and this was a new area to me. I realised I had an identity crisis, not able to decide if I was a positivist or a constructivist, depending on the context and intent of the research setting. This dilemma continued to disturb me as I moved on to the other courses and areas of research. In the MOE1 assignment, due consideration and reflection was also taken in ensuring the integrity and reliability of research, and that the ethical code was adhered to. Among others, the potential conflict of interest when the researcher was also the facilitator of the project was discussed.

In “Methods of Inquiry 2 (MOE2)”, we were introduced to a broad range of research methods and how they have the potential to be used in response to educational issues relating to formulating research questions; research design and sampling as well as implementation and analysis. Information gathering techniques, such as construction and use of questionnaires, interviews, observation and unstructured methods of data collection were also covered. I learnt how to formulate research questions and consider appropriate methods to collect evidence in the assignment. The assignment also challenged me to question the reliability of questionnaires and quantitative surveys. I

began to be more interested in the reasons and stories behind the answers, and this exercise helped me to understand my personal research perspective better, and to develop special interests in qualitative approaches.

The “Specialist Course in International Education (SCIE)” raised issues for education as a site of professional practice by different understandings of “international” and the range of meanings associated with the idea of “comparison”. I was introduced to aspects of global inequalities as they manifest themselves in education and considered a range of professional responses to these inequalities by national governments, non-government organisations (IGOs and NGOs) and educationists. We also discussed how comparison is invoked for educational description, educational theorizing and educational reform. I found the Education for All (EFA) game introduced as part of the course very interesting. Apart from generating critical thinking regarding how policies and strategies impact educational development, I began to take a greater interest in gaming as pedagogy, and subsequently attempted to introduce the concept back in my workplace.

The Institution Focused Study (IFS) gave me the opportunity to investigate on what I was interested to study – the impact of transformation through education. I was able to conduct insider research on an academic service-learning programme that I had designed and implemented over six years, involving polytechnic students teaching prison reformatory trainees skills on Information Technology, aimed at helping them reintegrate back into the society after their incarceration. The study examined the legitimacy of academic service-learning as pedagogy in the school. It was my first attempt experiencing the full research cycle, which involved crafting the research proposal; deciding on the methodology and research methods; identifying research participants; conducting the research; analysing and finally writing up the report. Albeit being a small-scale qualitative research study with one focus group and six individual interview participants, it was, nevertheless, a mentally rigorous experience. The research process required organised thinking and preparation, interpersonal skills, competency in research software, a critical mind, and a good command of the English language; notwithstanding a persevering spirit that continues in the face of momentary challenges. The research data from participants gave a balanced view of insights into the

academic service-learning programme. Some feedback helped to justify and establish arguments and ideas about the acceptability of practices and processes required by the proposed pedagogy, while others highlighted constraints within the current system that could hinder the effectiveness of the pedagogy. I was also prompted to coin a new term “transformationality” to refer to *the educational and learning process which leads to outcomes that result in a positive change in values, attitudes, behaviour and character of the learner.*

I decided to work on the topic of constructing a mentoring model for my thesis after much deliberation. While working on the IFS, I recognised that the success of service-learning programmes hinged critically on the quality of facilitation and guidance given to students, and the importance of bonding between the facilitator and the students. I realised these traits were important in developing mentoring relationships, and could contribute to the transformational experience of the students.

For me, the thesis is certainly the climax of the EdD International Programme. The process of constructing the mentoring model in the thesis helped me to critically evaluate prevailing practices at my workplace, and to consider new approaches that could change current mind-sets and the way things are being done in the school. My research unearthed the rapid growth of mentoring as a developmental tool, which has impacted beyond the business community where it had its original beginnings. It was interesting to study how mentoring has evolved in different countries, and how it has become an important approach in developing faculty and students within the educational setting. I hope to share the research findings with the stakeholders and will cherish the opportunity to apply the mentoring concepts, principles and tools for the identified Business & Social Enterprise course. This would allow the mentoring model to integrate the academic setting and the community of practice, such as the mentors and the support network structures outside the school.

In the course of working on both the IFS and thesis, I realised that the crafting of the research question as well as the direction of the research needed critical examination. A poorly constructed research question or an unclear understanding of the research intent could trigger a totally futile process. Therefore I am grateful for the support given by

my supervisor, who guided me and challenged the assumptions in the construction of my research question, epistemology and methods, so that both my IFS and the thesis could be written in a coherent manner. This EdD International Programme has been a long journey, and it was more difficult than I had imagined, juggling between demanding professional work and the commitment to the programme. When I enrolled for the programme, I was a rather junior lecturer with the School of Business & Accountancy, with an aspiration to offer students a transformational learning experience through education. The EdD process has allowed me to explore how practice could be substantiated by relevant theory, which helped to strengthen the rationale and philosophy of some of the programmes being implemented. It has also cultivated an evaluative mind-set which continually seeks to gather feedback from various parties involved. The notion of both service-learning and mentoring are rather nebulous, but the qualitative research methodology employed allowed further clarification of the terms and concepts used in the school context.

Since I enrolled for the programme, there have been significant changes in my work environment and portfolio. While working on the IFS, I was transferred from the School of Business & Accountancy to the School of Humanities, with a major change in job scope and responsibilities. There were times, especially during the course of the research on the thesis, when work exigencies had tempted me to give up or delay the completion of the programme, and I am grateful to many who have encouraged and supported me in this journey, and have in their ways given me the courage and hope to carry on. Even as I pen this statement of reflection and recall the many significant moments and learning points, I am grateful for the opportunity of this whole experience, and it certainly marks a critical milestone in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1. IN SEARCH OF A NEW LEARNING STRATEGY

The inspiration for this thesis dates back to the point of my considering education as a career switch, some ten years ago.

The conclusion was drawn that education had little relevance to work and career advancement apart from securing the first job, and even less in the development of values, psychosocial skills, active citizenry and social responsibility. In fact, what was learnt in the classroom usually remained in its confines, and the ultimate purpose of education seemed to culminate in the letter of the grade achieved and the certificate acquired. Dore (1976) aptly coined the term “*The Diploma Disease*” in what he sees as the chase of credentialism under the mask of education. It was quite candid that to many, the goal of education was to give students a limited number of skills, insights and points of view that would somehow help them find a good job and a satisfying life (Chickering, 1969).

A good job and a satisfying life in itself is a noble goal. But even education for employment has a higher call, including the contribution to human learning and development that would produce:

“a work force that can function at high levels of cognitive complexity, adapt to change, and develop the interpersonal competence and value orientations necessary for effective performance in a multicultural nation and world. They call for persons with motivation and a sense of their own effectiveness who can identify with, and invest themselves in, something larger than their own short-run, short-term self-interest.”
(Chickering and Reisser, 1993, p. xi)

The problem from my perspective seems to be the dichotomy between formal and informal education (Cross, 2006). Formal education is usually classroom-based, and provided by trained teachers or instructors. Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2006) describes formal education as

“highly institutionalized, bureaucratic, curriculum driven, and formally recognized with grades, diplomas, or certificates.” (p.29)

and non-formal education as being used most to describe

“organized learning outside of the formal education system. These offerings tend to be short-term, voluntary, and have few if any prerequisites. However they typically have a curriculum and often a facilitator.” (p.30)

In my own practice, I have noticed the difference in students’ interest, receptiveness and learning outcomes when they were engaged in investigating community problems as compared to studying about such problems from the textbooks. Hence, it is in my interest to develop strategies that integrate formal and informal education, and allow learners to benefit from the poignant characteristics and rich heritage of both approaches.

In particular, the generation of youth today (those born between 1977 and 1997) has been identified to be “exceptionally curious, self-reliant, contrarian, smart, focused, able to adapt, high in self-esteem, and has a global orientation” (Tapscott, 1998). They also “have a strong sense of social responsibility” and “care deeply about social issues”. This is also a generation that challenges textbook theories and demand for genuine action to accompany claims and promises. They look up to those who, in their terms, “walk the talk”.

This perspective resonates with my search for an educational system, structure and pedagogy that engages learners, harnesses their creative and cognitive potential, and prepares them to be ethically, socially and economically responsible and, at the same time technically and academically grounded.

2. THE RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

My convictions regarding such learning approaches have been shaped and reinforced by my involvement in the design and implementation of new models of learning in the School of Business & Accountancy (BA) and the School of Humanities (HMS), at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) in Singapore. The opportunity to work on service-learning

projects within the formal curriculum at BA (Tang, 2008), and the culture at HMS that supports education that integrates both formal and informal learning with a strong emphasis on experiential and service-learning has allowed for further inquiry into such learning approaches. The context that shaped this thesis includes the following:

Polytechnic Education in Singapore

This research is situated within the polytechnic education sector in Singapore. Polytechnic education in Singapore is considered to be at the tertiary level, and the majority of the intake comes from students who have completed their “O” levels and qualify for the minimum entry requirement of the respective diploma courses under the national Joint Admission Exercise (JAE) (See Appendix 1 – The Singapore Education Journey). Most of these students join the polytechnic at about seventeen years of age, and the typical diploma is a three-year course.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic¹, one of the five polytechnics in Singapore, houses eight academic schools with about fifty full-time diploma courses and a total enrolment of more than fifteen thousand students.

The Diploma in Business & Social Enterprise

I have been the course manager of one of the diploma courses offered by HMS, the diploma in Business & Social Enterprise (BZSE), introduced in April 2008. The intake of students in the BZSE diploma ranges from 40-45 per year, and the programme has (in April 2010) just enrolled its third batch of students into the course.

A rather new course, and first of its kind, BZSE was initiated by the polytechnic in response to a perceived growing need for a new cohort of diploma graduates with skills and knowledge in the business domain, and an identification with social issues (Refer Appendices 2a&b - Newspaper articles on BZSE). Recent scandals in the charity sector and attempts for non-profit organisations to become more sustainable have surfaced the

¹ Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore <http://www.np.edu.sg/home/aboutnp/corporate/Pages/index.aspx>

need for social sector managers with business and accounting knowledge and management skills.

The course allowed for introduction of new learning designs and methods integrating curriculum with informal learning through pedagogy that engages learners in various modes. The desired outcome of the BZSE graduate is one who has fundamental knowledge in business, social entrepreneurship, social studies, and applied skills relevant in equipping him/her to fit into jobs in the corporate business, social entrepreneurship and community development sectors. The three-year course hopes to develop in the students, social entrepreneurial traits like compassion, passion, resilience, leadership, resourcefulness, enterprising spirit, and an ethical fibre². As will be elaborated later, BZSE has a learning framework for formal and informal education working towards the development of the desired outcome of the BZSE graduate.

Though a learning framework exists, there appears to be a gap between the desired outcomes and the actual learning on the ground. One factor could be that some students apply for the course due to their personal interest, while others are posted based on the JAE exercise, and this is not their application of first choice. The students' inability to relate their schooling experiences as part of their lifelong learning journey beyond the classroom could be another reason.

The Social Entrepreneurship scene

The social enterprise is a relatively new global phenomenon, comprising an enterprise seeking to make profits, achieve a social cause, and sometimes seeking to solve environmental issues as well. This initiative and resolve to solve social problems, once considered the exclusive domain of the state (Bornstein, 2004; Salamon, 1994), has been increasingly undertaken by volunteers and social innovators, and is creating an unprecedented movement.

² Source: Ngee Ann Polytechnic BZSE Graduate Competencies document (Confidential).

The people behind the success of these social enterprises are usually the social innovators, also known as “social entrepreneurs”. These social entrepreneurs are driven, ambitious leaders with great skills in communicating a mission and inspiring their team, beneficiaries and partners, capable of creating impressive schemes with virtually no resources (Brinckerhoff, 2000; Dacanay, 2004; Dees, Emerson and Economy, 2001; Leadbeater and Demos, 1997). Though the concept of social entrepreneurship is still in the nascent stage, the impact of the work of these individuals is being recognized by internationally acclaimed organisations like the Schwab Foundation³, the Skoll Foundation⁴, and Ashoka⁵. The Schwab Foundation has awarded three Singaporean social entrepreneurs as “Social Entrepreneur of the Year” since 2006. One of them is also an Ashoka Fellow.

At the national level, this is a very young initiative. A Social Enterprise Committee was initiated in 2007 by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), to formulate a set of recommendations to develop a pro-social enterprise environment and a culture of social entrepreneurship in Singapore (Refer Appendix 3 – Newspaper article on the Social Enterprise Committee). The report of the Social Enterprise Committee (SE Committee, 2007) was released in late 2007. A Social Enterprise Association was launched in October 2009 with the mission to promote social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in Singapore⁶.

³ The Schwab Foundation selects about 20-30 social entrepreneurs annually from around the world who will form part of the Schwab Foundation Community and recognizes them as “Social Entrepreneur of the Year”. It supports the participation and active involvement of its selected social entrepreneurs at the regional and global meetings of the World Economic Forum, which offer unique opportunities to connect with corporate, political, academic, media and other leaders (<http://www.schwabfound.org/sf/AboutUs/Whatdowedo/index.htm>).

⁴ The Skoll Foundation invests in social entrepreneurs through their flagship three-year award programme, the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, which supports the continuation, replication or extension of programs that have proved successful in addressing a broad array of critical social issues: tolerance and human rights, health, environmental sustainability, economic and social equity, institutional responsibility, and peace and security. It also provides high-level connections for the social entrepreneurs which serve to advance the work of individual entrepreneurs, as well as the field of social entrepreneurship as a whole. The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship was launched at the Said Business School, University of Oxford in 2002 (<http://www.skollfoundation.org/aboutskoll/index.asp>).

⁵ Ashoka recognizes leading social entrepreneurs as Ashoka Fellows and provides them with living stipend for 3 years. They also provide a global support network of peers and partnerships with professional consultants (<http://www.ashoka.org/support>).

⁶ Social Enterprise Association, Singapore <http://www.seassociation.sg/>

3. MENTORING AS AN APPROPRIATE STRATEGY

While working on my Institution-Focused Study (Tang, 2008) on the topic “Can Academic Service-Learning be a legitimate pedagogy in the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Business School?”, students and faculty alike have implied that while service-learning as pedagogy has been effective in transforming learner attitudes and values, the role of the facilitator or mentor who is interested to nurture students beyond academic pursuits played an important part in the whole process, guiding students in making meaning out of experience both within and beyond the classroom.

My interest in mentoring as a youth development and learning approach was first sparked by an involvement in a personal capacity. In 2006, I was invited to be a mentor for the Citibank-YMCA Youth for Causes Social Entrepreneurship programme⁷, organized jointly by Citibank and The YMCA in Singapore. The programme spanned over a period of about five months, and I worked with a group of eight students who were planning various activities to raise funds for needy students at the polytechnic. We met regularly, almost bi-weekly, over the period, and discussed strategies related to the programme. As an important incidental, I also provided counsel and a listening ear to personal issues that some of them faced. A cordial relationship was forged, and I am still in touch with some of the students today. I was also honoured to have received the Best Mentor Award (YMCA, 2007) for the year, out of 100 participating mentors and teams. This experience has helped me realise that mentoring can contribute to the mentee’s development and psychosocial functions, as well as enhancing networking and making professional connections (Kram in Allen and Eby, 2007).

The idea of a mentor as someone showing a keen interest, like a personal guide, model and advisor to students, for the nurturing of values, social skills and interpersonal

⁷ The Citibank-YMCA Youth for Causes Social Entrepreneurship programme offers a platform for youths to develop their ideas into proposals to raise funds for a cause and help raise public awareness of that need. Student teams vie for the award money to explore their initiatives towards bolstering support for charitable and social services, especially for the underprivileged, public health and interactive sports segments. The programme is reinforced by a mentorship initiative, where project teams are guided by working professionals from Citibank and YMCA of Singapore.

relationships, (Cullingford, 2006b) seems to be a possible strategy for the BZSE learning model to integrate both formal and informal education.

4. A PROPOSED MENTORING STRATEGY IN BZSE

As part of the educational strategy of the BZSE course, learners are informed by certain key focuses of this diploma, one of which is to “*mentorship by award winning local and global social entrepreneurs*” (HMS, 2008). BZSE hopes to adopt mentoring as a learning approach for students over the period of three years, with its cohort size of between 40-45 per year. The large number of students with a relatively small pool of mentors available is a major constraint to implementing one-to-one mentoring. Furthermore, it is unlikely that any single mentor can adequately deliver every mentoring function or operate effectively in every critical role with a student, and students therefore need to be open to the notion of benefiting from multiple faculty role models, advisors, mentors, supervisors, and peers.

Hence, considering the nature of formal and informal education, and the potential network of available mentors, Kram’s concept of “development networks”, as elaborated in Chapter 2, may well fit into the BZSE mentoring model to be proposed. In this context, a mentee or student’s “developmental network” could comprise his or her class advisor, other faculty or role models involved with the student in formal or informal learning activities, the student’s peers, and the social entrepreneurs that are being introduced to the BZSE learning model. This strategy involves partnership and collaboration on a personal level, where students/mentees are able to develop relationships and learn from those who deliver the formal education programme, as well as others that bring with them the wisdom, experience and network such as the social entrepreneurs, in particular. This concept is very similar to that of “distributed mentoring” where mentoring is distributed across the full community, creating a kind of deep immersion that leads to the successful induction of practitioners (Tynjälä *et al*, 2006).

The student is akin to “an apprentice adult, facing several large tasks in his efforts to move from the world of childhood and its quandaries to life as a fully hatched adult. These novice phase tasks are (a) forming a dream, (b) forming a mentor relationship, (c) forming an occupation and (d) forming an enduring love relationship” (Roberts & Newton in Allen and Eby, 2007, p. 52).

The design of the BZSE diploma intentionally included a framework that aimed to give learners a holistic experience of both formal and informal education. This framework for formal and informal education within the BZSE diploma exists under two broad segments: (a) Formal education, for the purposes of this research, can be further categorised to include modules within the curriculum, as well as internships with industry partners, or what is commonly known as Work Based Learning (WBL). (b) Non-formal education would refer to student involvement in all kinds of co-curricular activities within the school environment, as well as any other programmes considered on a personal level beyond the school domain. Figure 1.1 summarises the framework for formal and informal education within BZSE into the four broad quadrants. The learning model includes both local and overseas experiences for all the quadrants.

FORMAL EDUCATION	INFORMAL EDUCATION
A. Curricular Classroom Lectures, Tutorials Experiential Projects, Field Visits, Study Trips	C. Co-curricular Non-academic Student Projects Student Competitions Leadership Training Programmes Expeditions Other Assignments
B. Internships/ Work Based Learning (WBL) Attachment Project	D. Personal Beyond school

Figure 1.1 – BZSE Framework for formal and informal education

Under Quadrant A, the proposed “mentors” could have a direct involvement with academic outcomes as they provide guidance on class assignments and projects, help to facilitate field visits and study trips, and other related roles within the context of the academic curriculum-based requirements. In this quadrant, although the lecturers and tutors would likely have a greater influence because of the proportion of time spent with

the students, students could still engage in other relationships within the developmental network.

Quadrant B would enable students to be attached to a particular social entrepreneur or business mentor on a more prolonged basis (usually five months), allowing deeper relationship building. This occurs during the students' final year in the diploma, and the attachment could be with a local or international mentor. The attachment or project under Quadrant B is graded as part of the students' assessment for the diploma, and each student is also assigned a lecturer as the internship supervisor. In this quadrant, the social entrepreneur or industry partner plays a more significant role in the developmental relationships as compared to Quadrant A.

Quadrant C comprises co-curricular programmes and activities where students are developed in various aspects beyond the academic focuses. Learning through co-curricular programmes has been deemed to be effective where students find these activities alive, relevant, real and exciting (Sprague, 1961). In many of these programmes, students can be guided by the various mentors on projects which could tie in with the mentor's own expertise areas.

Quadrant D is where the mentoring relationship could extend beyond the school-based activities, whether academic or non-academic. The mentoring relationship could be further developed where the student and the mentors in his or her developmental network moves into a "life-long" learning continuum, beyond the requirements of the BZSE diploma. This would be a desired outcome of the BZSE mentoring model.

Figure 1.2 below summarises the modules being taught in the BZSE formal curriculum.

The National Youth Council in Singapore has set up a steering committee to look into a national youth mentoring programme, training youth in tertiary institutions to take on the role of a mentor to secondary school students. The programme has just completed its pilot phase, and may take another two years before it can be implemented as a national programme. The committee has studied mentoring models from the United States (such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, icouldbe, The Mentoring Centre) while doing ground research to customise arrangements for the local youth scene.

The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) has also commissioned a new entity, the Centre for Non Profit Leadership (CNPL) which runs a mentoring programme catering only to the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of non-profit organisations. The mentors are high-calibre individuals with a wealth of experience and network to share with their CEO mentees. Interviews have also been conducted with the key executives of the two programmes mentioned above to gain a better understanding of the mentoring scene in Singapore.

CHAPTER TWO – SELECTED PERSPECTIVES ON MENTORING

1. DEFINING MENTORING

Having introduced the intent of this thesis in Chapter One, this chapter focuses on some mentoring perspectives that will help formulate principles for developing the BZSE mentoring model, and to guide the discussion and reflection in the research process.

The impression that the origins of the term “mentor” traces back to Greek mythology in Homer’s *Odyssey* is likely a familiar one. The story tells of how King Odysseus entrusted the care of his son, Telemachus to his friend, Mentor, who guided all aspects of the boy’s development. Athena, the goddess of both war and wisdom, later also assumed the form of Mentor to offer prudent counsel to Telemachus (Miller, 2002).

The mentoring movement has grown to such an extent that it can now be regarded as a social phenomenon in its own right (Colley, 2003). One of the most comprehensive definitions of mentoring emerges from the work of O’Neil and Wrightsman (in Allen and Eby, 2007, p. 50).

We propose that mentoring exists when a professional person serves as a resource, sponsor and transitional figure for another person who is entering that same profession. Effective mentors provide mentees with knowledge, advice, challenge, and support as mentees pursue the acquisition of professional competence and identity. The mentor welcomes the less experienced person into the profession, and represents the values, skills and success that the neophyte professional person intends to acquire someday.

This traditional understanding of a mentor connotes a knowledgeable older, wiser professional who provides counsel, guidance and advice to a usually younger individual, within the context of a profession, usually over a prolonged period. Traditional mentoring seems to assume that the effectiveness of mentoring relationships could be attributed to the amount of mentoring assistance provided. If this assumption holds, it would seem relevant to consider alternative sources of mentoring that might provide similar types of assistance (Higgins and Kram, 2001).

While the majority of theoretical and methodological advances in this area of research have arisen from business and organisational environments, the concept of mentoring also lends itself well to the field of Education, as it has the potential to connect the formal with the informal aspects of student learning through a personal relationship. It has been often used as an instrument of social learning to inculcate a particular set of values and practices (Baker and Maguire, 2005). In the Asian context, such a concept could also be likened to that of the Chinese “master-disciple” relationship. Mentors also facilitate the socialisation process by helping mentees acculturate to the environment of the organisation (in this case the school), and foster more positive attitudes and higher commitment to the institution (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2004).

One of the criticisms of mentoring in education research is the need for a greater clarification of the construct (Allen and Eby, 2007; Colley, 2003; Healy and Welchert, 1990). Student-faculty mentoring has been widely accepted as positive with substantial benefits for both undergraduate and graduate students, but research on this area remains comparatively sparse (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2004; Johnson, Rose and Schlosser, 2007; Kanan and Baker, 2002). Mentoring is often used in the context of education to describe a combination of coaching, counselling, and assessment, but in most cases for assisting pre-service or newly qualified teachers in their professional development (Fletcher, 2000). The development of mentoring in schools in the United Kingdom such as the introduction of the learning mentor, and business mentoring in schools has provided helpful insights for this thesis (Miller, 2002).

There is a need to review the role of the traditional mentor in the context of education, especially if mentoring is to be considered a systematic approach to student development. This proposition in some important regards underpins my thesis.

2. ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL MENTORING

Relationship Constellations/Developmental Networks

As reflected by Higgins and Kram (2001), changes in the current career environment have propelled a review of the concept of mentoring. While the phenomenon of mentoring in providing career and psychosocial support is still of primary interest, the question shifts towards “who” could provide such support and how the support is best provided. Job security has become a historic phenomenon, as organisations restructure in the wake of globalisation and externalisation of work. As such, individuals have been urged to look beyond the organisation to multiple relationships that can provide valuable developmental assistance. In today’s knowledge-based economy, with the rapid pace of change in information and digital technologies, seniority in an organisation does not necessarily equate with value, as organisations place value on those who have specific knowledge, can adapt and learn quickly, and who can learn how to learn. These meta-learning (Biggs, 1985; Norman, 2004) abilities and attitudes, where individuals are proactive and able to take control of their own learning and development, are becoming increasingly sought after. This implies that individuals will then need to draw on relationships from a variety of sources, rather than the “senior-level, intra-organisational relationships” for developmental assistance. In addition, as corporations become multi-national, align and collaborate with other organisations in various arrangements including relocation and even virtual businesses, employees need to look beyond intra-organisational sources to others who can provide them with developmental assistance. These changes also make the role of the traditional mentor increasingly difficult.

Hence, while traditional mentorship is an intense interpersonal helping relationship of a rather long duration, there are authors like Kram and others (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2004; Jackson, 1993; Stead, 1997), who call for attention to the variety of developmental relationships, some traditional and others not, likely to be experienced by a student.

Kram (1985), in particular, has introduced a phenomenon she calls “relationship constellations” or “developmental networks” (Higgins and Kram, 2001) where individuals rely on not just one but multiple individuals for developmental support in their careers. The constellation comprises a set of concurrent relationships that are specifically developmental in nature and include, but are not limited to one’s primary mentor. Scholars have also begun to consider the limitations of research on a single or primary mentor and to revisit Kram’s proposition (Higgins and Kram, 2001), with ideas of the mentor as a transitional figure from Levinson et al (1978).

Higgins and Kram (2001, p. 268) define an individual’s “developmental network” as

the set of people a protégé⁸ names as taking an active interest in and action to advance the protégé’s career by providing developmental assistance

Here, an individual’s “developmental network” is a subset of his or her entire social network. It comprises those relationships the mentee identifies at a particular point in time as being important to his or her career development. These relationships are simultaneously held, as opposed to a sequence of developmental relationships.

The “developmental network” (Higgins and Kram, 2001) sits well within the social network perspective as highlighted by Brass (1995), which focuses on the relationships among actors and assumes that actors (whether they be individuals, groups, or organisations) are embedded within a network of interrelationships with other actors. It is this intersection of relationships that defines an actor’s position in the social structure, and provides opportunities and constraints on behaviour. Ibarra (1993) adds that limited network access produces multiple disadvantages, including restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organisations and difficulty in forming alliances, which, in turn, associates with limited mobility and “glass ceiling” effects.

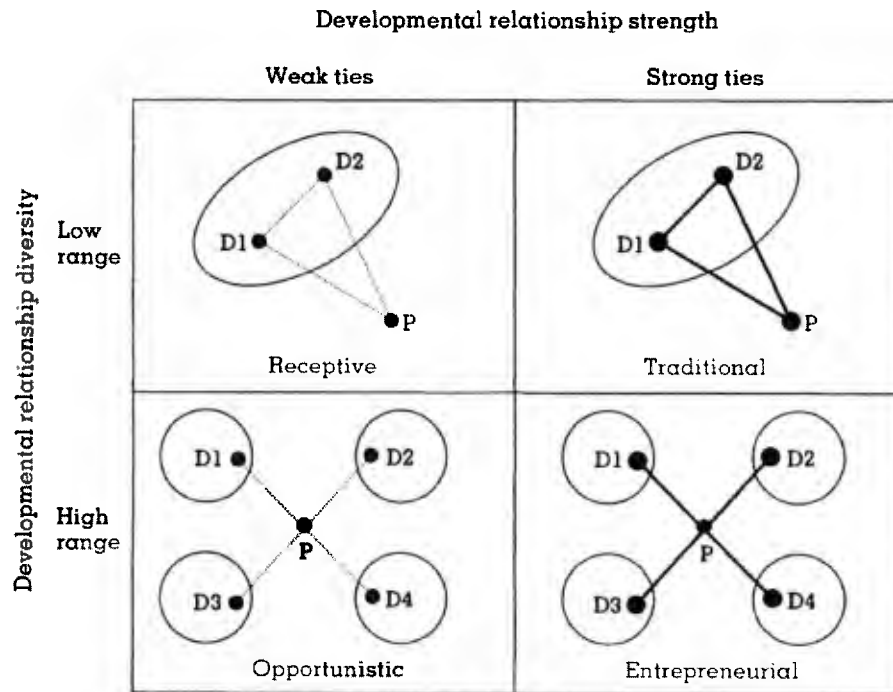
⁸ Apart from citations which are kept in verbatim form, the term “mentee” rather than “protégé” will be used in this paper to describe “a person who is advised, trained or counselled by a mentor” (as defined in the Oxford Dictionary). This definition is preferred over that of “protégé” which connotes that the “mentor” needs to be an older, more experienced or influential person. This paper will elaborate that the “mentor” in this context, could include peers . However, in some regards, the relevant terminology remains contested.

Researchers have also increasingly recognized the importance of social support for students' academic success. In his discussions on social theory, Coleman (1990) maintains that strong relationships constitute a form of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000) that is of value to children's academic success and can have positive effects. This is just one principle that appears to have applicability to my own professional context.

Typology of Developmental Networks

Higgins and Kram (2001) introduced the "typology of developmental networks" focusing on two main dimensions, namely (1) the diversity of individuals' development networks and (2) the strength of the developmental relationships that make up these networks.

The typology yields four categories of developmental networks: (1) high developmental network diversity, high developmental relationship strength (Entrepreneurial), (2) high development network diversity, low developmental relationship strength (Opportunistic), (3) low developmental network diversity, high developmental relationship strength (Traditional), (4) low developmental network diversity, low developmental relationships strength (Receptive). These four categories of developmental networks are useful in helping to analyse and model the BZSE mentoring process, in terms of managing network diversity as well as the strength of the mentoring relationships. These relationships arte illustrated in Figure 2.1.



Key: D, developer; P, protégé.

Figure 2.1 – Developmental Network Typology (Higgins and Kram, 2001)

Entrepreneurial developmental networks demonstrate both the wide-ranging nature of the developmental network as well as the strength of the ties. The developers are highly motivated to act on behalf of the mentee and collectively provide access to a wide array of information. This type of developmental network may be conducive for the BZSE mentoring model where the mentoring ties are possibly strong, and a network of mentors made available to the students.

An *opportunistic* developmental network is portrayed as one where the mentee is generally passive toward actively cultivating the relationships, even though help is offered and available from the network. There is little reciprocity and initiative to help the relationship grow. Under such a network, the BZSE mentoring model would need to consider how to encourage potential mentees to initiate and sustain their relationships with their mentors, given that the mentors are willing to develop them and take them under their charge.

The *traditional* mentor relationship with one or two strong primary relationships within the same social system, is typical of a traditional developmental network, and there is likely to be interconnection between them. Such networks may provide highly similar or redundant information, and fewer differences in the developmental assistance provided as compared to an entrepreneurial or an opportunistic developmental network. In this case, the mentoring model has to expand the range of mentors in the developmental network without diluting the strength of the relationships.

The *receptive* developmental network is somewhat similar to the *opportunistic* developmental network in that while the mentee is open to receiving assistance, he/she is not actively initiating or cultivating the relationships. The developers in the *receptive* developmental network are likely to come from the same social system and like the *traditional* developmental network, likely to provide similar information, even attitudes and cognitive judgements. This type of developmental network is not ideal where the range and strength of the mentoring relationships are both weak, and may cause inertia and problems for the mentees' development.

The typology provides a helpful basis in analysing different types of developmental networks and how they could have an impact on the development of the mentee. However, it does not address the issue of enabling mentees to move from the low-range, weak-tie (Receptive) quadrant towards the high-range, strong-tie (Entrepreneurial) quadrant, where most of the benefits of the developmental network are reaped. This is a developmental approach that the BZSE mentoring model hopes to encourage.

The typology is also situated in the context of the office environment, where there could be greater opportunities for individuals working on tasks that allow them to come in contact with a greater variety of potential developers. A student within the context of a school environment would be likely to have fewer such opportunities to develop his/her network. The BZSE mentoring model could seek to address these aspects by pointing the students to a range of mentors within the developmental networks, such as the faculty staff, social entrepreneurs and industry practitioners.

Two moderating factors were also highlighted by Higgins and Kram when considering how developmental relationships are likely to unfold, namely, the developmental orientation and the emotional competence of both the mentor and mentee. The BZSE mentoring model could look into how to cater to more appropriate matches in the mentoring network and relationships, such as a selection process open to both mentors and mentees in their initiation of the mentoring relationship. Research on helping behaviour has shown that individuals are more likely to seek help when they feel psychologically safe, when there is minimal threat to one's ego or sense of self (ibid.). Perhaps, a mentoring model that helps to cater to such an environment would encourage the mentees to take more of the initiative in plotting their own developmental plan.

3. SPONSORSHIP VERSES DEVELOPMENTAL MENTORING

It is also interesting to explore how mentoring models in the United States and Europe have been generally viewed to stem from rather different philosophies, and how they could be applicable in the BZSE mentoring model in an educational context in Singapore. The United States model tends to favour protégé sponsorship, while the European model resonates more with a developmental approach in mentoring.

In a sponsorship model, the primary aim of the mentoring relationship is to sponsor the protégé for career advancement, while the developmental model aims at personal growth, mutual learning, and the mentee assumes a significant degree of accountability for the outcomes of his/her development (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009). A mentor in developmental mentoring may be more experienced, but not necessarily more senior, and the purpose is to facilitate learning rather than provide answers (Megginson *et al*, 2006). Clutterbuck (in Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009) commented that in the developmental model, career outcomes are seen as outcomes of personal growth rather than the primary purpose of the mentoring relationship as evidenced in the sponsorship model. The sponsorship model also tends to be more prescriptive, where mentors actively champion the cause of the protégés, and the success of the relationship is determined by the sound guidance and advice provided by the mentor. On the other hand, the development model encourages more questions, discovery of insights and

abilities on the part of the mentee, and helps the mentee aspire towards lifelong learning and personal development.

Reciprocity is recognised as part of the learning process in developmental mentoring, where both mentor and mentee benefit and grow in the course of the mentoring relationship. Reciprocity demands a certain degree of humility on the part of the mentor, an important attribute that liberates the mentor and empowers the mentee. This trait may be less evident in the sponsorship model, as the mentor is looked upon as an expert. There is also an expectation of loyalty on the part of the protégé in the sponsorship model, while the focus is more of mutual learning in the development model (ibid.).

As Megginson admits, in practice, both models could be less clear cut, and it may be difficult to be dogmatic about each model. In many graduate-faculty mentoring models, mentoring is viewed as an essential element in the student's professional development, and may even be viewed as mechanisms for indoctrinating students into a professional field, with the relationship having profound effects on students' professional identity and career plans (Austin, 2002; Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007).

The degree of mutuality or reciprocity congruence in matching between the mentor and mentee is a key factor in developing the mentoring relationships (Johnson, Rose and Schlosser, 2007). Mentoring relationship correlates, according to O'Neil and Wrightsman (in Johnson, Rose and Schlosser, 2007) include interpersonal respect, professionalism-collegiality, role-fulfilment, power, control, and competition.

In the context of the BZSE mentoring model, the objective of orientating the student into a professional field is an important consideration, in which case, appropriate guidance, advice and prescription would be necessary in this regard. However, the model also hopes to offer students a developmental approach towards adulthood (Levinson *et al*, 1978) and help them to acquire skills and traits that promote personal development, where personal growth can be translated to more holistic lives and a better integration into the community where they live and hope to serve.

4. POWER ISSUES WITHIN MENTORING

Though there appears to be limited writing that acknowledges the place of power in mentoring relationships (Elmes and Smith, 2007; Millwater and Ehrich, 2008), it is recognised that power is a vital concept used to explain relationships between people within organisations and organisation structures. It is inherent in organisational life and hence, should be an ethical concern for those in a position to plan mentoring programmes within organisations (Hansman, 2002). A key part of most descriptions of power connotes the ability to influence behaviour, of getting someone to do something they do not particularly want to do (Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009).

French and Raven (in Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009) has presented a framework on five sorts of power which raises some relevant and interesting points. Their perspectives are summarised below.

They define *reward power* as the ability to provide rewards such as promotions, pay rises or developmental projects, and *coercive power* as the ability to withdraw or withhold the rewards or to make life difficult or unpleasant for those who do not comply. In the light of the BZSE mentoring model, the question of the implications of conflicts of interest, having a mentor who is also an academic faculty member grading the mentee on a particular module may need to be considered. Another consideration could be whether the impact of grades would affect the openness in the mentoring relationship.

According to French and Raven, *legitimate power* is the power that is derived from formal authority or position within an organisational hierarchy. Scholars have found that the perceived and/or formal power of the mentor could affect the importance that the mentee places on the mentor's opinions, and hence, the relationships that form (Higgins and Kram, 2001). Just as in any organisational structure, there are hierarchical roles within HMS and the BZSE faculty team, and, there are chances that the formal authority of the mentors may affect the way the mentees relate to them, as they view the mentoring relationships in an authoritarian manner, and will not speak up or prefer to

adopt a passive posture. On the other hand, mentees could also take advantage of better access to the faculty member's resources and influence in high ranks.

Expert power is described as the perceived knowledge, experience or judgement that others value, but do not yet own. As a mentee begins to acquire more knowledge and expertise, this may have an impact on the perception of the value of the mentor. The effect could be positive if the mentoring relationship is a reciprocal one. The mentor could be updated on new developments while offering advice from a different vantage point. On the other hand, if the relationship is one based solely on *expert power*, then the regard and respect for the mentor may diminish as the mentee seeks to establish his/her own standing in the field. The mentor may feel threatened by the mentee's confidence and expertise, and hence behave in a way that is unhelpful to the mentee (Millwater and Ehrich, 2008).

Referent power, on the other hand, is power based on personal qualities, such as the charisma, respectability, likeability of the person. Mentors with greater referent power may find themselves being in high demand with students. In the context of peer mentoring amongst students, a common obstacle is resistance from peers on the legitimacy of the peer mentor. In such cases, mentors with *referent power* would be able to garner respect more readily, as compared to peer mentors who are perceived to have less power to help in the relationships.

Clutterbuck (2004) advocates a mentoring relationship where the mentee has a choice in setting his/her agenda for the direction of the relationship. In such situations, power becomes more democratic, as mentees are empowered to reconstruct practice rather than merely be the recipient of one-way relationships subjected to the power relationships inherent in the organisations (Millwater and Ehrich, 2008).

Hence, key questions that should stay in the forefront of planning for mentoring programmes include: *Whose interests are primarily being served through mentoring programmes - the organisation's, the mentor's or the mentee's? Whose interests should be served? Can and should mentoring programmes challenge unequal power*

relationships and institutional structures or simply reinforce the existing hegemonic culture? (Hansman, 2002).

5. SITUATED LEARNING

Another theory of relevance to mentoring relationships and to the context of this thesis is the Situated Learning Theory, first proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). Lave and Wenger maintain that learning mostly occurs when it is unintentional and situated within authentic activity, context, and culture in which it is applied, and is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice. In his foreword to the book, Hanks (in Lave and Wenger, 1991) explained Lave and Wenger's ideas as learning that is located in the processes of co-participation, not merely in the heads of individuals. It takes as its focus, the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs. Questions regarding what kinds of social engagements provide the proper contexts for learning to take place rather than what kinds of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved, are posed. This view contrasts with most classroom learning approaches that often involve abstract knowledge and are often presented out of context. Lave and Wenger call this a process of "Legitimate Peripheral Participation", drawing attention to the point that learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community.

Situated learning has its origins in adult education, within communities of practice (Kimble, Hildreth and Bourdon, 2008). It takes place within the same context in which it is applied, and is a social process where knowledge is co-constructed, and learning is situated in a specific context and embedded within a particular social and physical environment. As the beginner or novice moves from the periphery of a community to its centre, he or she becomes more active and engaged within the culture and eventually assumes the role of an expert (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Lave and Wenger had specifically maintained that their perspective on learning was not developed in response to the claims of any educational form, including schooling, but rather represented a view of learning that would stand on its own. Hence, in the context of this research, situated learning resonates with my philosophy of learning, embracing the dichotomy between formal and non-formal education, as situated learning helps to focus the exposure and experience of learning in a social context. The BZSE framework for formal and informal education certainly has elements of learning situated in authentic contexts, where students or mentees interact with stakeholders of the community in their fieldwork and internships, by applying theories at the workplace and being mentored by industry or social entrepreneur practitioners in the field. The BZSE mentoring model could take advantage of the social and community context to involve students beyond their projects, and to encourage them to form informal networks as volunteers and interest groups to serve the wider community.

The proposed BZSE mentoring model could consider developing communities of learning networks where both mentors and mentees could grow in their roles. Specifically, a community of practice where mentors and mentees could share their experiences and facilitate mutual learning could be developed (Kensington-Miller, 2006). The mentees could be assimilated into this community as they mature and consider becoming mentors to other students.

All of the above considerations, and theoretical constructs, have informed both my reflections and my commitment to devising the most appropriate framework to meet the needs of our BZSE programme's participants.

CHAPTER THREE - THE CASE FOR THE BZSE MENTORING MODEL

This research initiative has prompted me to ponder mentoring in ways I have never previously considered. The thesis is concerned with the praxis of mentoring (Orland-Barak, 2010) within a specific context, and how these contextual conditions and commitments will be guiding the development of the research. It specifically explores the relevance of the network of developmental mentors as the basis for the construction of a mentoring model for the BZSE course. Persuasions from literature reviewed and conversations with research participants have helped to sharpen the focus of the research, and these have led to a number of changes to the original draft on the objectives and intent of the thesis.

Countless definitions abound for the term mentor, and a qualitative researcher would agree with Monaghan and Lunt (1992) that attempts to define mentoring could be futile because mentoring relationships are constructed by each mentor and mentee. This research approaches mentoring as an intentional strategy (Johnson, 2002), at the same time alluding to the “popular consensus” approach which is based on the idea that everyone knows what mentoring is, but are all working with their own definitions (Lunt et al in Miller, 2002), and the final construct takes into consideration the various appropriate descriptions which could be viewed as a continuum of helping behaviours from which the mentor can choose (Gay in Miller, 2002).

In this chapter, I would like to define the aims, and identify key themes in mentoring deemed relevant to the context of this study, as a basis for further investigations and dialogue in the course of the research. Chapter 4 will elaborate on the philosophy, paradigm, methodological strategy and methods applied in this research. The analysis of the research findings will be outlined in Chapter 5. The chapter will discuss key themes that surfaced from the research data that has shaped the outcome of this thesis, some misalignments from the existing BZSE learning framework that the new model could help address, as well as ideas from respondents in the construction of the BZSE mentoring model. Chapter 6 will present the BZSE mentoring model as the outcome of

this research. Using a grounded theory methodological approach, the model is constructed from data driven inputs, with an understanding of the culture and context of the environment from which it operates, as well as mentoring theories and ideas that have been applied in the global context. In chapter 7, I will conclude this thesis by explaining how the proposed model addresses the aims set out in this chapter, some constraints of the model, and propose a phased approach in its implementation. I will also discuss how this research informs practice, and is of professional relevance.

1. AIMS OF THE MENTORING MODEL

The current research focuses on the nurturing of social entrepreneurship traits, values and skills in the development of the student. Though student mentoring normally considers academic mentoring, participants have highlighted that academic performance should not be an intended desired outcome in this model as it poses a conflict in motivation, and hence may divert the focus of the mentoring process. However, academic improvement could likely be a possible outcome as students become more motivated and confident, and have a clearer picture of their life goals. Career support, a common objective in other mentoring programmes, is also implicitly connected with the developmental aim as mentors seek to help mentees understand their longer term goals in life.

Due to the constraints in the availability of suitable mentors, and the reality that no one individual possesses all the relevant skills, knowledge, values and personal traits beneficial in the role of the mentor, this research will explore Higgins' & Kram's (2001) idea of the "relationship constellations" or "developmental networks", which are simultaneous relationships the mentee identifies at a particular point in time as being important to his/her development. The new model will consider introducing a network of mentors available at different points, and who can provide support and guidance in the journey of the students. Herein lies the distinctiveness of the model I am proposing.

While it is advised that an environment that is conducive is needed for mentoring to be effective and sustainable, I would suggest that the reverse is also true. A good mentoring programme helps to create a desired culture within the organisation.

According to Clutterbuck (2004), research has shown that mentoring helps in induction and increased productivity of new staff. A mentoring programme demonstrates commitment to management development and staff retention, and also helps to improve motivation by providing a listening ear and offering productive and constructive advice leading to job performance. As such, the BZSE mentoring model hopes to create a learning environment that is positive and nurturing for every BZSE student. The model will attempt to cater to the necessary environmental factors needed as well as how students can learn to develop and cultivate their own network of mentoring relationships that will accompany them for the longer run.

Nurturing and stretching (Clutterbuck, 2004) are key dimensions in the development of a mentee, and in this context, the nurturing of social entrepreneurial traits and values, and stretching mentees in the application of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge will be an important aim of this model. The mix here is thus one of *support* (nurture) coupled with *challenge* (stretching),

One of the gaps of the existing BZSE learning framework for formal and informal education highlighted by respondents (elaborated in Chapter 5) is that some students may not see the connections despite going through the experiential learning framework. The metaphor of mentoring as making up for the deficiencies of mechanistic models, and making them function more smoothly (Cullingford, 2006b) seem to be somewhat applicable in this context. The mentor could play an important role in helping mentees make explicit these connections in the course of dialogue and sharing of experiences. Strategies could also be employed to encourage greater reflexivity in student learning.

Another important outcome of mentoring is the development of the mentee's self-esteem, confidence and independence, where the mentor could provide counsel, a listening ear and act as a "sounding board", but encourages the mentee to reach his/her own conclusions and decisions (Morton in Trorey and Blamires, 2006).

In summary, the following are the key aims of the BZSE mentoring model:

- (a) to form a developmental network of people from various backgrounds and experiences able to guide students in attaining social entrepreneurship traits, values and skills
- (b) to create a culture of support, motivation and inspiration for students in their academic pursuit, over the three years in the BZSE course
- (c) to help students harness their best potential through nurturing and stretching their capacities
- (d) to cultivate a reflexive orientation in students enabling connections between formal and informal education
- (e) to develop confidence, esteem and independence, preparing them to flourish as successful individuals and able to become mentors to other mentees

2. CLUTTERBUCK'S MODEL OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

While there are many helpful models of mentoring shared by mentoring practitioners, I found Clutterbuck's (2004) model (Figure 3 below) on developmental relationships to be particularly useful to the BZSE construct.

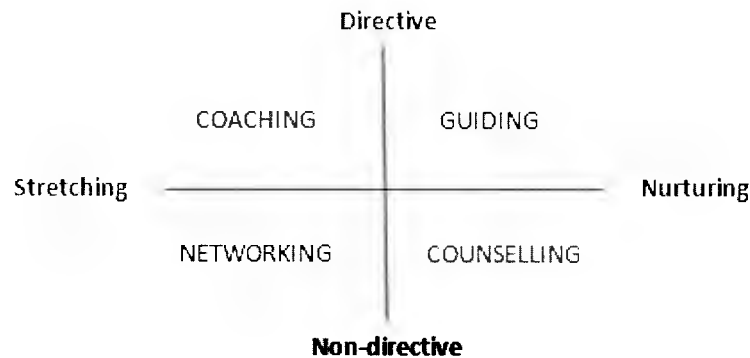


Figure 3- Clutterbuck's (2004, p. 17) model on developmental relationships

He juxtaposes the mentoring approach of directive or non-directive with the dimensions of stretching and nurturing needed in the development of the mentee.

Within each quadrant, four different styles of helping the mentee grow are highlighted, depending on the extent of the directedness and helping dimension. Coaching is the

development of competencies, and is relatively directive, usually with learning goals established as an outcome. The counselling role acts as a sounding board and provides support in analysing life goals and possible career options, helping the mentee to take responsibility for his/her personal development. The networking function is important in giving the mentee a head start in getting to know the right people that could help in his/her development, especially in the areas the mentee hopes to pursue. The guidance role in offering advice and sometimes helping the mentee to get back on track is an important aspect of the developmental relationship. Sometimes the role of guiding is overshadowed by that of counsellor, where the mentee is asked what he/she would want to do in the situation, which may not be of much help in certain situations.

A more experienced mentor will be able to apply the most appropriate style at the right time, as mentoring is a dynamic process, and the wisdom of situational discretion would be most helpful in the mentee's developmental journey. In the BZSE context, mentors can suitably employ the various styles at various points in the BZSE learning framework.

3. ROLE OF MENTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK

Higgins' & Kram's (2001) typology of developmental relationships has led to interesting discussions with respondents on how mentoring could be effectively employed in the context of this study, with an awareness of the peculiarities of the people, environment and structure, and the voices of the various stakeholders on what they deem would work and what wouldn't.

Extending from Clutterbuck's model, the developmental network in the new construct would include all of the four roles, namely, the mentor as counsellor, coach, guide and networker, within the function of a traditional mentor, team mentor, group mentor, business/community mentor, peer mentor or learning mentor.

The *traditional mentor* in this context will be where a more experienced mentor has a one-to-one relationship with the mentee over the period of the mentoring contract.

Team mentoring occurs when more than one mentor works together with one mentee (Saito and Blyth, 1992). In the BZSE context, the team could comprise, for example, a faculty member and a social entrepreneur in helping to mentor a student in the setting up of a new social enterprise.

Group mentoring usually comprises a group of mentees attached to one (or more) mentors, with a number of simultaneous relationships being developed (Herrera, Vang and Gale, 2002; Saito and Blyth, 1992). *Group mentoring* offers a viable alternative due to the constraint in resources for mentoring. This approach may also be preferred by individuals who prefer group-based relationships, and may find it a good way of making new friends (Herrera, Vang and Gale, 2002). However, it may be more challenging logistically to arrange meetings. There may also be a tendency for dominance by certain individuals, and a lack of privacy and confidentiality for personal issues to be aired (Miller, 2002).

Miller also gives a good overview of *business and community mentors*. *Business mentoring* refers to the mentoring relationship between business people and young people. It could also be used to describe mentoring where the subject matter is a small business start-up and development. *Community mentoring* would involve members of the local community as mentors. Engaging *business and community mentors* help students to be more positive about themselves when someone from outside of the school environment is prepared to put time and energy into their development (ibid.). The *business and community mentor* model is akin to inviting social entrepreneurs and industry experts as mentors in the new construct. But because *business and community mentors* are external to the school culture and environment, it would be necessary to consider some ways to help them better assimilate into the BZSE context.

Peer mentoring is usually a status-free, or “horizontal” kind of mentoring relationship, mostly highly accepting, involving a strong sense of friendship (Clutterbuck, 2004), though the age and ability of both mentors and mentees do have a bearing on the nature of the relationship (Miller, 2002). In this context, *peer mentors* could be senior students who have had slightly more experience in the course, and *peer mentoring* could take place in groups or in one-to-one relationships. As will be highlighted in later chapters,

student respondents have highly endorsed their preference for a peer mentoring framework within the new construct, and this approach could serve well in academic support and the morale-building and affirmation of the culture within the course. Another prime aim of *peer mentoring* is to develop the peer mentor (ibid.), and this could be intentionally designed to develop different types of students, including students considered in the talent pool (TCP)⁹ as well as those considered at-risk.

The *learning mentor* (Cruddas, 2005; Megginson *et al*, 2006) in this context involves providing guidance to the learner in drawing up and implementing his/her own personalised learning plan, charting his/her aspirations and goals and devising a strategy to work towards them within the three years in the course. In the UK scene, the role of the *learning mentor* includes other managerial functions which in this case will be handled by the mentor coordinator as defined later.

An interesting notion of the “*Chief Mentor*” surfaced from the research conversations, which reinforces the networking style suggested by Clutterbuck (2004). The suggested role of the *chief mentor* is much like the *traditional mentor* who recommends the mentee to consult others in the network or panel in areas where these other mentors could better support the mentee’s development in a particular aspect. The *chief mentor* remains as the “official” mentor in the development of the mentee in the course.

It has been suggested that the developmental relationships in the BZSE mentoring model include a combination of the various mentoring types at various points of the BZSE framework, with the formation of a panel of mentors as the pool of available mentors.

⁹ There is a talent development mentoring programme in existence at the polytechnic where high academic achievers are assigned mentors to help them in their academic pursuit and to develop their portfolio within their three years in the polytechnic. The programme is known as “The Christeria Programme (TCP)” <http://www.np.edu.sg/sdar/tcp/Pages/default.aspx>.

4. THE MENTOR COORDINATOR

In order for the model to be implemented and sustained, there needs to be someone who can set up, drive and manage the structure. The term *mentor coordinator* has been assigned to this role in various contexts (Clutterbuck, 2004; Miller, 2002). This is a key management role that is preferably held by someone of a certain level of influence in the organisation, at least initially, as it would probably involve the need for some change in culture within the organisation.

The significance of the leadership provided by the mentor coordinator cannot be underestimated. As such, the mentor coordinator should preferably be someone respected by students, faculty and community; have an understanding of issues involved in dealing with schools, the voluntary sector, businesses and even the local government; have excellent organisational and coordinating skills; have the authority to commit resources and make decisions on behalf of the project; have access to leaders in partner organisations (Miller, 2002).

The mentor coordinator would be responsible for establishing the basic parameters for the model, recruitment of mentors, facilitating preparation and training for mentors and mentees, managing mentoring meetings, identifying the target group of mentees, and overseeing the process of matching of mentors. He/she would also conduct evaluation and quality review, amongst other things, generally ensuring the system is well-run upon implementation. The mentor coordinator is also expected to be reflexive and progressive in outlook, consistently evaluating and strengthening the system by continuous improvement,

Studies from the UK context have revealed that school mentoring coordinators often have senior or middle-management roles and the coordination of mentoring is generally added to an already busy workload (ibid.). This is likely to be the case in the BZSE model as well.

5. THE EFFECTIVE MENTOR

The mentor's role is multi-dimensional. At times, he/she coaches a mentee through the nuances of a new task or project, gives a challenging assignment to stretch the mentee beyond his/her comfort zone, demonstrating the career function, and at times intervening in the emotional and personal development of the mentee, giving affirmation and encouragement in pursuit of dreams, and increasing collegial friendship with the mentee, demonstrating very much the psychosocial function (Johnson and Ridley, 2008). Exemplary mentors hold an articulated view on educational ideology with a strong correspondence between what they say they believe in and their enacted roles in practice. They tend to display highly developed organisational skills, interpersonal relationships, reflexivity, ability to integrate theory and practice, subject matter expertise, professionalism, leadership roles and the right combination of challenge, modelling and support (Orland-Barak, 2010).

Because the role of the mentor is consequential to the development of the mentee in critical areas, the selection of mentors for the programme is a vital process that requires careful consideration. In fact, the director of HMS suggested that if suitable mentors were not available, it might be better not to start the mentoring programme rather than have mentors that may not be fitting, and may lead to detrimental consequences. This sentiment was also reflected by Rhodes (2004). In actuality, some people are better suited for the mentoring role than others. As aptly put by Gerald O'Callaghan who was formerly responsible for the BP mentoring scheme,

Mentors are not picked for any superhuman qualities – though some may fall into that category. Most are experienced, well-balanced professionals and managers who are interested in developing young people and broadening their own contribution to the company. They are among the best staff we have (Clutterbuck, 2004, p. 48).

Similarly, in the context of BZSE, mentors (whether faculty or external parties) will be invited based on their interest in youth development, passion and purpose in life, and a generally interesting personality, involved in his/her own lifelong learning and self-development. The representation of the mentor as a role-model was highlighted by quite a few respondents during the research.

In the selection of the different mentors for the network in the model, there could be a consideration of mentors with varying expertise and skills, to cater to the different aspirations and needs of the mentees.

Also of significance is the availability of the mentor for the programme. Students have revealed that experiences in past mentoring programmes with mentors who were not available or who allowed other priorities to affect the mentoring schedule had been at best frustrating. For some students it has become a deterrent to involvement in other mentoring programmes.

6. WHO SHOULD BE MENTORED?

If Clutterbuck's book "Everyone needs a mentor" (Clutterbuck, 2004) is anything to go by, every student should be mentored. While there are individuals who may be highly self-sufficient, and may not see the need for mentoring, or may even be adverse to the idea of having a mentor due to various reasons, it is the intention to give every BZSE student an *opportunity* to be mentored. With a student population of about forty per cohort, the total number of students to be mentored at any one time would amount to about a hundred and twenty based on students from three levels.

Who should be mentored also depends on the objectives of the mentoring programme. The aims of the BZSE model cater to all BZSE students. But because resources are limited, many mentors are selective of who they would like to accept as mentees and develop a relationship with. Mentoring is costly in terms of time, emotional energy and professional resources, and there are usually a limited number of suitable and available mentors, who can only mentor a limited number of mentees.

Feedback from respondents and discussions with the school management have alluded to a mentoring option that is available for all at the base levels, but restricted to some at the more advanced stages of mentoring, adapting Treffinger's (2004) "levels of service" approach. Hence, the adoption of a *multi-dimensional mentoring approach*, which will be discussed at a later section in this chapter.

As detailed in Chapter 6, various structures and forms of preparation will be introduced to cater to all students at various points, giving them the rationale and purpose of the programme, how the mechanism for selection of mentees and mentors will take shape, highlighting potential benefits, the terms of reference, and duration of the mentoring contract. Some constraints will also be highlighted to help students better understand and appreciate the model.

7. MATCHING OF MENTORS WITH MENTEES

There was much discussion with respondents on the matching of mentors with mentees during the focus groups and interviews. All participants were mindful that a good match resulting in the development of a healthy mentoring relationship would be pivotal in the success of the programme. The considerations between faculty having a better understanding of the needs of both mentors and mentees, thereby making a more informed decision in the matching process; social entrepreneurs and business mentors preferring to have mentees who were genuinely interested and would seek them out; and students wanting the liberty to choose their own mentors rather than be assigned one, make the matching process a rather complicated one.

The selection of mentors will need to be a well-considered process, as not everyone may be suitable to be a mentor. And in the developmental network approach to be considered in this model, the panel of mentors will come from very diverse backgrounds, age and experiences, including students, alumni, faculty and external parties. The *mentor coordinator*, in consultation with the management of the school will select mentors for the programme. A face-to-face conversation with the prospective mentor to understand his/her mentoring philosophy, interest in youth development and general outlook in life and career would be necessary to help in assessing the suitability of the candidate.

Care needs to be taken in considering the matching process to prevent the mentor and mentee feeling they have been imposed on each other. The matching strategy should give the participants a sense of “buy-in” into the programme (Clutterbuck, 2004). An exercise could be conducted where mentors provide details about their background, expertise, experiences, even interests and hobbies, and what they may be looking for in

prospective mentees. Similarly, mentees could indicate their aspirations, interest and inclinations, what they hope to learn from the mentors, and how they see their role in the mentoring relationship. This could give both mentors and mentees a sense of preparation and expectation in the programme.

Hence, in this *multi-dimensional mentoring approach*, different matching strategies will be applied at different points in the model that fits into the BZSE learning framework. Mentors within curriculum modules would be matched differently from the *chief mentors* and mentors needing to play the coaching role. The discussion with respondents regarding a matching method where mentees pitch for their mentors may be a novel idea that could be adopted in the matching of chief mentors. Chapter 5 will highlight some of these discussions regarding the matching process and respondents' views of the pitching idea.

8. A PERSONALISED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Personal development planning (PDP), though not a new phenomenon, has not been widely applied in the Singapore education scene, although initiatives towards self-directed learning engaging new information technology and social networking strategies are gaining interest and popularity (Cross, 2006). The development of PDP has the potential to form an intermediary stage leading to continuing professional development and lifelong learning, with opportunities for students to develop skills which will be relevant in the workplace (Clegg and Bradley, 2006).

The PDP was suggested by one of the respondents, to be introduced into the BZSE mentoring model as a strategy to cater for all students, helping them pursue reflexive orientations regarding their learning journey and aspirations, enabling them to produce a basic plan within the BZSE course, exploiting the various opportunities for self-development within the BZSE learning framework. The PDP could possibly be introduced at the beginning for first year students, and subsequently reviewed at the beginning of each academic year as the student progresses. More detailed discussion on how the PDP could fit into the BZSE mentoring model will be discussed in Chapter 6.

9. THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MENTORING APPROACH

Due to the varied and diverse needs of the students and the mentoring opportunities identified in the BZSE learning framework, it was not possible to employ any one mentoring strategy to meet the demands of the new model. The greatest challenge is to balance the equity in giving all students an opportunity to be mentored, with the constraint of limited mentoring resources available. Hence, a *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* was considered. In my further readings from Miller, this idea was not too different from the multiple programmes mentoring strategy applied by Pershore High School in the UK (Miller, 2002, pp. 182-184).

The *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* in the BZSE model would be targeting at two main levels. For example, programmes and learning plans where all students can be involved in reflection, discussion and drawing up of their developmental goals; curricular projects which engage faculty or industry partners within the formal academic learning framework; as well as *peer mentoring* schemes which engage senior students to mentor their junior course mates, will be available for all BZSE students. Further matching with a *chief mentor* will be open to three groups of students: (a) those who really want to be mentored, and are prepared to give a pitch to convince the mentoring coordinator or a team of mentors about why they should be mentored (b) talented students identified by the school to be developed under the school's talent development programme, also known as "The Christeria Programme (TCP)", (c) students on the fringe, who are needing help in terms of motivation and purpose. Students in categories (b) and (c) are identified by faculty and the mentor coordinator, but will only be placed in the mentoring programme if they themselves desire to be mentored. This strategy is further elaborated in Chapter 6.

A panel of mentors will be formed comprising faculty, social entrepreneurs and industry partners, and future BZSE alumni and senior students who will play the role of *peer mentors*. Each mentor may play the role of coach, guide, counsellor or networker as suggested in Clutterbuck's (2004) developmental model, and may be involved in individual, group or team mentoring depending on the needs of the mentee and the purpose of engagement within the BZSE learning framework. This multiplicity of roles

could be challenging for some individuals, and a support structure for the mentors would be helpful in their various roles. In the event that all students want to make a pitch to be mentored, the outcome will be dependent on the number of mentors available and the number of mentees a mentor can accept. This constraint would need to be clearly explained early on in the model to give students the necessary preparation and minimise potential unhappiness due to unsuccessful pitches.

10. RECIPROCITY OF MENTORING

In concluding this chapter, I would like to add that while the benefits of mentoring to the mentee have been the focus of most mentoring programmes, it is undoubted that the reciprocal value of mentoring to mentors is invaluable. Many mentors describe reaping extrinsic rewards such as accelerated research productivity, greater networking and enhanced professional recognition, when mentees perform well (Johnson, 2002). They also highlight the intrinsic satisfaction of knowing that they have made a difference in the life of someone else. They continue to sharpen their intuitive and relational skills, and take pride in the achievements of the mentees under their guidance. One mentor remarked during the interview that the hope of developing more social entrepreneurs is an incentive for him to want to mentor the younger generation. In some cases, reverse mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2004) may take place where the mentee could help the mentor acquire web-based skills or understand current market trends. In many ways, the process is also transformational for the mentor as he/she journeys with the mentee (Healy and Welchert, 1990) and this is particularly a personal testimony in my own mentoring episodes.

In the final analysis, the mentoring concepts, roles and approaches explored in this chapter will have to be extricated strictly from the data collected and evidenced to have pursued a clear ontological and epistemological standpoint.

CHAPTER FOUR - METHODOLOGY

1. APPROACHES TO SOCIAL ENQUIRY

My journey in recognizing the ontological, epistemological stances and research paradigms has been strewn with dilemmas, and at times confusion and challenge, mostly contributed by conflicting views and terminology found in different literature sources. Helpful advice to get started and back on track was to realize that the research question actually dictates the paradigm that the research should be located in, rather than the other way around (Byrne-Armstrong, Higgs and Horsefall, 2001).

The broad research question, *“to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma”*, hence helps to clarify that there is the leaning towards a social constructionism position, both from ontological and epistemological standpoints. Social constructionism acknowledges the strong contribution of subjects to the construction of meanings, and stresses that culture and society play an important role in constructing meanings through the process of socialisation. It also elaborates that subjects do not assign new names nor give new meanings to objects, but that meanings are generated collectively, are readily available, already constructed by and conveyed through the culture, and are shared and socially constructed, and also sustained and reconstructed through interaction (Sarantakos, 2005). This is relevant to the construction of the mentoring model, where the meanings of the concept of mentoring, and the understanding of “developmental relationships” are to be collectively generated by all stakeholders and participants in the research.

This research aims to contribute to current knowledge and application of mentoring in the institution concerned. Particularly, to propose the introduction of mentoring as a systematic model, to complement the current learning framework for formal and informal education within the Diploma in Business & Social Enterprise programme.

The role of the researcher in this study is that of a practitioner/insider researcher. As the course manager, there are obvious conflicts that the researcher would need to cautiously

consider in this capacity, yet this position also gives validity to the construction of an educational model in this research.

2. ONTOLOGY

It took some convincing that the ontological and epistemological paradigm of this research was to be one towards *social constructionism*. The huge dilemma of being a realist at heart, influenced by faith-based beliefs regarding the origins and purpose of the physical world and human existence, yet at the same time agreeing that meanings are constructed, especially in the context of language, culture and society, made the search for a “right” ontological and epistemological stand almost an impossibility. The contention between realism and idealism assertions, that of the world having an existence independent of our perceptions of it, in contrary to the view that the world exists only in so far as people think it exists, continued to be a baffling struggle.

Blaikie’s (2007) interpretation of the concept of subtle realism could be a possible ontological stance for this research in the light of this dilemma. Subtle realism supports the idea that research investigates independent, knowable phenomena, yet it accepts that cultural assumptions should be relied upon.

In the process of reflecting in attempting to resolve the above conflict, Hames (1994, p. 143) provided a liberating enlightenment in his view below.

Our world views are a result of many important factors – our upbringing, religious beliefs, gender, work ethics, etc. To look at the world through a different view is not to deny our values or faith, but simply to utilize our intelligence to ‘put ourselves in someone else’s shoes’.

3. EPISTEMOLOGY

One of the key assumptions of social constructionism that is adhered to in this research is that of knowledge being sustained by a social process. As elaborated by Burr (2003), the social constructionist maintains that people construct their versions of knowledge of the world between them through their daily interactions in the course of social life. The

experiences and exchanges between people in the course of their daily lives are viewed as the practices during which these shared versions of knowledge are constructed. Raskin (2002) reasons that social constructionism emphasises how contextual, linguistic and relational factors combine to determine what people will become and how their views of the world will develop. He recommends that social constructionism is about relationships, and that all knowledge is considered local and fleeting, negotiated between people within a given context and time frame.

Crotty (1998, p. 42), defines *Constructionism* as the view that:

...all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.

He maintains that meaning is thus not created, but constructed, and that there is a source from which construction commences. Interpretation is therefore, relative, with no “true” or “valid” interpretation in that sense. There are certainly useful interpretations. Crotty further elaborates that *social constructionism* emphasises the hold our culture has on us, shaping the way we would see and feel things, and such a description would be misleading if it were not set in a genuinely historical and social perspective. Social constructionism is thus both *realist* and *relativist* (1998, p. 64). These historical and cross-cultural comparisons would make one aware that under different circumstances and timeframes, the same phenomena could have had very divergent interpretations. As such, there would seem to be more tentative rather than dogmatic views and understandings, a perspective that I believe suits my study, as I elaborate below.

It resonates with the whole intention of constructing a mentoring model that is derived from reflections and feedback on how to strengthen the current framework, with the conviction that mentoring relationships will help to develop the individual in their personal learning journeys through an increased clarity of professional identity, personal values, strengths and weaknesses, and an increased awareness of developmental needs, reactions and patterns of behaviour (Kram, 1996).

4. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The whole idea of meanings and action being created and recreated through interactions which generate new meaning, is an assumption underlying the methodology used in this research. Symbolic Interactionism is a particular kind of interaction that occurs between persons. Blumer (1969) maintains that human beings do not just react to each other's actions. Rather, they interpret or define each other's actions instead, and their response is not made directly to the actions of one another, but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. To him, the external world is a symbolic representation, and both the internal and external worlds are created and recreated through interaction, and there may exist no divide between the two worlds (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

This research concurs in many aspects with the Pragmatist philosophy, where knowledge is created through action and interaction, where reflective inquiry originates from a problematic situation which often cannot be settled within its own terms, and where its answer is uncertain, and judgement of it can only be in terms of further action directed by the provisional answer (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss also elaborates that Pragmatists are concerned with processes and in the accumulation of collective knowledge, and that any new knowledge is provisional until checked out by peers; eventually, it may be judged partly, or even wholly wrong. The experiences and views of whoever is engaged in an inquiry are vital to the inquiry and its implicated thought processes.

Because the BZSE learning framework already includes elements of mentoring, though not formally and systemically incorporated, it would be prudent to construct the mentoring model through engaging the experiences and views of stakeholders involved in the processes, in order to examine the acceptability and relevance of the proposed model. A pragmatic approach allows the discourse of new ideas through collective knowledge and the resulting outcome could be a better tested construct, though still open to further inquiry and improvements or a rejection of the model, as further checks and evaluation may lead to such a recommendation.

The current research attempts to construct a new mentoring model through uncovering relevant mentoring theories and concepts, and building upon prior knowledge and existing experiences, as part of the process of defining viable practices and desired outcomes through exchanges with the various stakeholders. The construction process encompasses the need to ask “why” questions to understand the “how” of knowledge through perspectives and accounts from human participation and engagement.

5. RESEARCH PARADIGM

In such a “supercomplex world” (Barnett, 1999) as ours, there are few simple explanations. It is important for us to attempt to capture the complexities through multiple perspectives on events and build variation around analytic schemes. To understand experience, that experience must be located within, and not divorced, from the larger events in a social, political, cultural, racial, gender-related, informational, and technological framework and therefore, these are essential aspects of our analysis.

Qualitative inquiry is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and comprises a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible, transforming the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, and qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The process is as important as its outcome, and it is the process that ultimately determines the quality, formation and transformation of any outcome or response.

As mentoring is a concept centred on relationship-building, discovering, sharing and journeying together between mentor and mentee, this nature in itself requires a research paradigm that calls for exploration and understanding of personal accounts. The qualitative research paradigm would best fit such a construction of a mentoring model.

6. METHODOLOGY

The methodology in this study would be adapted to some extent from that applied in my Institution Focused Study (Tang, 2008), where the Qualitative Case Study strategy would be adopted in the construction of a mentoring model to complement formal and informal education in a tertiary course.

Case Study

The Case Study research strategy is particularly appropriate when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context (Yin, 1993). Case studies focus on understanding the dynamics present within single settings, can involve single or multiple cases, and numerous levels of analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). According to Yin (1981), the distinguishing characteristic of case study as a research strategy is that it attempts to examine contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Merriam (1988) advises that some key issues to be considered when deciding whether case study is the most appropriate design for investigating the problem of interest are (a) the nature of the research questions, (b) the amount of control, (c) the desired end product and (d) whether a bounded system can be identified as the focus of the investigation. Hence, a case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a programme, an event, a process, an institution, or a social group. The most straightforward examples of bounded systems are those in which the boundaries have common sense obviousness.

A case study can have different features, and the case in point would fit into the *heuristic* case study type. Merriam (1988) explains that *heuristic* means that the case being studied illuminates the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study, bringing about the discovery of new meaning, extending the reader's experience, or confirming what is known. Previously unknown relationships and variables could emerge from case studies leading to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied,

bringing new insights into how things get to be the way they are (Stake, in Merriam, 1988).

The Case under study – “unit of analysis”

The “unit of analysis” as termed by Yin (1993), is a critical component in the design of case study research. Defining the case, its scope and limits of its boundary focuses the research on its intended objectives and time-frame. It also enables further generalisation of findings, recommendations and theory propositions to other cases with similar units of analysis (ibid.).

The case under study is a single case study and “one of its kind”, as it is a special course within one of the schools in the polytechnic with a unique culture and learning approach. The peculiarities of the learning design, interactions with faculty, students and industry partners (social entrepreneurs), make it a unique institution as a case study, and the objective of constructing a mentoring model for evaluation is an idea mooted by the course manager of the particular course.

The intent of this research is to examine stakeholders’ responses and experiences with regards to the BZSE learning framework, their thoughts and ideas on the concept of mentoring and how it could complement the framework, as well as explore various strategies to construct a mentoring model to best fit the case. The desired outcomes of the mentoring model are (a) to nurture social entrepreneurship traits, values, skills (and whether these could have an impact on academic performance) (b) to encourage a culture and environment conducive for developing mentoring relationships within the school (c) to develop a healthy network of mentors and mentoring relationships for the students.

Figure 4.1 below represents the methodology adopted in this research.

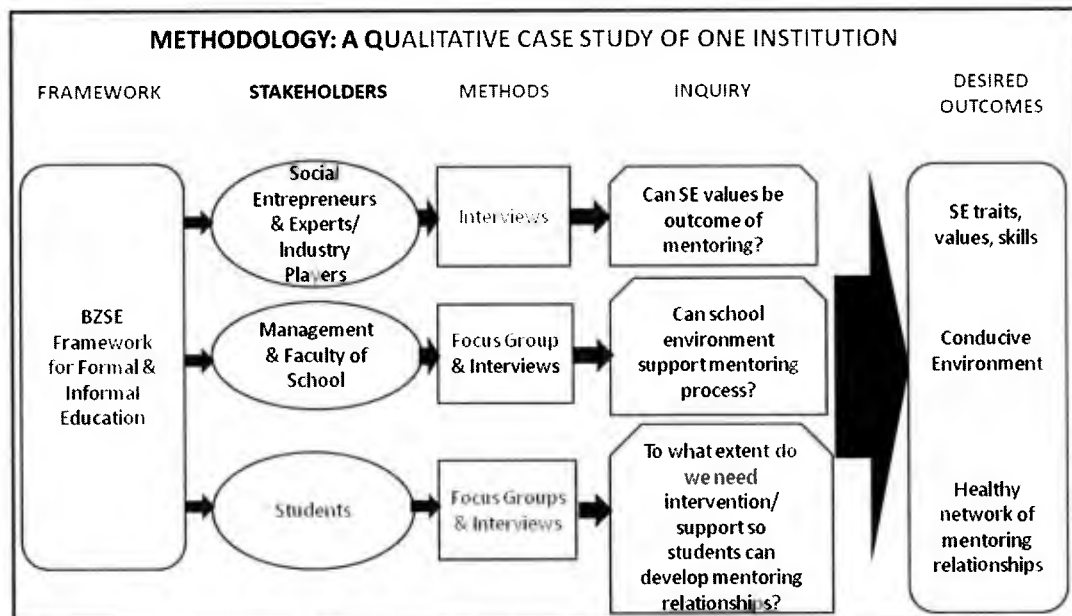


Figure 4.1 - Methodology: A Qualitative Case Study of One Institution

A Grounded Theory Approach

Edwards (1998) explains the *theoretical-heuristic* phase where descriptions are used for the generation of or experimentation with theory, and that this kind of work depends for its validity on there being a foundation of sound descriptive work.

For the current research, the BZSE learning framework for formal and informal education that already exists would form the descriptive work for the construction of the mentoring model under the *theoretical-heuristic* phase. Grounded theory building fits well into the *theoretical-heuristic* phase of the case study, where the case is a product of a progressive conceptual refinement, as knowledge from diverse cases is systemised. A grounded theory approach was chosen to express the idea of theory that is generated by (or grounded in) an iterative process involving the continual sampling and analysis of qualitative data gathered from concrete settings, such as unstructured data obtained from interviews, participant observation and archival research, which places great emphasis on participants' own accounts of social and psychological events and of their associated local phenomenal and social worlds (Pidgeon, 1996). As highlighted by Charmaz (2003), in-depth qualitative interviewing fits a grounded theory approach particularly well, where the flexibility of open-ended, in-depth exploration allows the researcher

control over data and analysis. The researcher then narrows the range of interview topics to gather specific data for his/her theoretical frameworks.

The process of the construction of a grounded theory approach in this research will be guided by the five components proposed by Edwards (1998), namely (a) Categorisation, (b) Statements of co-relational relationship (c) Definition of psychological structure (d) Propositions about processes (e) Propositions about causal relationships.

(a) Categorisation

This component refers to the refining of categories for classification. The concept of mentoring is being refined from the existing BZSE learning framework to a proposed mentoring model. The research will investigate the developmental mentoring network as compared to the traditional mentoring model. This process will refine what mentoring means from the perspective of the faculty and students in order to provide their perspectives for the proposed mentoring model.

(b) Statements of correlational relationships

Having established the key themes and categories in the research, the next step is to identify their associations and correlational relationships. In order to determine what an effective mentoring model is, the key factors should include selection criteria, relationship variables, value criteria, student outcome and environmental factors.

(c) Definition of psychological structure

This is a distinct aspect of theory development in which the underlying nature of an experience is explicated. Using Brooke's (in Edwards, 1998) study of guilt applying the Duquesne phenomenological method as an illustration, descriptions from ten respondents of situations in which they had felt guilty were examined. Synopses of these situated structures were used as a basis for determining a general structure. Psychological structure in this sense is informed by a phenomenological perspective, which goes well beyond mere description. The task of identifying a general structure calls for "psychological mindedness", a capacity for insight into the psychological dimensions of the data on the part of the researcher, hardly a mechanical step alone (Giorgi in Edwards, 1998).

Why is there a need for a mentor? The underlying psychological need for the student is to have a role model to look up to and the potential mentors or the network of developmental mentors to transmit traits, values and the motivations of social entrepreneurs. Hence an important consideration is to understand the psychological structure where both the student learns and the social entrepreneur mentors, and possibly themselves gain from engagement in the activity, especially outside the school context.

(d) Propositions about processes

The identification of processes in the course of the inquiry, understanding what follows from what and under what conditions, gives a good basis for theory building. Processes help to classify stages in the continuum of the learning journey. In the current framework, anchor modules have been identified for experiential learning and mentoring opportunities already but the research hopes to explore the gaps in the existing modules. Apparently there are gaps where the role of the mentor is not defined properly, and the curriculum does not provide sufficient time for the building of mentoring relationships. From the focus group discussions, these areas have been highlighted for the purpose of building on the existing curriculum.

(e) Propositions about causal relationships

The proposition about causal relationships implies that the theory allows for predictability. Strauss & Corbin (in Edwards, 1998) highlights this as

in the limited sense that if elsewhere approximately similar conditions obtain, then approximately similar consequences should occur (p. 48)

The research will need to look into the cause and effect of the current mentoring model and propose intervention to enhance the learning process. For example, by formalising the mentoring relationship within the curriculum and to draw out responses from the interviews as to whether a formal mentoring relationship is a critical component in the proposed model. This proposition would come into the form of the new construct for evaluation – the pilot mentoring model for BZSE. Predictability could be in the form of how the model could be replicated and adapted for the other courses in HMS, if it proves effective in supporting BZSE's stated objectives.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher adopts the role of a “practitioner teacher researcher” in this study. This is a hybrid role, where the researcher is part-practitioner, part-researcher. Such a phenomenon has been gaining acceptance with the original motivation due to disenchantment with the lack of applicability of most formal educational research to the day-to-day problems and innovations of the classroom (Bassey in Powney and Watts, 1987). By engaging in critical processes of reflexivity and questioning the assumptions they bring to work, teacher researchers can help to develop pedagogical practices and relations at a deeper level in the local contexts in which they are located (Burke and Kirton, 2006).

However, there are conflicts that teacher-researchers face, due to the perceived and at times actual conflict in role which challenge the authority of the teaching role, and which may inhibit responses of faculty and student participants. Participants’ speculation about a possible agenda for which the research was crafted, or even that the assignment is more or less a personal undertaking than an official one would potentially affect the attitude towards the research.

Any other roles the researcher may hold could also have impact on the research, and due consideration would need to be given as these could have significant impact on the outcomes of the research.

In the case of this research, the researcher started off as the course manager of the diploma under study. As the participants comprised faculty and students, there was initial concern and consideration regarding the possible conflict of interest and whether the accounts from the respondents would have been skewed due to the role relation. But familiarity with participants had its advantage as it helped to create a more relaxed atmosphere. It was not difficult to engage the students in open discussion as mentoring was something that was personal and they could see that the intention was to help create a better learning environment for their benefit.

The strategy with faculty as respondents was to get the “buy-in” from the school director and faculty members about how the proposed model could be helpful for the course. The culture at HMS was one of openness and transparency, and it was not difficult to get the whole BZSE faculty to be involved in the focus group discussion, along with the school director. The session turned out to be one with active discussion, jokes, constructive comments and criticisms, with data that was very helpful for the research. Nevertheless, power issues as highlighted by French and Raven (in Garvey, Stokes and Megginson, 2009) while seemingly minimised, cannot be totally ignored.

The researcher also took on the role as moderator of the focus group, interviewer and transcribed all the conversations of the research. This helped in ensuring consistency and reliability of the data captured from the research.

7. METHODS

The research can be broken down into two sections - the focus group discussions, and the in-depth interviews. The focus group will be convened to help inform the strategy of the interviews and design of interview questions. One-to-one semi-structured interviews will then be conducted to obtain greater depth and insights into the problem of the research.

The methods chosen for any research really depends on the research topic and the relevance and appropriateness of the selected methods, as methods in themselves have no intrinsic value (Silverman, 2006). Using focus groups and interviews as the approach is relational, and also more akin to the characteristics of mentoring as a learning strategy – one that is based on the nurturing of relationships through sharing of perceptions, feelings and experiences.

Purposeful respondent strategy

The population for this study can be grouped into the following categories:

- a) Student cohort – direct beneficiaries of the BZSE programme

Since its inception in October 2008, there have been three cohorts with a total number of one hundred and twenty-eight students in the BZSE programme. The pioneer batch comprising forty-four students, are now in their third and final year of the programme. The second cohort, with an intake of forty students is moving on to the second year of the programme. The newest cohort was just enrolled in April 2010. As the focus groups and interviews were conducted before the April enrolment of the new cohort, the Year 1's referred to in this study would be presently in their second year, and the Year 2's are in their third year of the course.

b) Faculty

The BZSE faculty comprises five full-time lecturers teaching academic modules in the BZSE curriculum. All of them have taught at least one of the cohorts, with a majority (three) having taught both cohorts.

c) Institutional Policy Makers

The executive feasibility of the model ultimately depends on the acceptability of the proposal by the school management and institutional policy makers. Hence, it was crucial to include them as key stakeholders in the research. In-depth interviews were conducted with the Director of the Teaching & Learning Centre of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, the Director of the School of Humanities, and the Course Manager of the Diploma in Business & Social Enterprise.

d) Social Entrepreneurs/Experts/Industry Players

This group consists of social entrepreneurs and experts who have been involved with the BZSE programme in various ways, as well as industry players with experience in mentoring either the youth or the social sector. Some of them were interviewed by the students as part of the curriculum project, while others played a part in project planning or in giving consultation to student teams. One of them is both a partner of the BZSE diploma, as well as a member of the National Mentoring Panel set up under the National Youth Council. The roles of each of them will be further discussed under the section on interviews.

Focus Group

Focus groups provide participants with an opportunity for reflective interaction in a safe environment with others who may have complementary or differing views about the issues discussed. Focus groups can provide insight into complicated topics when opinions are conditional or when the area of concern relates to multifaceted behaviour or motivation. This method also places the researcher in a less commanding and controlling role of information gathering, so that ideas could emerge from the group, exhibiting a synergy that individuals alone do not possess (Krueger and Casey, 2000; Phillips and Davidson, 2009). The method is appropriate for a heuristic case study project.

Careful planning is involved in designing the inquiry based on the defined area of interest, setting up a permissive and nonthreatening environment where participants enjoy sharing their ideas and perceptions. Preparations also included purchasing a recording device, scheduling sessions and working on strategies to engage participants. Each group is conducted with six to eight people by an interviewer, commonly known as the moderator (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

The discussions were planned to help identify themes and categories for further investigations through the detailed interviews.

Composition and Selection

The participants were selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group. Initially, four focus groups were planned for, but due to the constraints of the social entrepreneurs and experts to come together at a common timeslot, the alternative plan to conduct in-depth interviews with them was then adopted. This alternative worked out well, as based on their personality and experiences, the social entrepreneurs and experts had contrarian views which were best teased out during personal interviews.

Patton (1990) describes these information-rich cases as

those from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. (p.169)

In this scenario, the normal “data saturation” point for deciding when the number of focus group sessions conducted are sufficient, may not be as appropriate, as the focus groups are used to help identify themes and categories for further in-depth interviews, rather than as the single tool in data gathering. Furthermore, in the case of the faculty focus group, the participants included all faculty involved in teaching the BZSE course, The selection criteria for the two student focus groups were based on the participants’ role and involvement in the BZSE projects.

Three focus groups were conducted, comprising (a) BZSE Year 1 students (now in their second year) (b) BZSE Year 2 students (now in their third year) and (c) BZSE faculty members. These three groups were identified based on the common experience and role of the participants.

The BZSE Year 1 and Year 2 students were selected based on their roles as project group leaders. Each cohort had ten project groups working on curricular projects, and the ten project group leaders were invited for the focus group discussion. Seven out of ten students participated in the BZSE Year 1 focus group while nine out of ten students participated in the BZSE Year 2 focus group discussion.

The BZSE faculty focus group comprised all the full-time lecturers teaching modules in the BZSE curriculum. It also included the director of the School of Humanities as a participant in the focus group. There was due consideration before the final decision to include the school director. Concerns regarding whether her involvement would create a bias in the discussion due to conflict of interest and power relations were weighed with the culture of HMS where there was open and transparent communications, very much a result of the personality of the director. It was deemed helpful to include the director, as discussion on faculty matters would require her “buy-in” as a major stakeholder.

Figure 4.2 below summarises the focus group plan drawn up.

Focus Group Plan						
	BZSE Yr1		BZSE Yr2		BZSE Faculty	
	Invited	Present	Invited	Present	Invited	Present
Number of participants	10	7	10	9	6	6
<u>Profile of participants</u>						
Project Group Leaders	10	7	10	9		
School Director					1	1
Assistant Course Manager					1	1
Lecturers					4	4
Gender		M(3) F(4)		M(5) F(4)		M(3) F(3)
<u>Mode of invitation</u>						
Email invitations sent				✓		✓
Announcement made during lecture		✓				
Focus group brief and questions (Appendix 4a, 4b)		4a		4a		4b
Date of Focus group	11 June 2009		26 May 2009		9 June 2009	
Duration	1.5 hrs		2 hrs		2 hrs	
Venue	HMS Meeting Room		Classroom		HMS Meeting Room	
Medium of recording	Digital Voice		Digital Voice		Digital Voice	
Moderator	Researcher		Researcher		Researcher	
Transcriber	Researcher		Researcher		Researcher	

Figure 4.2 – Focus Group Plan

Discussion Content

Two separate sets of questions were prepared, one for the students (Refer Appendix 4a), and the other for the faculty members (Refer Appendix 4b). For all three groups, Figure 4.1 on the methodology, and Figure 1.1 on the BZSE framework for formal and informal education were presented and explained to the participants.

The questions for the students focused on their understanding of the concept of mentoring, their views on a developmental network of mentors as opposed to the traditional mentor, their inputs regarding the BZSE framework for formal and informal education, and how it could be helpful in achieving the desired outcomes, their perceived size of the network, and how they saw their role in the framework and processes. For example, questions like “In what ways have you been mentored?” and “How would you see your role within this network of relationships?” were posed.

The questions for the faculty members focused on their perception of the difference between the traditional mentor and the developmental network, and their take on the more appropriate model for the school. Questions like “What is the difference between (a) the traditional mentor and (b) mentors within the developmental network?” and “Given the current school system, which mentoring approach would be more suitable?”

were asked. They were also to construct the term “social entrepreneur”, and to share about who they felt could impart those traits. The group was also asked about whether the school environment was conducive to implement such a structure, and the graduate outcomes they thought could be achieved if the mentoring model was constructed.

The experience from conducting the focus groups reinforces Phillips’ and Davidson’s (2009) assertions that working within any group is far more complex and challenging than working with individuals, as group dynamics and process variables influence the ways that people share and interact with one another. A focus group introduces many participants, which makes it an uncontrolled social situation where the researcher has limited control over the discussions, which have the potential to become tangential (St John in Phillips and Davidson, 2009). There was also the potential for some participants to dominate the conversations, sometimes driving discussions away from the focus, while others may contribute very little. Interactions also could be affected by personal characteristics and social factors such as experience and position in the organisation (in the case of the faculty focus group) which are important considerations. However, group settings for data collection could be particularly rich and stimulating as participants built on one another’s disclosures, reflected on what has been said, and came to consensus about shared experiences.

I subscribe to Kruger’s and Casey’s (2000) caution that moderators’ respect for participants may be one of the most influential factors affecting the quality of focus group results, and that the moderator must believe that the participants have wisdom no matter what their level of education, experience, or background. When participants find that the moderator listens attentively with sensitivity and try to understand their perspective, they are more open and ready to give views which may otherwise seem controversial and may not be well-received. A lack of respect and a dismissive attitude would be quickly conveyed to the participants, who would essentially shut down any meaningful and honest communication.

A key constraint impacting on focus groups, is the fact that people tend to be selective about what they disclose about themselves, as commented by Jourard (1964, in Krueger, 1994, p. 12). Our disclosures reflect, not our spontaneous feelings, thoughts and wishes,

but rather pretended experience which will avoid punishment and win unearned approval. We say that we feel things we do not feel. However people have a greater tendency for self-disclosure when the environment is permissive and non-judgemental. In some circumstances, they may even reveal more of themselves.

Interviews

Qualitative interviews are relatively loosely structured with the aim to elicit respondents' ways of thinking about the issues of concern in the research. The interview approach adopted in this research can be considered semi-structured and open-ended, with key questions posed to ensure important issues are covered, and these have been given to the interviewees beforehand. The interviewer is an active listener, allowing the interviewee the freedom to talk and ascribe meanings while bearing in mind the broader sense of the project (Noaks and Wincup in Silverman, 2006). But departure from the questions are often expected especially if interesting themes emerge from what respondents say (Bryman, 1989). Even if the respondent goes off at a tangent and chooses to speak about issues that he or she is most passionate about, the researcher goes along with the drift, but guides the discussion back to the context of the question posed. Some of these stories may be of relevance and could contribute to a richer source of data for analysis. Probes are also often used during the interview to follow-up and elaborate on something already asked. They may take various forms, ranging from silence, sounds, a single word, or complete sentences (Glesne and Peshkin in Merriam, 2009). The best way to improve the skill at probing is to practice, and this was evident in the series of focus groups and interviews conducted. All in, the interview is more like a "conversation with a purpose", with the questions guiding the flow to keep it in focus.

The following strategy was employed for the in-depth interviews and a total of ten participants were selected for the interviews. They represented the four groups of stakeholders identified earlier: namely, social entrepreneurs, faculty, institutional policy makers and students.

Preparations for the interview sessions included giving due consideration to the role of the researcher, as (a) an EdD student conducting research for a thesis, (b) a course manager intending to construct a mentoring model for the course (initially), (c) an ex-course manager assessing the feasibility of constructing a mentoring model for the course (subsequently). There was also a need to establish good rapport to gain and maintain trust with participants, as this would encourage more open and transparent responses during the conversations in the interview.

The Interview Plan

It was part of the initial plan to interview representatives from each of the respondent categories: students, faculty, institutional policy makers, social entrepreneurs/experts/industry players to have a deeper understanding of their receptiveness towards the concept, concerns, issues and observations. The focus group interviews were reviewed, and themes that emerged from the discussions were mapped onto a diagram (Figures 6.1 and 6.2 in Chapter 6) to provide an initial structure for further deliberation.

Ten candidates were invited for the interview, and Figure 4.3 below summarises the Interview Plan drawn up.

Interview Plan										
Number of participants	10									
Profile of participants										
School Director (HMS)	✓									
Director of Teaching & Learning Centre		✓								
BZSE Course Manager (newly appointed)			✓							
In-house Business Consultant				✓						
Social Entrepreneur					✓					
Chairman, National Youth Mentoring Steering Committee						✓				
CEO, Centre for Non-profit Leadership								✓		
Student (BZSE Year 2)									✓	✓
Gender	F	F	M	F	M	M	M	M	F	M
Mode of invitation										
Email invitations sent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Date of Interview (Year 2010)	8 Apr 15 Apr*	28 Mar	5 Apr	28 Mar	31 Mar	1 Apr	31 Mar	13 Apr	1 Apr	1 Apr
Time	6pm 8pm*	4pm	10am	2pm	9.30a m	9am	4pm	10am	1pm	5pm
Duration (in minutes)	80 53*	94	66	68	61	61	59	55	67	71
Venue (P=Participant)	HMS Office	HMS Office	HMS Office	P's Residence	P's Office	P's Residence	P's Office	P's Office	Coffee Bean	School Canteen
Medium of recording	Digital Voice									
Interviewer	Researcher									
Transcriber	Researcher									

Figure 4.3 – Interview Plan

Note: * indicates a re-interview due to technical glitch in recording

Discussion Content

In qualitative research, it is not the number of respondents, but their potential to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of phenomena that really matters (Merriam, 2009). As each respondent for this research had a unique role and purpose, the interview questions were compiled separately for the different interviewees. There were eight sets of questions for the ten participants. The two social entrepreneurs and the two students shared a common set respectively. The interview brief, theme maps and interview questions were emailed to the respondents before each interview. During each session, the interview brief was explained, including the mapping of the themes that arose from the focus group discussions. The interview brief, theme maps and questions are found in Appendix 5, Figures 6.1, 6.2, Appendices 6a-h respectively.

Profile of Interview Participants

(a) Director, School of Humanities, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

She is the key stakeholder influencing the direction, resources and programmes for all the courses run by the school. Her “buy-in” would be a critical factor to determine whether the implementation of the pilot model could be realistic and possible. The questions for her were in the areas of her views and experiences in youth mentoring, her desired outcomes of the BZSE graduate, and her views on the benefits of a mentoring model within the BZSE framework; who should be mentors and who should be mentored, the critical success factors and concerns regarding the model. The recording of her interview session met with a technical glitch, and only twenty minutes out of an eighty-minute interview was being recorded. She was kind enough to avail herself for a second interview as the recording was the only source of documentation of the interview. This experience gave the researcher a first-hand encounter on understanding reliability and consistency in qualitative research.

(b) Director, Teaching & Learning Centre, Ngee Ann Polytechnic

The Teaching & Learning Centre shapes the teaching & learning infrastructure that underpins the learning environment at Ngee Ann Polytechnic. Its mission is to direct pedagogical staff development for quality and innovative teaching and learning practice aligned with the polytechnic's teaching and learning overarching direction. The director would be an influencing stakeholder in giving her inputs on the relevance of the proposed model, her views on mentoring, and how it could complement the BZSE framework for formal and informal education. Her views on students' desired outcomes, environmental factors and other mentoring models were sought, and finally, how the Teaching & Learning Centre could support the proposed model.

(c) Course Manager, Diploma in Business & Social Enterprise

Until recently, the researcher was also the course manager for the diploma, but the role has since been handed over to the previous Assistant Course Manager. He was involved in the design of the BZSE framework for formal and informal education since the genesis of the diploma in 2008. His interest and ownership of the proposed model and its intended learning outcomes is highly crucial, as he would be one of the key drivers of the concept and approach should it be implemented. Some key questions included asking about his desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate, his views on how he would like mentoring to be incorporated into the BZSE framework, and his concerns about the proposed model.

(d) In-house Business Consultant

She manages the enterprise of the polytechnic, and is a senior lecturer from the School of Business & Accountancy. She is not part of the BZSE faculty, and hence holds a neutral advisory position. Her expertise had been sought on two occasions – as coach and mentor to a student project team working on implementing a social enterprise in a social enterprise competition; the other as a consultant in a module requiring student groups to write a business proposal to set up a social enterprise for a non-profit organisation serving clients with intellectual disability. Her reflections on her role as coach, mentor and advisor to the BZSE students would be an invaluable contribution to this research.

(e) Social Entrepreneurs

Two social entrepreneurs were invited to be participants in the interviews. Both of them have been involved in helping to guide BZSE students in their formal projects. The first respondent is the CEO of the non-profit organisation serving clients with intellectual disability, and he has collaborated in designing a business plan contest as part of the formal curriculum. He was involved in advising students on the feasibility of their ideas as they worked on crafting the proposals. The second respondent is the founder of an international organisation committed to improving toilet and sanitation conditions worldwide. He was being interviewed by a group of students about his motivations as a social entrepreneur. He had been involved in the project for the two years running. The questions to them would include their views on mentoring youth, the values, traits and skills they hoped to inculcate in the students, and the role that social entrepreneurs could play in the BZSE framework.

(f) Chairman, National Youth Mentoring Steering Committee

Prior to chairing the National Youth Mentoring Steering Committee to pilot a national mentoring strategy for secondary school students, he was also one of the social entrepreneurs interviewed by the first year BZSE students in their anchor module project. His role as the chairman of the steering committee provided a perspective on mentoring at the national level. Questions at a macro level were being addressed, as he shared his experiences of mentoring both at a personal level, and as the chairperson of the national programme.

(g) Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Centre for Non-profit Leadership (CNPL)

The CNPL is a relatively young organisation established to focus on equipping leaders in the non-profit sector in Singapore. Formerly known as Mentoring Partnerships International, CNPL was repositioned to cater to developing leaders in the non-profit sector in Singapore. There is a mentoring programme catering only to CEOs of non-profit organisations. The mentors are respected individuals in Singapore, who have committed their time to help nurture the CEOs of non-profits as their contribution to the development of the sector. The CEO of CNPL shares the rationale for the CEO-mentoring programme, its framework and structure, and advises on important

considerations in constructing a mentoring model. This is the only participant who had not been involved in the BZSE framework. He was recommended to be a respondent by one of the social entrepreneurs during the interview.

(h) Students

Two Year 2 (currently Year 3) students were invited to be respondents in the interviews. They were identified as both had been involved in projects beyond the school curriculum, having pitched business plans at competitions and one of them (with his team) won the top prize at a recent Social Entrepreneurship competition. Their experiences as students and their views on how the mentoring model could be useful for them, are valuable for the research. They were asked questions on areas they would like to be mentored in, the criterion of mentors they would look up to, and their views on peer mentoring.

The profiles of participants serve as a trail (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the rationale behind the semi-structured, open-ended interviews.

8. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Certainly all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner, and this research is no exception. As a qualitative study, the measurement of trustworthiness, rigour and hence validity and reliability would be very different from quantitative research. Shank (2006) gives a reasonable definition that

a rigorous study is one that was designed carefully, conducted properly, and analysed correctly, with findings that are robust and important (p. 114).

The basic question to ask would be whether one would feel sufficiently secure about findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them (Merriam, 2009), or in this case, to implement a model that could impact psychosocial development and desired outcomes in the intended recipients of the model.

Even within qualitative research, there exists differences in criteria for validity and reliability. A narrative study compared to phenomenological research, grounded theory

research, ethnography research, or case study research would have different considerations for validity and reliability (Cresswell in Merriam, 2009).

Validity

Validity deals with the notion that what you say you have observed or heard was what really happened, whether investigators are observing or measuring what they think they are. Validity is always about truth. As part of ethical norms, the stance of the researcher needs to be made explicit. Honesty about his or her perspective is of vital importance and has to be out in the open. Preferences and nuances about what has been observed or heard, even what may have been missed out, should be highlighted, especially if those feelings are strong (Shank, 2006).

But the question that the social constructionist would ask, would be - what is reality? With the assumption that reality is holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing, it is certainly not a single, fixed objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researchers study people's constructions of reality – how they understand the world. There will be multiple constructions of how people have experienced a particular phenomenon, how they have made meaning of their lives, or how they have come to understand certain processes. Hence, from a social constructionist's perspective, Aguinaldo (in Shank, 2006) shifts the notion of validity from the task of making sure the research is true, toward the task of making sure the research *is useful*.

When asked about their experiences of being mentored, some participants shared how their relatives had been their mentors in their growing years. It was not the researcher's task to challenge whether the relative actually played the mentoring role, rather to understand the nurturing role played by the mentor in the respondent's journey, and how that experience could be applied in the current research.

Triangulation as first introduced by Denzin (1978) helps to advocate the use of multiple methods, sources of data, researchers or theories to increase the credibility of qualitative findings. In this research, triangulation using multiple sources of data where data was

collected from three focus groups and ten interviews allowed contributions from different perspectives. Some respondents were also selected to be involved in both the focus groups and interviews, which helped in the follow-up and elaboration on earlier discussions.

Another important point is the adequate engagement in data collection. Although the constraint of availability of stakeholders and time available for data collection, were factors that limited the number of focus groups and interviews conducted, the plan to have three focus groups and ten interviews was based on a judgement of adequacy and appropriateness. As described above, each respondent was purposefully selected, and even then, there were themes being repeated by the different participants that highlighted data saturation to a large extent.

Reflexivity, or the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, explaining personal biases, dispositions and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken, clarifying assumptions, experiences, world view and theoretical orientation would allow the reader to better understand how the individual researcher might have arrived at the particular interpretation of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). And this is the approach taken in this thesis.

The positioning of this construct as a pilot model for evaluation is in itself an intentional effort in assessing validity in the outcome of the research. This approach has been actively practised by Morse (in Shank, 2006) and her colleagues, who usually start with the analysis of relevant concepts with the idea of building a skeletal framework. The concept is then studied inductively, where experiences are being scaffolded into the skeletal framework. As the research matures with more field data, the scaffold eventually grows into a field-based theoretical framework. The model is being tested and refined for creating theory while establishing validity.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated, and whether certain methods will yield the same results. It has to do with accuracy. But the problem

is that human behaviour is never static. The same person in the same context and under the same conditions would likely not behave in exactly the same manner if the behaviour was required to be repeated. This stance is echoed by Wolcott (2005):

In order to achieve reliability in that technical sense, a researcher has to manipulate conditions so that responsibility can be assessed. Ordinarily, fieldworkers do not try to make things happen at all, but whatever the circumstances, we certainly cannot make them happen twice. And if something does happen more than once, we never for a minute insist that the repetition be exact. (p. 159)

Reliability is a central concept of traditional experimental research which focuses on discovering causal relationships among variables and uncovering laws to explain phenomenon. However, in qualitative research of this nature, the study is on the description and explanation of the world as those in the world experience it, and hence there is no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense.

A more appropriate question may be whether the results are consistent with the data collected, that given the data collected, the results make sense (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba's suggestion of the audit trail to document in detail how data is collected, how categories are derived, and how decisions were made through the inquiry is being reflected in this methodology section. It aims to show how various stages of the research and the decision processes were considered and arrived at, and that this was the best account and process possible.

A technical fault during one of the interviews helped me to further reflect on the relevance of reliability in qualitative research. While interviewing the director of the School of Humanities, the voice recorder stopped after twenty minutes of recording, but both the interviewer and participant were not aware of the glitch. Later, when attempting to transcribe the interview (and the recording was the primary source of documentation of the interview), the problem was discovered. Only twenty minutes out of the full interview of eighty minutes was recorded. Thankfully, the participant consented to a re-interview based on the same set of questions, continuing from the point where the recording stopped.

Considering reliability in this situation, the responses to the interview questions were consistent except for the variation in certain aspects of her answers. The general concepts and inclinations on mentoring remained consistent, but some of the stories, the drifts, and illustrations were different. The same set of questions was covered, but there could be different themes that arose from the two interviews. Which account was more accurate, and was the process then considered unreliable? A sort of triangulation could be applied as the participant was also involved in the focus group for faculty, and her responses were very much an extension of contributions made during the focus group discussions.

9. ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics is a key tenet in research that calls for commitment to universal categories concerning the true, the good, and the right (Schostak, 2006). As the researcher is a witness to the views and experiences of different individuals and groups, he or she has an ethical duty to be open and to listen actively to the respondents, minimising personal views and perspectives in the course of applying the research methods and in the process of data analysis.

Clarity in spelling out the purpose and intent of the research helps researcher, participants and all stakeholders to understand the scope and objectives of the research, and respondents can contribute in a more effective and appropriate manner. It also helps to prevent inquiry into areas not within the research, which would border on ethical considerations. The Contents Page of this thesis gives an overview while the various sections aim to give a clear rationale and approach for this study.

Tradition from Mill and Weber insists that participants have the right to be informed about the nature of the experiments they are involved in (Christians, 2005; Miller and Bell, 2002). Informed consent was sought here as all participants were invited to participate in this research in writing, and the focus group and interview briefs were sent to them before the sessions. During each session, the participants were briefed about the

rationale of the research and any queries were clarified before the discussions commenced.

Maintaining confidentiality is part of the ethics of any research, though some research contexts demand greater adherence than others depending on the nature of the research (Christians, 2005; Kumar, 2005). The individual names of all participants will be kept anonymous, and only the roles and designations will be disclosed.

It is also appropriate to add that the principles of beneficence are evident in the intent and outcome of this research, with the aim of contributing to the development of a learner who models the example of his mentor and the ideology of his course.

10. RESEARCH TIMELINE

The proposal for this research was approved in July 2008, and the three focus group discussions were completed by June 2009. However, due to exigencies at work, and some major changes in my appointment and its scope, work on the thesis had to be put on hold. It was only in Mar 2010 that a three-month study leave was negotiated, and the research has proceeded since. Figure 4.4 below summarises the updated timeline for this thesis.

Year and Month	Task
2008 July	Approval granted on thesis proposal
2008 August-December	Preparatory readings and planning
2009 March	Obtaining necessary faculty and management consent and endorsements for the research
2009 April	Preparations for focus group discussions
2009 April	Invite participants to join focus group discussions
2009 May-June	Conduct focus group discussions
2009 July-August	Transcribe focus group discussions and prepare questions for interviews
2009 September	Begin writing of Introduction and Methodology Section of Research
2009 October – 2010 February	Break due to work exigencies
2010 Mar	Conduct semi-structured interviews/data collection
2010 Apr	Transcribing interviews
2010 Apr	Complete writing of Introduction and Methodology Section of Research
2010 May	Analyse data from focus groups and interviews
2010 May	Writing of Analysis and proposed mentoring model
2010 June	Compiling the final report for submission
2010 July	Submission of Final Thesis Draft 1

Figure 4.4 – Thesis Timeline

CHAPTER FIVE - PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH DATA

1. PREFACE – THE RESEARCH JOURNEY FROM CONCEPTUALISATION TO ANALYSIS

The idea of constructing a mentoring model for a diploma course was not what I had planned to do when I first registered for the doctoral programme. There were many other areas of interest. At the same time, I wanted my research to be purposeful, making an impact on learners and the community where they were engaged. Meanwhile, I had been involved in different appointments at the workplace, and my role as the course manager of the diploma in Business & Social Enterprise gave me the opportunity to provide the leadership for both the course design as well as the development of students who enrolled for the diploma. Interactions with students who joined the course disclosed their dauntless yet amenable traits, and their quest for role models and significant others was revealed through various forms of expressions. The transformative potential of mentoring relationships observed from my own personal mentoring experiences, stories from gratified mentors and grateful mentees, as well as review of mentoring literature has convinced me that this would be a worthwhile project to consider. Certainly there have also been accounts of disenchanted mentors and disillusioned mentees. In these cases, most that I know of were still supportive of the mentoring approach, though they felt that the process could have been better managed.

The approval of the thesis proposal marked the beginning of the journey of construction of a mentoring model to integrate academic and informal learning as a holistic process for the students' educational journey.

A total of three focus groups and ten in-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, to seek their views and inputs on the relevance and efficacy of constructing a mentoring model for the BZSE diploma. Although as the sole moderator I tried to maintain a consistent style in facilitating the focus groups and interviews, and each of the participants were given a brief to explain about the research objectives

before the sessions, every respondent had a different approach in how they related. Some needed more promptings while others started off by giving their comments to the questions stated in the brief without requiring many clarifications or interjections. There were also those who tended to veer off-tangent and had to be reined back into the topic of discussion. In all cases, the objective was to allow the respondents to share their inputs with minimal inhibitions, and promptings were given more to help keep the conversations from drifting too far off the focus.

Nevertheless, all participants were very supportive and cooperative during the interviews, which made the seeming arduous task of data collection a rather enjoyable one. The conversations and discussions allowed me to have a better understanding of individual perceptions and aspirations regarding the course, and helped to build a greater rapport with all stakeholders involved.

This chapter will describe the analytical process adopted in this research, and highlight the key issues discussed and recommendations proposed that surfaced from the data. It will also look at some of the gaps in the current BZSE learning framework where a more integrated learning approach could be addressed by introducing the mentoring model. The focus groups and interviews provided a platform for a rich array of creative ideas amidst constructive critical analysis of the BZSE learning framework, and offered insights on how mentoring could provide the needed complement in learning strategies within the framework.

2. INTRODUCING THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The three focus groups and ten in-depth interviews were voice-recorded and subsequently, I painstakingly transcribed and coded each of them. A technical glitch encountered during the recording of the interview with the director of HMS was a grave lesson learnt regarding the need to cater to contingencies in the process of data collection. The experience of transcribing the thirteen sets of recordings each lasting between one to two hours, though tedious and time-consuming, was actually very helpful in the recall and internalisation of the key themes that emerged. Subsequently, every transcription has been formatted to include (a) a line number (b) an abbreviated

code to represent the speaker and (c) the actual conversation. The full set of transcriptions is available upon request. Relevant quotes will be highlighted in the respective sections of the thesis, and detailed in Appendix 7 – Quotes from Data referred.

The process of analysis for this qualitative research will be “data driven”, avoiding premature theory construction and generalizing the research materials, as summed up by Heritage (in Silverman, 1993, p. 125):

Specifically, analysis is strongly “data driven” – developed from phenomena which are in various ways evidenced in the data of interaction. Correspondingly, there is a strong bias against a priori speculation about the orientations and motives of speakers and in favour of detailed examination of conversationalists’ actual actions.

Silverman also emphasises the importance of generating reliable data and valid observations in data analysis.

If there is a gold standard for qualitative research, it should only be the standard for any good research, namely: have the researchers demonstrated successfully why we should believe them, and does the research problem tackled have theoretical or practical significance (Silverman, 2006, p. 237).

A Grounded Theory Approach

As previously mentioned, the construction of a new mentoring model in this research is a case study adopting a grounded theory approach, and the process will be guided by the five components proposed by Edwards (1998) described in Chapter 3, namely (a) Categorisation, (b) Statements of co-relational relationship (c) Definition of psychological structure (d) Propositions about processes (e) Propositions about causal relationships. Edwards considers this the theoretical-heuristic phase in grounded theory building which depends for its validity on there being a foundation of sound descriptive work, which, in this research, is in the form of the existing BZSE framework for formal and informal education.

As I sieved through the massive amount of data attempting to make sense of the various conversations and classifying them into logical categories and themes, I realise that this

process is a form of *abductive inference*, an approach developed by Charles Sander Pierce, where a satisfactory explanation of observed facts is related to previous knowledge (Kelle, 2005). Many of the ideas proposed by respondents from the research were not new ideas per se, as the concept of mentoring, though rather ambiguous and nebulous, already exists and there is sufficient literature to justify the existence of previous knowledge. Anderson described this approach as,

.. that is to say, we put old ideas together in a new way and this reorganisation itself constitutes a new idea (in Kelle, 2005, [para 31]).

The innovative process of abduction can be seen in some of the new mentoring notions and constructs that will be proposed in the new model.

Open and Axial coding of data

A computer-aided approach using the Nvivo application was applied in the coding and analysis process. Coding allows one to define what is happening in the data and to begin grappling with what it means. One hundred and ten categories and sub-categories of data were coded from the focus groups and interviews, based on themes that emerged from all possible angles, with prior knowledge and theoretical readings from mentoring literature as a basis. This *open coding phase* in grounded theory analysis allows interaction with data again and again, so that familiarisation could help identify new ideas that surfaced (Charmaz, 2006). Classifications are discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon, whereby they are grouped together under a more abstract higher order concept known as a category (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These classifications can be considered part of the categorisation component identified by Edwards (1998) in his theoretical-heuristic phase in grounded theory building. The audio recordings of the focus groups and interviews were replayed and transcriptions re-read in countless instances, and some initial themes were further categorized as new angles of consideration emerged.

The criteria of *fit* and *relevance* elaborated by Charmaz (2006) were helpful in completing the analysis to a grounded theory approach: where *fit* refers to how codes are categorized to crystallize participants' experiences; and the data is of *relevance*

when an analytic framework that interprets what is happening and makes relationships between implicit processes and structures visible is offered. *Fit* and *relevance* are being demonstrated in the discussion themes presented in the sections below.

The concept of *axial coding* introduced by Strauss and Cobin (1990) was adopted after the open coding phase was completed. This involved the process of putting back data together in new ways after open coding. The hundred and ten categories and sub-categories were analysed in the context of the BZSE framework and the aims of the research, and a “category map” was drafted that attempted to put all the data back into categories and sub-categories so that a more coherent connection with the overall context and framework could be visualised. The whole coding process was a tremendously tedious one, but after the massive albeit somewhat messy “category map” was completed, a much clearer picture of the critiques, new ideas and even a potential framework of the new model, emerged.

3. KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

The “category map” helped re-group and identify key themes that were raised and that recur during the focus groups and interview sessions, what Edwards (1998) would term “statements of correlational relationships”. This section will highlight some of the pertinent issues discussed that would help shape the construction of the new model for mentoring.

The need for Mentors

Participants generally indicated that there was an innate need for mentoring, which originates from parental and family structures. Changes in social patterns and growing influence of the internet, media and other networks have shifted the mentoring role to other significant people apart from the family.

One of the adult respondents observed that the shift in parental structures and practices, particularly in Singapore, could have resulted in the notion of who was relevant and significant to youths, and this has created a need for role models. She also highlighted

that youths seek out mentors on their own initiative, aided by the pervasiveness of social networking trends.

.. but just the fact that youth need role-models, and they need mentors, and they seek them out ... and today, seeking out all these people is very very easy ... going back to the point of social networking... it's there ...whether we want to see it or not, it's there, and they use it ... and they use it very pervasively. So I think ... em ... it would be good, because it's already generally a growing habit amongst the youth. So it would be good for us to actually tap on that ... and shape it so that it actually nurtures and develops the youth in terms of whatever curriculum outcomes you want. So basically you are using a habit, a preference of a generation...(Interview 2 ln 7-13):

Another respondent highlighted that some may not realise that they needed a mentor, but such critical relationships already exist in the form of close relatives, teachers and friends (FG Faculty ln 83-88).

A mentor having experiences with “at-risk” youth shared that youth were less likely to be involved in activities and relationships that got them into trouble if they had someone that played a significant part in caring for, loving and helping them (Interview 3 ln 18-19).

A youth respondent expressed that a mentor could inspire them to apply what they learn in class as they emulate the relevance in the mentor’s own life (Interview 6 ln 3-7).

The Mentor in the BZSE context

It was evident that each participant had his/her own definition of the term “mentor”, and the conversations helped to create a common understanding of the mentor in the BZSE context.

Respondents emphasised that BZSE mentors must have a basic knowledge of, some experience with, and a keen interest in, youth development. They need to be good listeners, unbiased, open-minded, and able to encourage the mentee to share their inner feelings, fears, struggles and aspirations, someone that the mentee would refer to when they need advice (Interview 10 ln 389-396, 440-446). They are also described as people who would have a stake in the mentee’s future, willing to spend time to understand the individual’s needs, is genuine and non-judgemental, passionate and compassionate, people with integrity, ethical and honest, having gone through some experiences in life.

Mentors with varied orientations and interests, and a different nature and focus of their causes would allow mentees to have a variety of people that they could learn from (Interview 8, ln 295-311, 429-431, 446-454). Students look up to mentors who mean what they say, are consistent in their support and who “walk their talk”.

...by their character ... by their consistency ... do they really when they say they believe in you ... they believe in your idea ... they will work towards ... you know ... making your idea come alive .. it's consistency ... some people ... they will be committed ... but some people ... at that moment they may say ... I will do it ... but ... in the end ... may not be all the way ... (Interview 7 ln 47-51):

The intention to develop the mentee to his/her fullest potential, understanding the strengths of each individual and stretching them beyond their comfort zones, makes it necessary for the mentor to also play the role of coach. There seems to be a greater urgency for the role of coaching due to the limited period of three years that a student spends in the course (Interview 10 ln 234-239, 394-395, 467-480).

A social entrepreneur respondent highlighted that as the BZSE course has a unique mission in training students to manage social enterprises and to inspire them to aspire to be a social entrepreneur, it was important to impress upon students the cause behind the existence of a social enterprise. A mentor from the sector could help to reinforce this sense of purpose in the mentee (Interview 4 ln 230-246, 264-266).

Student respondents felt that as the social enterprise sector is still in its nascent stage and evolving, BZSE mentors could play an important role in sharing about the social enterprise models that are currently in the market and how social impact is measured and accounted to stakeholders (Interview 7 ln 71-77, Interview 6 ln 58-62).

The descriptions of the BZSE mentor by respondents converges with behavioural functions of mentors highlighted in mentoring literature (Clutterbuck, 2004; Trorey and Blamires, 2006). The attributes that are distinctive and peculiar to the BZSE mentoring model are those related to the traits, values and skills of the social entrepreneur.

The desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate

As elaborated earlier, apart from the academic achievements and all-rounded development expected of students in any course, the BZSE graduate competencies include desirable social entrepreneurial traits like compassion, passion, resilience, leadership, resourcefulness, an enterprising spirit, and an ethical fibre. Participants interviewed echoed these traits as desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate. They expressed their hope to see BZSE graduates having the passion to champion causes to raise social awareness in specific areas and the courage to dream and attempt to start social enterprise projects.

Obviously because the Business & Social Enterprise diploma was set up to develop students basically to be interested in the social enterprise sector, I would like them to work in that sector, either as social enterprise managers, executives, or even if they work in the purely profit sector, commercial sector, with no social enterprise cause, they should be championing some sort of social enterprises, or working to raise social awareness in their companies. That would be ideal. And out of these students who were studying the course, we would really like to see more students who dream to be and daring to be social entrepreneurs, like Student J for example. And what he is trying to do is something not difficult for students, any of the students to embark on, because they are very small projects, and he is brave enough to collaborate with different students, not necessarily from the school itself, or from the diploma in Business & Social Enterprise. He got students from Business Studies, Mass Communication, and he even got some help from friends outside, whether they are from his church or elsewhere, to help him on his projects and he's extending his project. So ... many of our students can do that. They can start very small and, but I don't see many students are courageous enough at the moment. So that is something we can work on ... yah... (Interview 10 In 172-184)

The students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking skills, discernment and ethical behaviour in applying their business knowledge to manage people fairly, the books honestly, and an organisation ethically (Interview 8 In 179-186).

A social entrepreneur interviewed ranked compassion as a key trait of a BZSE graduate. Other areas considered important were a sense of inquisitiveness, curiosity, a contrarian mind and a daring spirit, not afraid to fail but able to learn from mistakes (Interview 4 In 281-285, Interview 5 In 13-15). Having had opportunities to engage in real world experiences were also cited as an important aspect of the learning journey (Interview 5 In 119-122). Another social entrepreneur hopes to see the BZSE graduate being useful citizens and making an impact in society (Interview 5 In 111-117).

One of the students highlighted the character trait of humility as important with regards to being a social entrepreneur. She explained that especially when the social entrepreneur first embarks on his business, he/she would have to perform menial tasks and need to learn from others. A servanthood attitude would be another virtuous character trait to emulate (Interview 6 ln 39-45).

There were quite a few discussions regarding whether academic achievement should be a part of the objectives and outcomes of the new BZSE mentoring model. The response was unanimous, despite the questions being asked at different sessions and settings with different participants. All respondents who were asked their opinions regarding this issue felt that the mentoring model should not focus on academic achievement as its aims and outcomes. They would like the students to be mentored in values and traits that could result in an intrinsic transformation of their motivations and purpose in life (FG Faculty ln 1113-1143). Their sentiments could be represented by comments from one of the respondents during the faculty focus group session.

Erm .. the I don't know why you put grades there, actually, as a desired outcome ... er ... because I think that if the values are in place ... the values are so important, I feel ... because it drives everything else ... and values here I mean their character as well ... their integrity, their resilience, and they dare to change, etc etc ... for the good ... for good reasons etc Then it should impact ... yes ... the knowledge acquisition and also the wanting to do better in terms of skill sets and so on and so forth you see ... that very likely will translate to good grades ... (FG Faculty ln 1131-1139)

The participants argued that a focus on academic achievement would in fact be a conflicting objective, and a value that most would not want to encourage as a motivator for social entrepreneurship. But respondents concurred that academic improvement would be a likely outcome for students being mentored as they become more purposeful and interested in what they are learning. Refer to the following for the discussions on this issue (FG Faculty ln 1113-1143, Interview 5 ln 10-13, Interview 8 ln 508-515, Interview 2 ln 543-549, FG BZSE2 ln 157-161, FG BZSE1 ln 395-402). This topic would make a good study for further research.

Developmental Network of Mentors

The concept of a developmental network of mentors for the BZSE mentoring model was one of the most interesting and controversial topics in the discussions, especially in the

faculty focus group. The contributions from the faculty focus group played a significant part in the new construct.

Initially, most respondents were quite supportive of the concept of the developmental network, highlighting that it was a notion that pre-existed where various significant people provided guidance, care, nurturing in our lives (FG Faculty In 174-175). The discussion moved on to consider who would be suitable mentors in the network and how they could provide mentoring in a holistic manner, understanding the needs and challenges faced by the BZSE student. This then raised the concern that the mentor should be someone with a vested interest in the student and the social entrepreneurs proposed as mentors may not have that vested interest (FG Faculty In 780-781). This was coupled with the fact that the students themselves may not be sufficiently equipped with the networking skills to be able to manage their own network of mentors. Some respondents then preferred the traditional mentor approach where guidance and nurturing could be provided in developing the mentee over a sustained period of time. However, all agreed that there were significant advantages in having mentors with different skills, expertise, experiences guiding the students. Refer to (FG Faculty In 790-834) for the discussions on this section.

The notion of a *chief mentor* was suggested:

at the end of the day If you really really want to help the student who is being mentored, to understand and pull together all these different mentoring relationships that they are becoming aware of, there must be a Chief Mentor ... like a Mentor at Large .. that coordinates the mentoring sub-components, and say hey .. because I find students must .. even adults, not just students ...we all fight very hard sometimes, to map it all together for ourselves. It's very difficult. We don't realize it. And that all these link up together in a very meaningful manner if we only see the picture for it ourselves. So I think you know someone right in the centre here ... in a sense pulling it together for ... so if you really really ... because you are talking about duration of time ... and you are going to measure it .. they are going to have 3 years with us ... (FG Faculty In 633-640)

This notion was adopted and further modified in the new model.

Other respondents were also supportive of the developmental network, with students keen to learn from different mentors. Some preferred the traditional mentor approach, but when the chief mentor notion was introduced, most were quite happy with the idea.

Should ALL students be mentored?

This question arose when one of the respondents highlighted that not all students may want to be mentored, and another questioned whether the mentoring model was catering to a compulsory mentoring scheme for all students (FG Faculty In 597-602, Interview 10 In 365-366, Interview 7 In 148-151). One of the reasons some students may be adverse to mentoring could be the stigmatisation that may be attached to it being associated with misfits (Kanan and Baker, 2002), and those considered “at-risk” (Interview 3 In 632-646).

Some respondents felt that for the mentoring relationship to be a rewarding one, mentees should desire the relationship, rather than being made to be part of a compulsory programme (Interview 10 In 10-11, Interview 6 In 104-106).

On the other hand, some may not realize that they would like to be mentored, so a mentoring programme for all may help them be developed in a more holistic manner (Interview 10 In 28-34).

It was observed by one respondent that some students will seek out their own mentors anyhow, whether there was a formalized programme or not (Interview 2 In 149-154). Another participant was concerned by the suggestion that not all may be mentored. He proposed that they could be allowed to find their own mentors, such as their parents, with some guiding principles provided (Interview 4 In 175-180).

The course manager of BZSE advocated that in the interest of fairness, mentoring should be offered to every student.

I think mentoring should be offered to everyone ... every student ... in the interest of fairness, and in the interest of not knowing who will take on to it ... because from my experience the kids do not know whether they will take on to it, and whether they will like that particular style (Interview 8 In 222-224)

From students' point of view, they would prefer to have a choice whether they would like to be mentored, and for those who would like to be mentored, a more formalized option could be made available to them (Interview 7 In 163-168). One student remarked that mentoring would be particularly relevant for those with social entrepreneurial

aspirations and already have an idea to start on some enterprise projects (Interview 6 In 98-102).

Who should be Mentors?

When posed the question regarding who should be mentors in the model, the responses suggested an array of the different groups of people most of whom already have some influence over the students, namely lecturers, social entrepreneurs, even retired businessmen and peers (FG BZSE1 In 623-628, Interview 2 In 175-177, FG Faculty In 231-234). “Peer mentors” was a category highly recommended by student respondents (FG BZSE1 In 701-704, 722-724).

A point was raised that while skills and expertise were important capabilities to possess, not everyone who has the social entrepreneurial skills and expertise would make a good mentor, and in such a case, they could be invited as guests only, to share at lectures and seminars, or for a specific task, not necessarily a mentor that would see the student through the course (Interview 9 In 218-225, FG Faculty In 278-285). One of the respondents cautioned regarding the selection of outsiders as mentors, that there should be a proper framework in place to ensure accountability and commitment to see the mentee through the three years in the course (Interview 10 In 494-497, 507-510). A student respondent emphasised that in order to provide relevance to the BZSE course, the mentors should believe in the cause of social entrepreneurship (Interview 7 In 531-541).

Cullingford (2006b) highlighted an interesting point that the mentor is who the teacher would have loved to be, had it not been for the shift of emphasis to their professionalism, where the pastoral aspects, the relationships with pupils, the personal nurturing and the autonomy of being able to respond to individual needs have had to be played down due to enhancements in other aspects related to management and standards. Hence it is no coincidence that lecturers were considered the most important group by quite a few respondents as they are able to follow the student through the three years of the course. The selection process in the hiring of lecturers was also discussed, as this would determine the pool of suitable lecturers as mentors. Individuals who were

youth oriented, passionate, compassionate, interesting, and with integrity, were some of the traits listed in the desired profile of a lecturer (Interview 5 In 344, Interview 8 In 277-285).

It was also suggested that there could be varying categories of mentors. Staff could play roles that included functions that corrected values and attitudes, while outsiders could be more consultative or more geared towards coaching in their approach (Interview 2 In 195-203).

The director of HMS cautioned that as the role of the mentor was a crucial one, if suitable mentors were not available, it would be preferred not to appoint any.

... if there is no good mentor, rather have no mentors ... seriously ... seriously ... I think a wrong mentor can be very disastrous .. can be very damaging also right? (Interview 10 In 450-451)

Matching of Mentors/Mentees

The discussion on the process of matching was another rigorously debated and controversial topic.

Students preferred the freedom to choose their mentors, citing that similar values and working styles were important factors (Interview 7 In 57-60). One of the student respondents also highlighted that it would be good to let students discover for themselves, learning how to make decisions that impact their lives in a changing world (Interview 6 In 273-279). When asked how they would be able to know whether a particular mentor would be suitable, one of the students suggested matching based on recommendations from personality tests. He proposed that the D.I.S.C. profile personality test¹⁰ could be used as a diagnostic tool (Interview 7 In 296-309).

One of the respondents was a little apprehensive, regarding students' readiness and basis for choices, based on previous experiences on other projects (Interview 2 In 115-

¹⁰ The D.I.S.C. personality report or inventory, developed by William Moulton Marston, profiles four primary behavioural styles, each with a very distinct and predictable pattern of observable behaviour – Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness (<http://www.onlinediscprofile.com/>).

116, 122-129). Some may opt for mentors based on popularity polls without having much knowledge regarding the background and experiences that they may be interested in. She suggested preparatory sessions to help students understand and better appreciate the selection process (Interview 2 ln 292-294, 331-334).

Some respondents also believed that some of the best mentoring relationships began with the mentee seeking the mentor out, indicating their earnestness in wanting the relationship (Interview 10 ln 18-24, Interview 5 ln 48). This stance was echoed by a student respondent, who emphasised that the mentee should initiate the mentoring relationship.

Correct ... so must initiate ... self-initiate ... I feel ... if you want to ask someone to mentor you, you cannot expect that person to come to you .. you must ... I mean that person is mentoring you leh ... why should he still come to you? You must go to that person ... hey .. can I be your disciple?? (Interview 7 ln 586-588)

While students would like the freedom to choose their mentors, likewise, some participants interviewed also highlighted their preference in being able to choose who they would like to take in as mentees (Interview 5 ln 128-133). One of them commented that (ln 128)

... a good mentor would also need a good mentee to motivate him to give more ...

Understandably, another critical consideration regarding the matching of mentors is the constraint in the availability of mentoring resources. The stringent requirements mentioned further limit the pool of mentors deemed suitable by the management of HMS (Interview 2 ln 593-598, 851-854, Interview 3 ln 342-344).

The various issues and challenges highlighted regarding the process of matching has led to the proposal of a new matching strategy – the *pitch for your mentor* scheme. Underlying this strategy is the rationale that the conditions most conducive to learning are those which put emphasis on the student and on the desire to learn rather than those which are rigidly controlled (Cullingford, 2006b). The *pitch for your mentor* scheme will be elaborated later under the section on “Ideas for a new construct”.

School Culture

Respondents were also asked about their views regarding whether the culture and environment in HMS was conducive for developing mentoring as a learning strategy.

Students interviewed were very positive about the culture and environment at HMS presently. The small cohort of forty per year and the good relationship between lecturers and students were cited as examples of the positive culture (Interview 7 ln 196-211). The learning framework which includes field trips, guest speakers, competitions and the attempt to integrate formal and informal learning was also appreciated as contributing to a more conducive culture for mentoring (Interview 6 ln 126-135).

The course manager commented that it was likely that BZSE would become part of the mental landscape of the social entrepreneurs who are increasingly being engaged with the course in various aspects. He also considers himself as a social entrepreneur within BZSE, as he attempts to live the desired values he described as expectations of a BZSE mentor (Interview 8 ln 489-492).

One of the social entrepreneurs highlighted that polytechnic education caters to learning in the real world context, exposing students to experiences beyond the classroom and is also facilitated by employing faculty with industry background and experience (Interview 4 ln 432-450). He believes that these factors contribute to a more conducive environment for mentoring.

The director of HMS has been very supportive of the whole concept of a mentoring model for BZSE. When asked about the constraints in terms of funds and resources, she emphasised the importance of finding suitable mentors with intrinsic motivations, and commented that training could be provided for all potential mentors. Staff load could also be re-considered where necessary (Interview 10 ln 505-515, 600-607).

The director of the Teaching and Learning Centre was also very flattering in her comments. She observed that the BZSE framework had a built-in reflective learning facility, which she felt was a pre-requisite to preparing students for further mentoring

(Interview 2 ln 133-138). She expressed confidence that there was high chance for the mentoring model to be successful in the BZSE diploma, based on the relatively small cohort size and the disposition of BZSE faculty (Interview 2 897-904).

... but I think if any diploma can succeed, I think the BZSE diploma can .. because the nature of the diploma already ... I mean ... half the battle is won in that sense (Interview 2 ln 681-682)

4. MISALIGNMENTS IN CURRENT FRAMEWORK

As highlighted in earlier chapters, this research to construct the BZSE mentoring model is a response to forging better integration between formal and informal education, in providing BZSE students a holistic education that not only establishes a firm academic foundation, but facilitates the development of values and character traits, as well as social entrepreneurial skills, to equip the BZSE graduate to be a contributing member of the society. This section highlights some of the gaps in the current BZSE framework that emerged from the research that the new model could help to address.

Connections between Formal and Informal education and students' life journeys

While the BZSE framework for formal and informal education (Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1) provides the structure for integrated learning, it has been observed previously that guided connections may be necessary to help students appreciate the holistic learning approach. The research also helped to confirm that this gap exists, as participants gave feedback regarding how the mentoring model could help provide the desired connections.

It was commented that students need some assistance to map all their learning experiences over the three years into a larger picture as some were unable to see how formal education was going to help them in their lives, or how involvement in co-curricular activities could enrich their life goals or career goals (FG Faculty ln 935-939, Interview 10 ln 254-264). An example was given by one of the respondents who had been helping to coach some students for social enterprise competitions. She commented that students were not able to connect accounting concepts learnt, with the costs related to the enterprise projects (Interview 1 ln 384-386).

A student respondent in one of the focus groups summarised the importance of this connectivity in his own words:

Basically the framework is on a general level ... so it's developed through one person, or a group of persons' opinion ... on how and a systemic order of how everything is carried out. There's a system going ... like ... the boxes ... you have curricular, then you go on to internship, then to co-curricular, and you go to personal ... there is a system, but then how we as the end user of this framework can support it, is, we apply it to ourselves first, and then we measure the benefits ... so if I go through the whole system, but at the end when I leave this school, I still cannot apply much of what I learn into my life, then there is really not much of benefit ... (FG BZSE1 ln 491-497)

Mentoring could provide the needed guidance and mentors could share their own experiences to help piece together the myriad of experiences in the lives of the mentees.

The BZSE course manager disclosed that he too realised increasingly that the students would learn more from the interactions through mentoring even though the BZSE curriculum has intentionally included different dimensions of learning.

I think the BZSE framework ... by design and by nature has to be really using as many different tools as possible to make it the 3-dimensional texture ... and academics, and curriculum, and I thought .. would be sufficient ... but the longer I stay with BZSE I realise that ... no it's not sufficient ... that the kids will learn actually more from the mentoring, although it's not assessable, and it will not go into their grades and into the numbers in their transcripts, but actually, that's how they learn more in achieving the objectives of BZSE, you know ... it's more the mentoring, and it's more the interaction rather than learning from school ... so the value-add is actually invaluable, you know ... you really cannot measure it ... I am a firm believer that this is where the learning happens more ... (Interview 8 ln 497-504)

One of the students interviewed admitted that mentors could play an important role in experiential learning programmes and projects, through their insights and perspectives, bringing learning to a different level (Interview 6 ln 503-509).

Another point raised was the realisation of the benefits in such learning experiences. Feedback mechanisms to help students see the benefits of various learning approaches may have been lacking. It was argued that if students could see the benefits, they would be able to make the connections themselves (Interview 2 ln 381-383).

Differing perceptions of mentoring's value

During the course of the interviews, there was a rather lengthy discussion regarding the readiness of students for a mentoring model. Based on feedback from another learning model, one respondent from the management found many students not of the level of maturity to make decisions that impact life goals. That model allowed students to select modules based on their preferences. They were given information like module synopsis, time slot, and the name of lecturer. Many of them looked at short term interests such as the possibility of waking up later, leaving school earlier, as priority in selection criteria, and ended up taking modules they may not have any interest in (Interview 2 In 302-308). She suggests that in order for the model to be effective, students should be made to realise the need for mentoring, and were able to communicate the type of mentor they are looking for.

ok ...we offer the opportunity for mentoring to you ... but you have to have #1 – a need, you have to be able to articulate that need; your desired outcomes, and the type of person you are looking for to mentor you. (Interview 2 In 458-460).

Also as mentioned earlier, some may not realise the benefits of mentoring, and may not think they need a mentor, although having one would likely accelerate their development over the three years (Interview 10 In 28-34).

This lack of readiness and realisation highlights the need for more explicit communication regarding the rationale and concept of the BZSE mentoring model, so that students are better informed and can appreciate the consideration for their holistic development offered by the course. On the other hand, the more informed students have taken advantage of the opportunities created in the current BZSE framework, and on their own initiative, moved on to expand their network with various individuals.

Mentoring Programmes for some

As highlighted in Chapter 3, there exists in the polytechnic a mentoring programme that focuses on talent development of academically high-performing students, known as “The Christeria Programme (TCP)”. The mentoring style in this programme is highly focused for a homogeneous group of students with clear goals and outcomes of

achievement (Interview 2 In 780-790). One participant feels that some who were not offered the TCP mentoring could have benefited more than some who have been offered the programme.

... but what breaks my heart is .. I mean ... I am a product also of this ... that there are some that are like The Christeria Programme for example ... that is not offered to everyone ... I have always been for the underdog .. and I experience that even in secondary school, and the university ... they offer some programme only for the top students ... and there are some who could have benefited more than the top students on this basis ... (Interview 8 In 227-231)

While not a major misalignment, this has raised the question of equity or entitlement in the design of the BZSE mentoring model.

Given the constraints in mentoring resources, the director of HMS would like the mentoring model to focus on two groups of students, namely, those who have unique talents and aspirations, and those at risk. Those who have unique talents and aspirations may include but not restricted to academically high-performers. They could be those with enterprising social entrepreneurial traits, artistic inclinations or some other form of talent. Those at risk would include some with personal issues or perhaps unfortunate experiences and needing guidance to overcome some of these problems.

And personally I believe that given the constraint of staff resources, time, and so on, we have in order to deliver some more distinctive outcomes, focus on either ... there are 2 ways of focusing – I really believe that those with very strong potential, talents .. whether academically, or not necessarily academically, but really really unique talents like wanting to be a social entrepreneur, or another kind of talent where it ... whether in the arts, and some creative talents elsewhere, but not really someone who is very academic, we can focus on those types. And then the other type would be – whether I call it mentoring or not, it might be an issue. But, those students at risk .. I call them ... where I really see them very bright, having lots of potential, but they have personal issues, they are depressed because of ... some ... perhaps unfortunate experiences in the past, in their lives and so on, so they are struggling with those issues... (Interview 10 In 197-205)

The attempt to resolve this dilemma of whether the BZSE mentoring model should cater to some or all students will be discussed in the next section on “Ideas for the new construct”.

Availability of suitable Mentors

Within the current BZSE framework, though elements of mentoring exist, the structure is loose, with little formal arrangements. Students have been given the opportunity to interact with various social entrepreneurs who have been invited as guest speakers, or

part of a project within the curriculum, but with no formal mentoring relationships forged.

With the stringent criteria expressed by respondents regarding the selection of mentors as highlighted earlier, the availability of a pool of mentors to cater to BZSE students in all three years could pose quite a challenge. If the BZSE mentoring model hopes to offer all students an opportunity to decide if they want to be mentored, and in the event that all students indicate that they would like to have a mentor, the situation may become problematic, if alternative matching criteria have not been considered.

Furthermore, as discussed in above sections, the definition of suitability may vary between faculty and students' viewpoints. And if the BZSE model were to cater to self-selection by both mentors and mentees, it would need to incorporate a flexibility that meets these requirements.

Conflict of interest between Academic Achievement and Mentoring Outcomes

Earlier discussions have highlighted the preference of respondents in excluding academic achievement from the aims and outcomes of the mentoring model, though there was an expectation that mentoring would likely result in improved performance. However, the academic structure in terms of assessment design may affect how well a mentee performs and how mentoring outcomes could be reflected in academic performance.

As remarked by the director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, if academic performance was heavily measured on concepts, recall, theories and the micro application of theories, which requires rote learning and recall techniques, the greater exposure to experiential learning through mentoring may have little impact on the student's performance in terms of grades attained. Assessment designs which cater more broadly to other learning approaches, drawing on application and reflection would probably see improvement in academic performances as a result of mentoring, as mentees are being exposed to reflexive learning through the mentoring process (Interview 2 In 518-533). This sentiment was echoed by the BZSE course manager and

a student respondent (Interview.8 In 554-560, FG BZSE2 In 157-161). A review of the design of assessments in the BZSE course may be helpful in encouraging the out-of-classroom learning advocated by the BZSE framework and better align the pedagogy for informal learning with its assessment.

One of the social entrepreneurs interviewed also highlighted this conflict of interest in a module he was involved in, where students were to write business proposals for the enterprise that he was running. When discussing about inculcating values of resilience and perseverance, he shared how he was more lenient in his expectations because of the limited time-frame within which students had to complete their project which was graded (Interview 4 In 294-309).

yes... yes ... but I am more thinking in terms of the time frame that they have ... sometimes you tend to close one eye lah ... ok ...because ... for me, basically, I am also very concerned that I am affecting their results end of the day, you tell me they are all graded ... that is something I always am very fearful that they may cause them to not do so well ... so ... whether .. while it's a valid concern ... but whether is there a way to address that, I am not sure ... because they definitely have to finish it within the time that you have ... (Interview 4 In 298-302)

A certain degree of compromise in the “real-world” experiences within curricular projects may need to be tolerated due to the constraint in time and curriculum requirements. This compromise could be negotiated between the course manager and the partner involved in such projects before the actual module is being implemented.

Students operating strategically

On a related note, another social entrepreneur was rather polemic in his comments regarding how the Singapore education system’s focus on grades and results as educational outcomes produces graduates who are self-centred, naïve and poorly educated.

... but I think that the in-depth is not emphasised in our educational system ... our educational system try to focus on marks and neglect education itself ... our educational system in Singapore is to show off to people that they have got high quality education, even if there is no delivery ... then ... when you go to society, you go and learn yourself ... the school will teach you nothing useful.. or not nothing lah ... but most of the thing not useful ... then you go to society and you go and learn at the job itself ... so the employer actually suffers when the employee comes ... very ... er ... self-centred, very naive, very poorly educated ... despite having a diploma or a degree ... then the employer is the real teacher ... and some employers are just so ... pissed off and very impatient ... why is this person coming to me? So it's a dilemma here, because ... parents also pushing for marks ... government pushing for marks ... everything is KPI-based rather than meaning, you know ... so end up, our students are

actually kind of zombies ... then the teacher also become zombies, the principal also become zombies ... it goes all the way up the ladder because it starts like that lah ... (Interview 5 ln 48-59)

From some of his experiences with students from various institutions, he found them seeking him out more because of the requirements of their academic projects, and he laments that the fear of failure and fear of scoring low marks becomes their motivator for learning (Interview 5 ln 67-68, 84-85).

Albeit the extremity, there may be some element of truth in his observations, which challenges the structural framework of the education system in Singapore. While the BZSE mentoring model is not designed to address structural reform, it hopes to impress positive intrinsic motivations for learning in the BZSE student.

5. IDEAS FOR A NEW CONSTRUCT

The data-driven approach in grounded theory has contributed significantly to the construction of the proposed BZSE mentoring model. Out of the various issues raised by respondents presented in the previous sections, some ideas and suggestions for the new model have also emerged from the data, and they will be highlighted in this section.

These ideas and suggestions will be formalised into the BZSE mentoring model and elaborated in Chapter 6 – the new construct for evaluation.

Revisiting the objectives of the Model

Responses from participants have helped to concretise the aims of the new model as one that

- (a) Comprises a network of suitable and available mentors that guides students in attaining social entrepreneurial traits, values and skills.
- (b) Creates a culture of support, motivation and inspiration for students in their academic pursuit, over the three years in the BZSE course.
- (c) Helps students harness their best potential through nurturing and stretching their capacities.

- (d) Cultivates a reflexive orientation in students enabling connections between formal and informal education
- (e) Develops confidence, esteem and independence in students, preparing them to flourish as successful individuals and able to become mentors to other mentees
- (f) Enables students to understand the purpose of mentoring and how it helps in their life goals and developmental journey.
- (g) Caters to giving all students an opportunity to have a mentoring experience, and focuses on some who may need more attention.
- (h) Attempts to allow both mentors and mentees to have a choice in the matching process.

These aims match those proposed in Chapter 3, with the last three additional points added as they emerged from the data analysis.

Personalised Learning Environments

In the course of the discussions with the director of the Teaching and Learning Centre and the director of HMS, a structured learning plan for students over the course of the three years was proposed. One concern was that students should be prepared and enabled to be more involved in their own development, and the concept of Personal Learning Environments where one of the key activities is to construct one's own personal learning plan (Interview 2 ln 588-590, 705-709) was suggested. This forces the learner to integrate the formal and informal aspects of learning.

you know ...PLE ... it's become quite a concept that people are beginning to ... Personal Learning Environments ... and to me, I mean, I'm bringing it up now because when we ... we 've got this programme in the University of Manitoba ... that was one of the first things that the staff was asked to do and I took a look at what our staff did .. and what other staff did .. a very very powerful tool, as an initial concept of how I learn, and then someone comes in oh is that all ... so ... you're going to have some that actually only have the formal, and they don't see the rest as learning ... they just see it as life, so they don't put it down ... but ... then you have someone ... a coach who comes in and say ... is that the only thing ... how about ... you know ...how you learn to survive in ... blablabla ... you know ... how you learn to navigate a new territory .. blablabla ... how you learn when you go on your travels ... so then they actually grow this PLE ... and as I was looking at some of the past PLEs that were open for public viewing at that point or open to other course members to view ... you can see some of them have actually grown to include things like ... oh ... I have a coach you know .. a personal coach for this ... I have a type of a mentor ... and sometimes they use it interchangeably ... who ... you know ... my business sense here and so on and so forth ... so they have actually started growing that ... (Interview 2 ln 713-726)

The director of HMS suggested that the structure be broken down into three parts, where certain items could be addressed in the first year, second year and third year of

the course. She emphasised that values should be addressed when they first join the course in their first year, the idea of “Who are you?”, “What are you?”, “What are your values?”, “What do you believe in?”. She also suggested that students should be made to reflect on their life experiences, and to help them chart their own plans with some goals in mind. The process could be reviewed at the end of each year, and could be rewritten if the student has decided to make changes to his/her initial plans. Personality tests could also be taken to help the students ascertain their strengths and weaknesses, which can help them in planning their goals (Interview 10 In 141-152).

This concept of a personalized learning plan is able to be structured into a classroom setting, allowing the model to cater to all students yet facilitating individual engagement. The suggestion to adapt the personalized learning plan over three years is reasonable and could be adopted in the new model.

Mentoring Roadmap

This concept was suggested by the student focus group, though they did not actually give it a specific term. Their idea was that they tabulate learning points for both the formal and informal aspects, including questions that help them to reflect on the various experiences and lessons that they have covered, and on the learning points.

H: ok ... alright ... now ... this framework .. in my own opinion right ... the framework is not really that valuable ... but what matters is like maybe a table on how we apply whatever we have learnt ...

Fac: A table on how you apply what you have learnt?

H: Yep ...

Fac: A bit like ... somebody mentioned ... was it K? about the point where you ... reflect on the learning? Is that what you are trying to say?

H: Yah ... something like that ... as in even in a network, or even personally ... it's like maybe we can have a table on what can be done to apply and what must not be done ... like ... in order to prevent yourself from ...

Fac: so something for your own feedback at various points ... in that sense?

H: Yah ... (FG BZSE1 In 1066-1081)

They also proposed to include some form of collaborative learning amongst students catered for reflection of learning to help apply what they have learnt (FG BZSE1 In 501-524).

A faculty respondent also had a similar idea, to help the student map their learning experiences within the three years into a big picture that can help them see the connection to their ambitions, career progression and ultimate goals, whether it is to become a social entrepreneur or otherwise (FG Faculty In 935-939).

The personal learning plan could be merged with the proposed mentoring roadmap to produce a *BZSE mentoring roadmap* which helps students identify their life goals, understand their interests and inclinations, personality traits and enables them to reflect on their learning journey, and to make sense of how they all connect. The BZSE mentoring roadmap could be introduced at the beginning of the students' first year in the course, and subsequently, at the end of every year, a checkpoint to review the roadmap could be formalised.

Various Mentor roles in the panel

When conversing with respondents regarding the network of developmental mentors, it became evident that we were talking about various mentor roles, not just that of a traditional mentor, nor even a network of mentors having the same sphere of influence. This resonates with Stammer's (in Jones, 2006) argument that there is

.. no single animal called a mentor, rather a group of tasks associated with the role

Some of the tasks or roles that emerged include that of the peer mentor, the coach, and an interesting notion of the chief mentor. These different roles were proposed in response to the various constraints, expectations, and developmental targets of a BZSE student (Interview 10 In 345-450).

The idea of peer mentoring within the BZSE mentoring model was first mooted by the focus group with students. They felt that peers also make good mentors as they understand the journey and struggles of students at various points, having been through it themselves. Students may also feel more comfortable with peers and hence encouraging them to raise questions and doubts (FG BZSE1 In 701-704, 722-724). It promotes the value of sharing, and can be quite a motivator to other students, as they

find that they could learn more effectively together (Interview 6 In 382-387). One of the students suggested that having peer mentors could also help to alleviate the constraint of not having sufficient mentors to give attention to all students who may want to be mentored. He added that being inspired by someone of the same age makes quite an impact. The peer mentors could be a part of the network of mentors, but there should be quite stringent criteria in the selection of peer mentors (Interview 7 In 382-387).

Faculty and management were also supportive of including peer mentoring in the model. The peer mentoring component needs some sort of structure of its own, perhaps with a student committee running it (Interview 8 In 531-543). Many successful mentors are those who have benefited from mentoring relationships (Clutterbuck, 2004). In actuality, the peer mentors are also those identified to be developed further in the BZSE mentoring model.

Peer mentoring can be quite effective and helpful, except that our students are still very young themselves. So, will be the senior Year 3, mentoring Year 1 and Year 2, and Year 2 mentoring Year 1, and so on. When we are actually asking someone to be a peer mentor, in some ways we are developing the so-called mentor in terms of leadership skills, accountability, responsibility of looking after a younger or newer student and so-on right? (Interview 10 In 311-314)

The need for the mentor to sometimes play the role of the coach was also brought up. Coaching differs from mentoring in that it focuses on challenging the individual to perform at his/her best to achieve certain defined outcomes. There is often a need to steer students in the right direction and focus in terms of their projects and initiatives, and even to coach them for competitions. Hence the role of the mentor as coach emerged in quite a few interviews (Interview 10 In 468-474).

One of the respondents who had played the role of a coach was sharing her perspective:

... youth would normally come to us with fairly unrealistic pictures because they have the passion, they are very passionate about the project, they are idealistic at the same time, and they think everything can work. Giving the example like they believe the "shoe" can work. But when you sit down and work out ... the project costing, and its still not real .. but when you actually send them out and say, look ... you have to do it ... and you ... you actually provide a push for them ... otherwise, they will still be living in that particular world. So mentoring is good for students. We are providing the push for them to see the reality part of business, the reality part of the social aspect of helping people... (Interview 1 In 22-29)

At the receiving end, the student being mentored (coached) gave feedback about how the “wake-up calls” were helpful in getting them back on track in their social enterprise project:

Ju: ... like ... Ms T ... you know ... that when we don't know how to do, she would whack whack ... then we wake up already ...

Fac: So you found that that was a helpful injection ...

Ju: yah ... if we weren't being awakened by mentorship ... sometimes we can ... I mean because we are young mah ... sometimes we are very naive ... very often we think that ... wow ... we've got an idea ... but we never really think about the details ... we never really think about the realism ... (Interview 7 ln 174-181)

The respondent who played the role of a coach highlighted that while students are usually passionate about their projects, and it was important not to stifle their passion, as mentors, there was that fine balance to show them the realities of what would work and what wouldn't, yet allowing them to make mistakes so they can learn from those mistakes. She adds that the coaching role in mentoring shortens the process of students getting to the marketplace, and minimises some unnecessary mistakes which could discourage them from their initial zeal and interest in the project, and may even result in them giving up their dreams (Interview 1 ln 172-178, ln 49-53).

The notion of the *chief mentor* was first proposed by the director of HMS, as one to help the student map everything into a bigger picture, highlighting the various learning points and opportunities, helping the student to link them up in a meaningful manner over the three years in the BZSE course (Interview 10 ln 633-640). She also suggested that the chief mentor be one who helps the student manage his relationships with other people who could provide different expertise and inspirations to enhance the student's learning experience, but the chief mentor is responsible to help the student plot his goals and developmental plans and work towards the desired outcomes.

... I will see that ... you ... if really interested ... to see Student J achieve all the outcomes ... your ethos and skill sets ... you have to say ... I'm not just a lecturer .. I'm XXX, the chief mentor of Student J And all these people ... you know ... I'm not just a lecturer .. I mean ... provided you want to be that mentor And then ... all these people are pulling in ... be it the likes of YYY .. and ZZZ ... if they have an interest to mentor him further it's fine ... but at this point of time when Student J needs that ... how to do a business plan ... I'm going to ask you all to come and teach him to do a business plan ... and that's all ... passing the information and skillsets ... he's learnt that ... he's back to me again, you know And I've to watch his progress here .. and if he doesn't know really how to operate the social enterprise ... go and talk to YYY, and YYY may impart ... because Student J is now ... like that .. like that ... need that jab, that whack .. and there, where YYY can do better ... because he hero-worships YYY ... that can give that jab and extra adrenaline in him ... that is YYY's role – very defined ... but after that it's back to me, XXX ... square one again .. so I've got to put Student J back into shape

again, and move him one notch up the ladder So Student J .. you can no longer be here ... you've got to go one step up the ladder, and here you are now ... you've got business plan, you know what drives a social entrepreneur ... what's next ... so I've got to nudge him on ... then his ethos can go harder, finer, and his skill sets deeper and better and so on, you see Then you are the mentor ... and mentor is a coach ... and culture, disciplinarian ... everything ... bao hai bao swa bao ga liao ... hahahaha ... (FG Faculty In 763-778)

When this notion was raised with other respondents, most felt it was a good idea and could be developed further within the BZSE mentoring model. One student expressed that he would find it easier to relate to one main person as a mentor, as it takes a while to develop the relationship, so within a network of mentors, he may not be able to connect as well with some others if he were to move on from one mentor to another within a short span of time (FG BZSE1 In 181-188). Another student found the idea useful as the chief mentor could direct the students to various other mentors with different expertise, thereby exposing them to a spread of skills and knowledge and styles (Interview 6 In 237-245).

One concern was with how the student was going to be matched with their “chief”. A respondent highlighted another framework, also mentioned earlier, where majority of students did not seem to prove that they could make mature choices when they were given the opportunity to make selections, and she considered the decision of the matching of the chief mentor as a key success factor in the whole experience (Interview 2 In 120-130).

Matching Strategies

As highlighted in the above section on “Matching of Mentors/Mentees”, the various groups of stakeholders wanted to have a say in the matching process. The school management would like to ensure the quality of mentors selected for the programme, while both potential mentors and mentees wanted to have a choice in the matching process. To add to the complexity, the model hopes to cater to equitable opportunities for as many students who would like to be mentored. Hence, taking into consideration the discussions regarding the need for students to seek out their mentors, the constraints in mentoring resources, and the stringent criteria for mentors, a new concept of “pitching for your mentor” was proposed.

When testing the concept with participants, most felt it was quite a good suggestion, and added their inputs to improve the idea.

The BZSE course manager agrees that due to limited resources, competition through the pitching option is probably useful, but he advocates that other less resource intensive options should also be offered to everyone (Interview 8 ln 250-265).

A student respondent voiced his opinion that the potential mentee may not know enough about the available mentors to know who to pitch to. Their choice may be based on the credentials or popularity rather than suitability and specific aspects they would like to learn from. He feels that it is important to at least have an idea of the personality of the mentor, and this could be done through both potential mentor and mentee completing personality tests, which could provide some basis for the choice (Interview 7 ln 289-317).

The social entrepreneur respondents were happy with the idea of pitching. One of them feels it is a process of self-discovery as students would have to be able to articulate their reasons for wanting to have a mentoring relationship with the person they were making the pitch to (Interview 5 ln 462-469). Another social entrepreneur respondent suggested forming a panel of mentors with different expertise in different areas whom the students could consider pitching to (Interview 4 ln 166-171, 571-576).

The idea of “pitching” also resonates with a core skill of the social entrepreneur who is expected to make business plan pitches to secure funding and investments for his social enterprise. When introducing this matching strategy into the model in the next chapter, it will be proposed that the “pitching” be restricted to the matching with *chief mentors* only, whereas other mentor types will be recommended by the *chief mentor* to the mentee where deemed suitable.

Multi-Dimensional Mentoring Approach

Taking into consideration all the inputs, ideas and concerns, and with an understanding of existing mentoring concepts and theories, an abductive inference approach (Pierce in Kelle, 2005) is being applied to develop the *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* for the BZSE mentoring model.

The *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* includes adaptations of existing approaches like the *personalised development plan* into the *BZSE learners' roadmap*, as well as introduces new notions and concepts such as the *chief mentor*, *consultant mentor*, *alumni mentor*, and *pitching for your mentor*, which were either suggestions from respondents or constructions as a result of the inputs given or concerns raised, which have been highlighted in earlier discussions. It attempts to address some of the dilemmas such as the intention to cater to all students, and at the same time allow more intensive mentoring for some students, and the hope to provide a system flexible enough to allow stringent selection criteria and personal matching choices to materialise.

Though the *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* was not discussed with respondents as it was finally put together only after the series of focus groups and interviews were completed and a thorough examination of the research data was being done, the inspiration for the construction of the strategy was basically data-driven, clearly a grounded theory approach. Stakeholders involved will be presented the proposed model and a possible implementation plan could be further deliberated. This will be elaborated in Chapter 7, under the section "Dissemination and Communication".

6. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS FROM THE RESEARCH DATA

This chapter has presented three main aspects of key issues that emerged from the research data, namely (a) Key themes of discussions from the categories, (b) Misalignments in the current learning model, and (c) Ideas for the new construct. A

summary of the main discussion points of the three aspects that has been evidenced by respondents' comments and opinions is presented below.

Key themes of discussions from the categories

Participants agree that youths are increasingly seeking out significant others in their lives through various means, and that mentoring could help fulfil this need which seems to have arisen due to the changing patterns in family structures and the rise in the trend of social networking.

The mentor in the BZSE context was also discussed as one who is not too different from the traditional mentor, but who possessed social entrepreneurial traits and inclinations, and was able to coach students to achieve outcomes in certain specific tasks related to the BZSE course.

Respondents concurred with the BZSE Graduate Competencies and were especially concerned with the development of character, values and social entrepreneurial traits in the BZSE student. They preferred that academic performance was not included as an aim or outcome of the BZSE mentoring model. Rather, they believed that mentoring could inspire and motivate students to be more interested in their studies and hence translate into better academic performance.

Participants debated on the idea of introducing the developmental network of mentors. On the one hand, a relationship needed to be cultivated with a mentor for a prolonged period, yet, having different mentors with different skills, experiences and styles to cater to different needs was also deemed beneficial for the mentee. The notion of the *chief mentor* as one who is like the traditional mentor and helps the mentee manage these relationships, was proposed as a response to the dilemmas highlighted.

The question regarding whether all students should be mentored was posed and garnered a mixed response from participants. Some felt that the system should be equitable and allow every student a chance to be mentored, while others highlighted that not all students may want to be mentored, and the constraint of mentoring resources

would make it difficult to cater to mentoring relationships for all students. Some added that mentees should seek out their mentors as an indication of their genuine interest and initiative. This led to the discussion on matching strategies where management cautioned that the selection of suitable mentors was a critical success factor in the model. Respondents who were potential mentors and mentees both expressed the preference to have a say in the matching process.

Participants were generally happy with the culture at HMS, and felt that it was conducive for the implementation of a mentoring model. Aspects highlighted included the small cohort size, relationships with lecturers, experiential learning components in the BZSE framework, and a school management that was pro-active and willing to cater resources in the development of students.

These issues dwell on the psychosocial structures that Edwards (1998) considers as part of the theoretical-heuristic phase in the grounded theory approach.

Misalignments in the current Framework

Though the *BZSE framework for formal and informal education* was designed to include various learning approaches that hope to integrate formal and informal education, it has been observed that many may not be able to see the connections. Respondents generally agree that students needed more help in making the necessary connections in the different learning experiences that they go through in the course of the three years with the BZSE diploma.

Some students may also not realise the value of mentoring, either because of their level of maturity and readiness or due to ignorance regarding the benefits of mentoring. Sessions to introduce the rationale, objectives and benefits of the BZSE mentoring model may need to be included to help students see how the BZSE course helps in their holistic development.

Some respondents highlighted that current mentoring schemes at the polytechnic cater only to the academic high-achievers. The sentiment from one respondent was that many

who were not included in those programmes may actually benefit more from the mentoring than those in the programme. This raises the question regarding the equity of the BZSE mentoring model in providing opportunities for all to be mentored. However, due to the constraint in mentoring resources, it was also suggested that the more intense mentoring relationships be offered to students who display unique talents as well as those who were considered as “at-risk” due to certain problems or issues they may be facing.

Due to the stringent selection criteria with regards to who may be suitable as highlighted by the respondents, the availability of potential mentors may be limited. This constraint is an important consideration for the BZSE mentoring programme as it poses a potential challenge on the sustainability of the model.

Some respondents have highlighted how the design of the nature of academic assessments could impact how mentoring may affect academic performance. Mentoring may help students do better in assessments that test higher order and reflective thinking rather than concepts, recall, theories and the micro-application of theories. A review of curriculum assessments may be needed for alignment with the learning approaches applied. It was also discussed that some compromise in the development of traits like perseverance and resilience in “real-world” assignments within some modules may need to be tolerated, due to the time limit that curriculum projects have to adhere to.

One of the social entrepreneurs was concerned that the Singapore education system may be over-emphasising on the pursuit of academic achievement in terms of grades, above learning and social responsibility. The BZSE mentoring model hopes to inspire intrinsic motivations towards learning in the BZSE student.

Ideas for a New Construct

Based on key themes discussed and gaps identified, this section summarises the ideas and inputs from respondents regarding the construction of the new model.

When revisiting the aims of the BZSE mentoring model as outlined in Chapter 3, three additional points were included based on feedback from the discussions. These included:

- (f) Enables students to understand the purpose of mentoring and how it helps in their life goals and developmental journey.
- (g) Caters to giving all students an opportunity to have a mentoring experience, and focuses on some who may need more attention.
- (h) Attempts to allow both mentors and mentees to have a choice in the matching process.

Management suggested a structured personalised learning plan over the course of the three years to enable students to be more involved in their own development. This plan could be introduced within a classroom setting, catering to all students, and reviewed at the end of every year, allowing students to update and make necessary changes as they discover more about themselves and their life goals as the course unfolds.

Students themselves proposed a learning roadmap that included reflection points that could help them make sense of the various learning experiences in the course. This roadmap could be combined with the personalised learning plan in the form of the *BZSE mentoring roadmap*.

In the course of the discussions, it became evident that respondents were proposing various mentor roles within the network of developmental mentors. These ideas were in response to the preferences, constraints and needs of the BZSE learning framework which the mentoring model hopes to address. The roles of the *peer mentor*, *coach* and the constructed notion of the *chief mentor* were highlighted, which would help to add to the needed dimensions in the BZSE mentoring model, attempting to give all students an opportunity to be mentored, and those who were more desiring, the further chance of being mentored more intensively. It also considers the availability and suitability of potential mentors in the various roles.

It was suggested that a panel of BZSE mentors be formed, and the selection criteria for recruiting “suitable” BZSE mentors be left to the decision of the BZSE management.

Dwelling further on the dilemmas concerning the constraint in mentoring resources, the identification of suitable mentors and the preference of potential mentors and mentees to want to have a say in the matching strategies, the idea of “*pitching for your mentor*” was proposed, where potential mentees make a “pitch” to potential mentors of their choice. “Pitching” of business plans is an important social entrepreneurial skill, and adds to the relevance of including the idea of “*pitching for your mentor*” in the BZSE mentoring model.

The *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* is an adaptive inference of the culmination of contributions by all participants in the research. It attempts to cater to the aims of the BZSE mentoring model, combining existing approaches such the *personalised development plan* and various mentor roles with new notions and concepts introduced including the *chief mentor* and “*pitching for your mentor*”.

This section gives a good basis for the construction of the new model, as it helps to identify processes and understand implications and consequences in pursuing various options. This concurs with Edward’s (1998) component of “*propositions about processes*” in his theoretical-heuristic phase in grounded theory building.

Chapter 6 will further elaborate on the outcome of this research - the new BZSE mentoring model, constructed as a pilot for evaluation. The chapter will describe the form and structure of the new model, and a more comprehensive manual will be designed and presented to stakeholders upon further discussion and consultation with the BZSE mentor committee, a team to be proposed (also in Chapter 6), to oversee the BZSE mentoring model.

CHAPTER SIX –DEVELOPING THE NEW CONSTRUCT FOR EVALUATION. A pilot mentoring model within the existing BZSE framework

1. INTRODUCING THE NEW MENTORING MODEL WITHIN THE BZSE FRAMEWORK

This chapter will discuss the framework of the new mentoring construct as an outcome of the research. As discussed under the section on Methodology, the new mentoring construct through heuristic grounded theory research is actually an enhancement of an existing case – the BZSE learning framework for formal and informal education. Hence, the proposed model includes suggestions to strengthen aspects of the current framework, whilst introducing a new mentoring structure that will complement the framework. The model cannot be divorced from the BZSE learning framework from which it derives its basis of construction.

While the intent of the BZSE learning framework was to integrate formal and informal education for the student, feedback from respondents seem to highlight that such integration may not have been appreciated by all students. Hence, the new model would provide intentional guidance and appropriately focused mentoring processes to students and faculty.

The process of determining the ideal characteristics of the BZSE mentoring model involved not only the interrogation of the kinds of literature cited, the professional experience of the researcher over the years in the various schools at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, but particularly, by the themes that strongly emerged through the research as disclosed in the mapping exercise shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

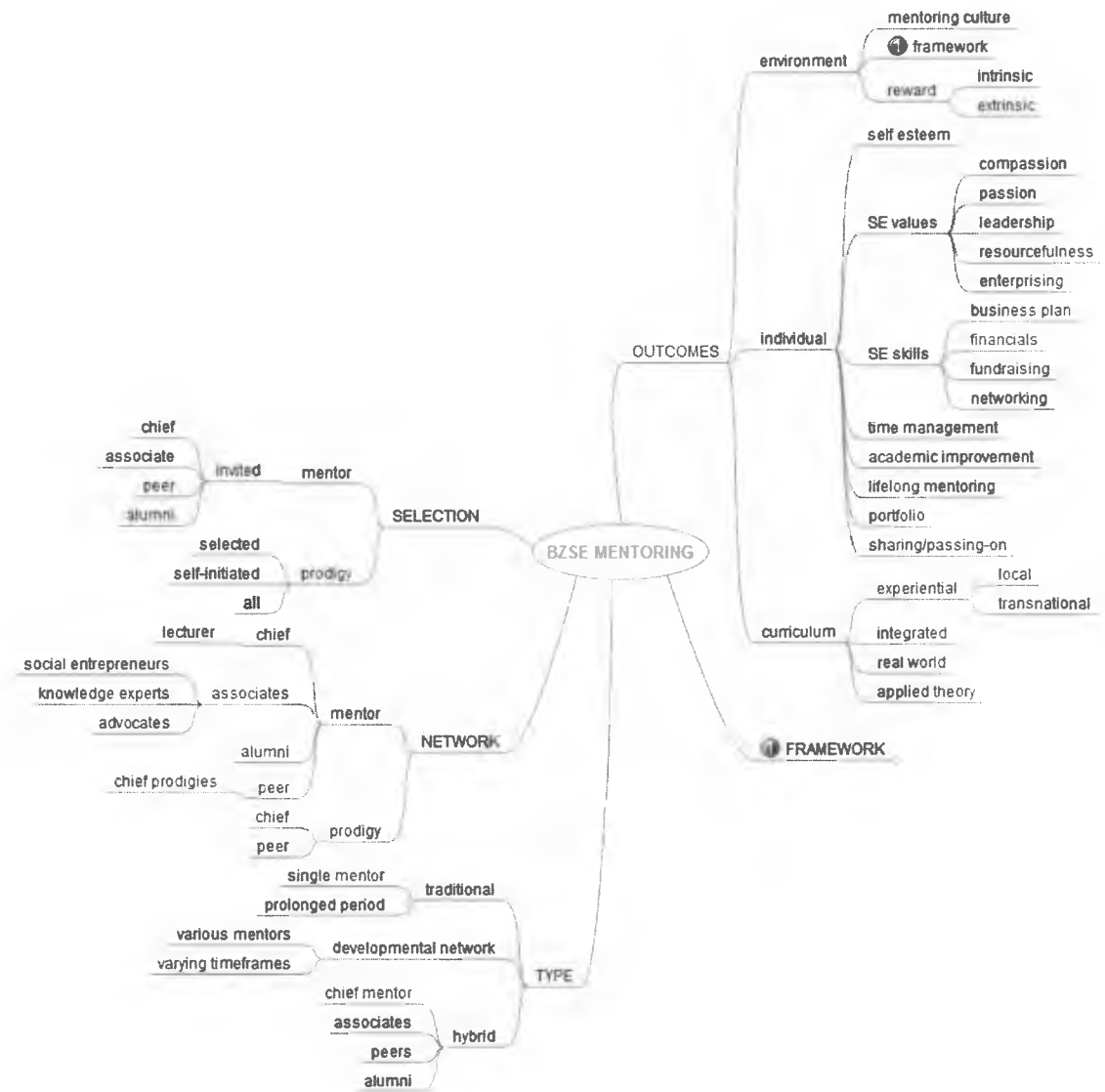


Figure 6.1 – Themes from focus group interviews

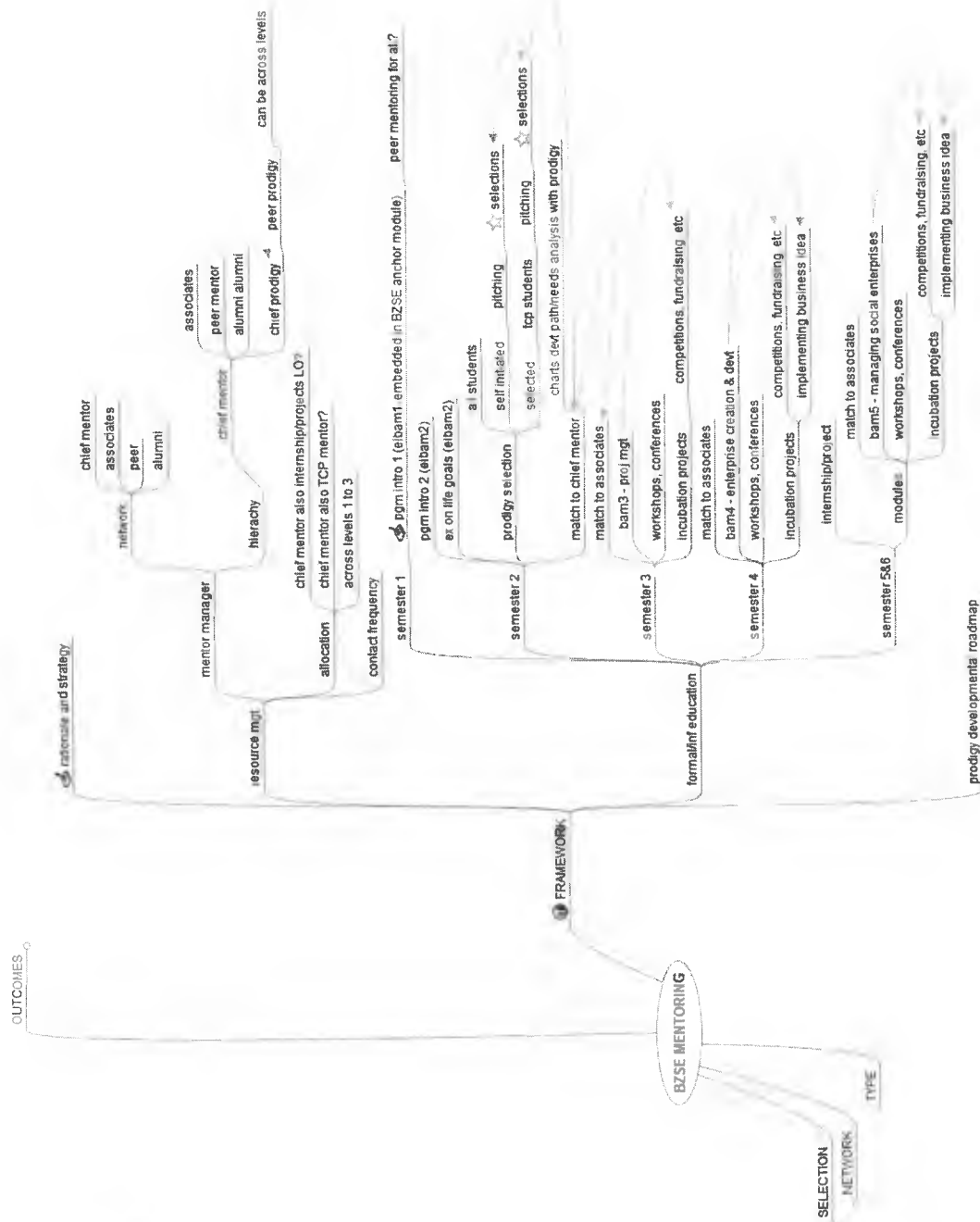


Figure 6.2 – Themes from focus group interviews (Framework)

These themes for the new mentoring design, as described in Chapter 5, surfaced from the data, and while many of the suggestions fit into current literature on mentoring models, there were mentoring ideas and approaches that could be explored specifically for piloting the new model. These concepts are premised on the typology of “relationship constellations” or “developmental networks” introduced by Kram and Higgins (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Kram, 1985) as well as aspects of the learning mentor and learning support needs initiative¹¹ that has been adopted rather successfully in some secondary schools in the United Kingdom. This chapter attempts to present the new BZSE mentoring model as a construct of imaginations that emerged from the research data, situated within proven mentoring ideologies and structures.

One such concept is the constructed *multi-dimensional mentoring approach*, which is a response to addressing entitlement, equity and matching concerns in mentoring relationships. This mentoring approach hopes to provide a structure to align students, faculty and mentors with agreed goals and expectations, and also to enhance the existing BZSE academic framework. Developing the students’ personal development plan, involving peer mentors and the introduction of the chief mentor, are some examples of how the new model has been designed based on evidence from the research data.

2. REVISITING CURRENT BZSE FRAMEWORK FOR FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

The BZSE framework was designed to give BZSE students a holistic learning experience, and to integrate formal and informal aspects of the learning journey. Responsive curriculum design methods with appropriate assessments tapping into multiple forms of intelligences were applied (Cross, 2006; Gardner, 2004). A BZSE student has the opportunity to weave various experiences within the three years in the course as represented in the four quadrants of the framework (Ref Figure 1 of Chapter 1). But findings from the research indicate that a strengthening of the framework may

¹¹ First introduced at secondary schools under the first phase of the British Excellence in Cities Programme in 1999 (<http://www.infed.org/learningmentors/lrn-ment.htm>).

be needed to provide better connections in learning. Cross (2006) echoes my sentiment as he explores informal and natural learning in the new world.

Learning is like breathing, so much a part of our lives that we're unaware of it until a mentor or a book refocuses our attention (p.xx).

Examining the current BZSE Anchor Modules

The modules highlighted with “***” in Figure 2 of Chapter 1 are the BZSE anchor modules. The anchor modules were identified to be modules that could help integrate formal and informal education for each semester at every level, providing a greater emphasis on situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Elements of mentoring are present, though not formally structured, and herein lies the gaps that could be addressed by the new mentoring model.

At Level 1.1, the module “Introduction to Social Enterprise” requires students to execute a group project where they interview social entrepreneurs to understand first-hand, their motivations, values and entrepreneurial drive and are required to create videos, posters and newsletters to document their experience. This module is situated in the first semester of the first year, to give students a foundational understanding of social entrepreneurship and the people behind these outfits. The module lends itself well to introducing some of the mentors of the programme to the students before they are being fully introduced to the mentoring model. Not all social entrepreneurs selected to be interviewed by students fully understand the ethos of the BZSE course. The new model could invite these social entrepreneurs to be a part of the BZSE panel of mentors (detailed later in this chapter) and be formally introduced to the rationale and objectives of the mentoring programme and the place and purpose of the module.

The anchor module “Introduction to Social and Environmental Studies” at Level 1.2 has group assessments related to an overseas trip to a developing country. Here, students are introduced to social entrepreneurs and social enterprises in the regional context. The assessment is a joint assignment with another module “Introduction to Statistics and Research Methods” where students are required to conduct research with the local community during the trip. More details on the overseas trip will be elaborated in the

next section. As the group is rather large in size, it may not be possible for personal mentoring to take place during the trip. Though reflexive journaling and group discussions regarding trip experiences have been conducted in the past, reflections that focus on helping to connect learning experiences from the trip with academic issues and social entrepreneurial understanding could be more intentionally worked into the programme or assessment for the trip. It is proposed that a learning mentor helps to facilitate these aspects of reflexive learning as discussed later.

At Level 2.1, students learn project management skills and are required to start and complete a project that usually serves a social enterprise, like fund-raising projects or designing marketing collaterals, just to name some examples. Although there is no direct mentoring involvement presently, there is potential for students to work with mentors on designing projects that are of value and impact to the social enterprises.

In the module “Enterprise Creation and Development” at Level 2.2, students learn about the process involved in creating enterprises, and the assessment involves writing a business proposal to set up a social enterprise. A competition was launched during the first run of the module and each group made a pitch for a social enterprise idea to create employment opportunities for persons with intellectual disability. An in-house business consultant was invited for the ten groups to seek advice regarding the feasibility of their business proposals. The chief executive officer of the organisation¹² personally organized an orientation programme and availed himself and his staff to discuss with students regarding their ideas for the proposal. Students provided positive feedback that the mentoring provided in the module was very effective for their learning, and this approach could be continued in the new model.

At Level 3.1, in the module “Managing Social Enterprises”¹³, students work with a social enterprise to understand the mechanics in prospecting and sales, logistics operations, human resource management, and customer relations management. The

¹² The organization involved was the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled Persons of Singapore (MINDS).

¹³ At the point of writing (June 2010), this module is experiencing its first run for the April-August 2010 semester.

polytechnic operates a social enterprise, “Dialogue in the Dark”¹⁴, where students are able to apply the management concepts in the context of a “real” enterprise, working with customers and employees, and setting up management systems within the requirements of the module. This anchor module focuses on the application of skills and knowledge, and mentoring is applied through inviting the founder, managing director and staff from the enterprise to share with students the inspirations behind the cause of the social enterprise, and to guide them on project requirements at appropriate points. Within the new model, the respective individuals involved, where appropriate, could be invited to be a part of the BZSE mentor panel, where they would be given the relevant induction and orientation into the purpose of this learning framework.

Field Trips: Local and Overseas

Field trips are one of many strategies to engage students in learning from a natural setting. They are rich in informal learning opportunities and when placed in the context of a formal curriculum, the potential for integrative learning is high.

In the framework, an overseas field trip to visit social enterprises in a country within the Asian region is planned for BZSE students at level 1.2. The trip also caters to experiential learning and application in two of the modules at level 1.2, namely, Introduction to Social and Environmental Studies, and Introduction to Statistics and Research Methods. The BZSE diploma is well connected to various global social enterprises, and students are introduced and orientated to the social needs and scope of work of these organisations. Social entrepreneurs share reflections about what triggered the initiation of such an enterprise, and the various issues and problems encountered in

¹⁴ *Dialogue in the Dark (DiD)* is an awareness raising exhibition. It is a social franchising enterprise, offering exhibitions and business training in total darkness, creating jobs for the blind, disabled and disadvantaged worldwide. Blind guides lead visitors through simulated environments in the darkness, and become the ones with mobility and confidence. Visitors learn what it means to live without sight. In having to navigate darkened environments, they also appreciate the value of effective communication and understand those who see the world differently. Originally founded in Germany, DiD has reached 30 countries since 1988, impacting over six million visitors and creating thousands of jobs for the visually impaired. DiD Singapore is an exclusive collaboration between Ngee Ann Polytechnic and the franchisor Dialogue Social Enterprise, and is positioned as a learning outfit for students in the School of Humanities. (<http://www.dialogueinthedark.com.sg>)

the operations of the enterprise. At the moment, there is no intentional mentoring process in the current framework.

Local field trips to visit social enterprises are also organized to give students a sense of the various initiatives and operations in the local social enterprise sector. Some of these visits include the social enterprises within the Singapore Prisons, foreign workers dormitories, organisations offering services for the intellectually disabled and the ex-offender community, amongst others. These field trips are offered at various points in the framework, usually within an anchor module, but sometimes in other modules. The field visit is usually coordinated with the founder or key senior manager of the respective enterprise, and students acquire a more holistic picture of the vision, objective and operations of the social enterprise.

For future field trips both local and overseas, more intentional reflexive learning facilitated by faculty members would be helpful in guiding students to draw necessary connections with their academic learning (Clegg and Bradley, 2006).

Internships and Final Year Projects

Internships and final year projects are field-based situated learning opportunities (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2006). In the final year, students have the option to be attached to organisations as interns either locally or overseas, or they could choose to work on a substantive final year project such as setting up a social enterprise, launching a book on interviews with social entrepreneurs, or other innovative initiatives that give them a valuable orientation into the real-world needs and challenges in this sector. The period of internship or final year project is about five months, and this could be a productive opportunity for a longer term, personal mentorship either by a mentor from the organisation that the intern works with, or a mentor that the student could consult regarding the final year project. However, not all participating organisations may be represented in the panel or mentors, and not all students may choose to be mentored, so the model would need to cater to such flexibilities. General oversight is currently provided to all students by internship liaison officers and project supervisors, though more from an academic rather than a mentoring approach.

Co-Curricular projects and involvement

Apart from academic related experiences and learning, BZSE students are also involved in various programmes, activities and competitions which are mainly student initiated, and outside the formal curriculum. These experiences offer many opportunities for informal learning that again could be given greater emphasis. Some examples include student participation in social enterprise contests, student initiated fundraising events, freshmen orientation camps, overseas community services trips led by other faculty members, involvement in clubs and societies and a host of other possibilities. Some of these programmes and projects lend themselves well into coaching, consultations and peer mentoring that could help draw learning connections between these activities and what they learn in the formal curriculum.

One example is a student initiated social enterprise project, *Soule*. Led by a passionate and enterprising student from BZSE, the *Soule* business concept is to sell shoes with the slogan “buy one give one” where for every pair of shoes purchased another pair will be contributed to needy students who may not own a pair of shoes. I am presently mentoring and coaching the student team, and could be considered a chief mentor in the new model. Appendices 8a&b relate to published articles on *Soule*. In their endeavour to set up the social enterprise, the team has come to realise that many of the modules in the curriculum are of relevance and significance to their mission. External mentors have also been invited to help boost their skills in pitching and making business decisions.

3. THE NEW BZSE MENTORING MODEL: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MENTORING APPROACH

Apart from enhancing the existing BZSE framework, the new multi-dimensional mentoring approach will introduce structures that hope to provide a more systemic approach to the integration of formal and informal education. Firstly, it aims to cater to all students at levels where personalised learning strategies could be employed. The model will then introduce a layered mentoring strategy which attempts to reach all students who want to be mentored through the peer mentoring approach, and where

more personalised attention could be given to the three categories of mentees highlighted in Chapter 3, namely (a) those who want to be mentored, and are prepared to give a pitch to convince the mentoring coordinator or a team of mentors about why they should be mentored (b) talented students identified by the school to be developed under the school's talent development programme, also known as "The Christeria Programme (TCP)", (c) students on the fringe, who are needing help in terms of motivation and purpose. Students in categories (b) and (c) are identified by faculty and the mentor coordinator, but will only be placed in the mentoring programme if they themselves desire to be mentored.

Helping *ALL* students build connections in learning

While not all students may want to be mentored, and availability of mentoring resources constrain the number of students who can have formalised personal mentors, it is part of the aim of the model to help all students develop enabling connections between formal and informal education, and to create a culture of support, motivation and inspiration for their experience within the three years in the course.

The Learning Mentor

The learning mentor (Cruddas, 2005; Megginson *et al*, 2006; Miller, 2002) is a recognised appointment in the United Kingdom to facilitate the mentoring scheme in schools. However, such a portfolio is almost unheard of in Singapore. The role of the learning mentor could be adapted and modified in the context of the BZSE mentoring model.

The proposal of the functions of the learning mentor in this model would be to oversee the aspects where personalised development is made available to *all* students, including programme introduction, progress checks and programme evaluation. The learning mentor in the context of the BZSE mentoring model would work closely with the mentor coordinator. He/she would most probably be a faculty member, and the appointment would be alongside other academic and administrative responsibilities.

It is proposed that his/her role could include (a) Introducing the BZSE mentoring model and conducting/managing sharing sessions for all students within the BZSE framework (b) conducting diagnostic assessment of students' interests, personality traits, strengths, weaknesses and learning support needs using a variety of methods where appropriate, including behavioural assessments, observation, school reports and one-to-one interviews, (c) guiding students in producing a BZSE learners' roadmap that helps them identify areas of focus and connections, (d) monitoring and evaluating students' progress over the three years and guiding them in developing their evidenced portfolio.

Platforms for ALL students

Formal platforms where a learning mentor could address all students within the respective levels could be introduced into the current BZSE framework. Figure 6.3 below attempts to present the various points in the BZSE framework where all students could be addressed and given some form of guidance.

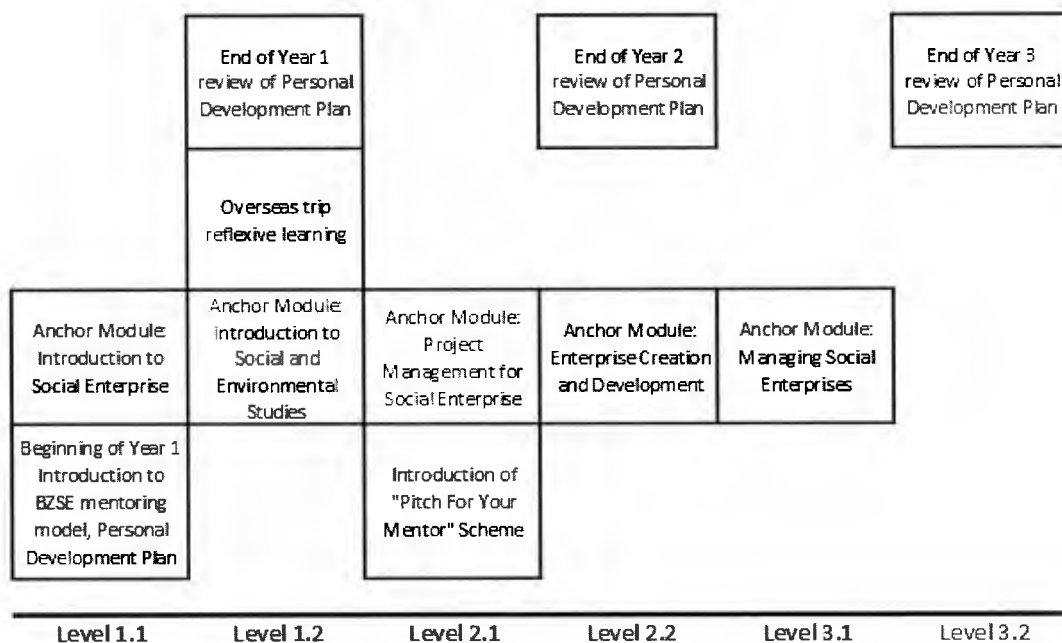


Figure 6.3 – Opportunities for ALL students

At Level 1.1, where students are new to the course as well as the culture of the school, it would be appropriate to share with them the rationale and objectives of the BZSE course, the BZSE framework, and to introduce the BZSE mentoring model explaining how it complements learning for the BZSE student.

The students could also be introduced to the BZSE Learner's roadmap, in actuality, a Personal Development Plan (PDP) where they can have initial thoughts about plans for their three years in the BZSE course. The PDP encourages the completion of an evidence-based portfolio, but goes beyond, acting as an intermediary stage leading to continuing professional development and lifelong learning. It also aspires to provide students with the opportunity to develop skills relevant in the workplace (Clegg and Bradley, 2006). It is proposed that a review of the PDP could be conducted with the students at the end of every year, to help them assess whether they have achieved what they had set out for themselves, and whether they would like to make any adjustments to their plans.

The BZSE anchor modules are also in place and their purpose in the BZSE framework could be further highlighted and given greater emphasis by the learning mentor. Mentoring in limited aspects could also be experienced by all students within these modules.

Reflection points after the overseas and local field trips could be formalised in the structure of the model. In many cases, during the trips, worldviews are challenged, new resolutions are made, and students are usually highly inspired. Their exposure to social enterprises overseas as well as local field visits over the year helps some of them to consider attempting to work on their own social enterprise projects, and this is where those who are keen and have initiative could be invited to "pitch" for a chief mentor at the beginning of their second year.

The "pitch for your mentor" scheme, though open for all, can only ultimately be available to some. The mentor in this regard refers to the *chief mentor* in the model. The other types of mentors in the model will be recommended to the mentee by the chief mentor, as will be elaborated later. This scheme is proposed to be introduced at the beginning of the second year as the students would have had a full year of understanding about the BZSE course and culture, and the BZSE learner's roadmap would have introduced them to reflecting on their own personal goals and how having a mentor could help in their personal development. It also gives sufficient time in their

second and third year to develop a meaningful relationship with the mentor including opportunities for stretching and nurturing. One condition that a successful mentee has to commit to is to agree to be a peer mentor. This tiered approach to mentoring (Fowler and Muckert, 2004) where the mentee passes on what he/she learns to someone else is, I argue, an effective developmental strategy.

The Layered Mentoring Strategy for BZSE

The layered mentoring strategy can help provide mentoring resources for all students who would like to be mentored, at least at the peer mentoring layer. This notion of layered mentoring was drawn from research data where different respondents suggested different mentoring approaches, and seems most appropriate in the context of the BZSE mentoring model. It includes the notion of tiered mentoring (Fowler and Muckert, 2004) where mentees being mentored are at the same time mentors themselves, and extends to include other mentor roles that form the BZSE mentor panel, like the chief mentor, consultant mentor and alumni mentor. The panel of mentors that support the layered mentoring strategy would include the learning mentor, chief mentors, consultant mentors, peer mentors, and alumni mentors, with the mentor coordinator overseeing the management of the BZSE mentoring model. Figure 6.4 below summarises the various mentor roles in the model.

Mentor Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishes basic parameters - Recruits mentors - Facilitates preparation and training - Manages mentoring meetings - Identifies mentees - Oversees matching of mentors - Conducts evaluation and review 	Learning Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduces BZSE mentoring model and conducts/manages sharing sessions within BZSE - Oversees facilitation of field trip reflections - Guides learner in charting the BZSE Learner's Roadmap
Chief Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plays the role of the traditional mentor for 2 years - Introduces consultant mentors within network to mentee where appropriate 	Consultant Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advises mentee on specialised areas - Coaches mentee where expertise is needed. Eg. Competitions, starting an enterprise, special projects etc. - Gives guest lectures/inspirational talks where appropriate
Peer Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides friendship and guidance to juniors - Helps junior settle into the BZSE course - Inspires juniors to inculcate social entrepreneurial traits and values - Could work on co-curricular projects with juniors as a form of mentoring 	Alumni Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducts sharing sessions to inspire juniors - Provides advise on further studies, career choices based on personal experiences - Helps juniors widen social network by introducing appropriate contacts and friends

Figure 6.4 BZSE Mentoring Model – Mentor Roles

Peer Mentoring for ALL students

Peer mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2004; Miller, 2002) could be adopted as a mentoring strategy catering to all students who would like to be mentored. It is suggested that the peer mentors would consist of the senior students who are themselves being mentored by a chief mentor. The peer mentor begins his/her role in the second year of the course, after having successfully “pitched” for a chief mentor. The group mentoring approach (Herrera, Vang and Gale, 2002; Saito and Blyth, 1992) could be adopted where the peer mentor is responsible for three to four peers.

A separate peer mentoring structure would need to be in place. Regular weekly meetings for mentors and mentees would have to be scheduled by the school to ensure availability of timetable and venue. The peer mentoring committee that comprises the team of peer mentors would be responsible for formulating the plans and programmes for the sessions. The committee would be given oversight by the mentor coordinator.

Students invited to “Seek Out” Mentors

This idea of allowing students to “pitch” for mentors resulted from discussions with respondents regarding “who should mentor” and “who should be mentored”. It is a response to the issue of the right to choose raised by both potential mentor and mentee respondents. Almost all respondents prefer mentees to have the initiative and desire to seek out their mentors. Some studies on mentoring relationships also suggest that the most effective relationships are those where the mentee is highly proactive and the mentor relatively reactive (Clutterbuck, 2004).

The model proposes that at the beginning of the second year, the learning mentor will invite interested students for the “pitch for your mentor” scheme. As highlighted earlier, three groups of students will be invited for the scheme, and the “pitching” is only catered for the *chief mentor* category. The whole process will be facilitated by the BZSE mentor committee chaired by the mentor coordinator. More details of the BZSE mentor committee will be discussed in later sections in this chapter.

A potential problem could arise where there is overwhelming response by students wanting to pitch for a mentor, or where some mentors may be more popular than others, and students may not be accepted by their preferred mentors. Students who are unsuccessful in their initial pitch could then opt to pitch to another mentor, or decide not to participate in the programme. This constraint due to limited mentoring resources should be communicated to all students during the introduction of the BZSE mentoring model.

“Chief Mentors” for interested and targeted students

The idea of a chief mentor was also suggested by research respondents as a creative response to harness the wealth of expertise and knowledge available through the panel of mentors. The notion of the *chief mentor* as one who journeys with the mentee and develops a personal relationship with him/her is similar to that of the traditional mentor. In the course of the two years of the relationship, the chief mentor aims to both support and challenge the mentee, sometimes leading the mentee to areas beyond his/her comfort zones. However, it is not possible for the chief mentor to be an expert in all areas, and hence, in areas where he/she feels a consultant mentor may be in a better position to advise or coach the mentee he/she would then introduce the mentee to the consultant mentor for the specific purpose. In this way, the chief mentor helps the mentee develop his/her network of developmental mentors (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Kram, 1985).

The chief mentor also assists the mentee in designing his/her developmental plan, giving opportunities for the creation of a portfolio that evidences the nurturing of social entrepreneurial skills, traits and values through various exposures and involvement. Some of the more common types of evidence include participation in competitions, pitching for grants and funding, or even setting up his/her own social enterprise.

As the chief mentor is required to have an understanding of the mentee’s academic as well as other developmental aspects, it would be appropriate for faculty members to play this role. It is also possible for external parties to take on the role provided they are available, well updated and able to keep abreast with the developments in the course.

Consultant Mentors

The consultant mentor is also a notion recommended by the interview participants, and could be either in-house (expertise from the polytechnic) or external expertise invited to join the panel of mentors based on their specialised skills, experience in founding and running a social enterprise, and their influence in the social entrepreneurial sector. The criteria of interest in youth development, availability over specified periods, like-mindedness with the vision and objectives of the BZSE course would also be key considerations in the selection of consultant mentors for the panel.

The consultant mentors could be invited by the chief mentor to help a mentee focus on specialised areas as part of the developmental plan. This could include coaching for special projects, offering consultancy and advice on proposals or helping students understand certain aspects in their specialised areas. The duration of commitment to any one mentee would need to be agreed between the chief mentor, the consultant mentor, and the mentor coordinator under a mentoring agreement.

The consultant mentors could also be invited by the BZSE course manager to give guest lectures on topics of their specialisation within the curriculum, or by the learning mentor to give motivational talks. These various commitments could be agreed upon during the discussion of the mentoring contract.

The Role of the alumni

As a course that is unique and the first of its kind, the BZSE graduates who will form the alumni have a special role to play in helping to further shape the course with regards to industry expectations and demand. They are also looked upon as role models by their juniors, and could share with them their own experiences, including successes and struggles, and introduce them to the network of contacts that they have developed. They will form an important part of the network of mentors in the BZSE mentoring model, and their role could include motivational talks and sharing during some of the

mentoring platforms organized by the learning mentor. Some of them could even play the role of a chief or consultant mentor, depending on their experience, maturity and availability.

Appointment of a Mentor Coordinator

The role of the mentor coordinator was introduced in Chapter 3 and summarised in Figure 6.4. It is envisaged that the mentor coordinator would be the driving force behind the model, and sets the direction and momentum of the BZSE mentoring model. It is a key management role that requires a certain level of influence and authority in the organisation. As part of his/her functions would include the recruitment and facilitation of the panel of mentors as well as giving oversight to the matching process, the mentor coordinator would need to be able to command respect and garner support from faculty, students, industry and community.

It would be important that the mentor coordinator believes in the effectiveness of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002) and situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) as the process of communication, development and learning for the panel of mentors. Regular meetings with the panel of mentors for purposes of updates and building a common understanding of culture and ethics within the BZSE mentoring model would be required.

The leadership, vision and passion of the mentor coordinator, potentially has a significant impact on the future and sustainability of the BZSE mentoring model.

4. FORMING THE BZSE MENTORS PANEL AND NETWORK

The basis of the BZSE mentors panel stems from Kram's (1985) typology of "relationship constellations" or "developmental networks" (Higgins and Kram, 2001) where individuals rely on not just one but multiple individuals for developmental support, and the relationships are simultaneously held. The formation of the panel comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds is a significant and consequential

component of the model, and can be a complex process, involving an understanding of the culture of the department, the suitability of the personalities, the expertise of the mentor candidates, the delicate process of matching mentors with mentees, and a vision that attracts the services of the mentors, affirming reciprocal benefits.

Selection of Mentors

Some important considerations in the selection of mentors include the willingness of the candidate to be a mentor, and the perceived importance of the role accorded by management (Cunningham, 2005). It is proposed that the BZSE mentor committee comprising the HMS director, the mentor coordinator, the BZSE course manager, the learning mentor and some chief mentors will form the consultative body in the selection process for the panel of mentors. They will endorse the list of candidates to be invited to join the panel. A personal face-to-face conversation between one of the members of the BZSE mentor committee and the mentor candidate is recommended as an introduction and invitation to the BZSE panel of mentors.

The committee could also recommend the mentor role based on an understanding of the mentor candidate's inclinations, expertise and experiences. The definitions of the various roles in the BZSE panel of mentors have been highlighted in the previous sections. Apart from the differentiating criteria of the various roles described below, the key traits for each role will include a strong interest in youth and their development, strong ethical principles, availability and commitment to the role, and identification with the culture and values of the department, in this case, HMS.

The *chief mentor* can be a generalist with a keen passion in youth development. He/she should ideally be someone who is people-oriented, a good listener, genuine, inquisitive and interesting, able to balance between providing support for the mentee and challenging him/her to greater heights beyond the comfort zone. The ultimate goal of the chief mentor is for the mentee to attain a level of confidence and maturity to be independent, and able to lead and mentor others. Student respondents have rated availability and commitment high on the scale of the criteria of their preferred mentors.

In this regard, appropriate faculty members may be most suited for the role, though mentor candidates outside the faculty could also be considered if they meet the criteria.

The *consultant mentor* is identified based on his/her expertise and specific experiences. These could include the ability to coach the mentee on writing business proposals, building financial models, imparting the knack for business acumen, professional communication skills, networking abilities or even having experienced failure in business. These specialities complement what students learn in their academic curriculum, and help them to apply the knowledge in “real world” situations. This role is appropriate for external parties such as the social entrepreneurs and industry partners, though some faculty members may also be more suited in this role rather than as chief mentors.

The *peer mentor* would comprise those being mentored by the chief mentors. At the onset, those who would like to “pitch” for a mentor would need to abide by the criteria that they will be peer mentors to their juniors. They could come from one of three groups of students highlighted earlier. Their role in peer mentoring is part of the tiered mentoring process in their own development (Fowler and Muckert, 2004), and their discussions with their own mentors could help them in the peer mentoring role.

The *alumni mentor*, another term I have coined for this model, would comprise the BZSE graduates who have embarked on further studies or on a career path. They need not have been peer mentors previously, but should have a keen interest in developing the next generation of BZSE students. Their current knowledge and experience with regards to further education and career opportunities, and their own journey as a BZSE student would make them good role models for the current cohort of students. Depending on their level of availability, experience, maturity and commitment, they could play the role of chief or consultant mentor as well.

The Mentoring Contract

The notion of a mentoring contract may raise concerns regarding whether over-formalising what is meant to be a relationship-based journey could result in a process

that is dictated by the bureaucracy of a contract (Clutterbuck, 2004). Yet on the other hand, poorly defined agreements where the mentor and mentee are not quite sure what to expect and what the relationship seeks to achieve, would most probably result in a frustrating and ineffective experience.

Especially in the context of the BZSE mentoring model, with the added complexity in the various roles of the different mentors, it may be necessary to have the job descriptions of the roles of each mentor clearly spelt out. These guidelines on which mentoring relationships should be founded would be best drafted by the BZSE mentor committee, comprising individuals from various levels of the institution, and to be evaluated after a specified period in use. They would serve as an overarching framework which should also allow space for flexibility and adjustments (Cunningham, 2005).

On the individual basis, chief mentors and peer mentors in particular, should also have personal agreements with their mentees on how they would like the relationship to progress and a template for such agreements could also be provided by the BZSE mentor committee. These agreements could include expectations, well-defined goals and objectives, evidence of accomplishment of objectives, learning resources and strategies, means for validating the learning, frequency and nature of meetings and progress reviews (Clutterbuck, 2004; Zachary, Daloz and Books24x, 2000).

With regards to consultant mentors, it may be more appropriate for the chief mentors to work out the scope depending on the specific need and circumstance, but a general template provided by the committee that could be modified would also be helpful.

The matching process

The scope of matching in the BZSE mentoring model would include matching of peer mentors, chief mentors and consultant mentors with the respective mentees. The matching process is a delicate one, and the tension between suitability of mentors for the specific mentee and the preferred choice of mentor by the mentee, would need to be carefully considered. The other dilemma is the option for all students to be given an

opportunity to be mentored, but having limited resources in terms of availability of suitable mentors. The question on “suitability” begs further judgement – suitability in the opinion of the mentor, the mentee, or even the BZSE mentor committee? This has resulted in the *pitch for your mentor* scheme to be introduced in the BZSE mentoring model.

The pitching process allows discretion for all parties. Potential mentees are given the opportunity to select from a panel of mentors, the mentor has the chance to meet and hear the mentee’s “pitch” before deciding on accepting and starting the mentoring relationship. The BZSE mentor committee plays the role of selection of mentors and some of the mentees (the TCP students and students on the fringe), and would have been able to prepare the mentors and potential mentees regarding the different needs and attention required by both parties.

Inevitably, there may be some who want to be mentored but are turned down by their mentors of choice, in which case, there may be a need for arbitration by the BZSE mentoring committee. In cases where the demand far exceeds the supply of mentors, some prospective mentees will have to be turned away, and considerations to expand the mentor pool may have to be discussed. This could be a potential problem if the scheme becomes well accepted and demanded. Such a constraint should be communicated to the students at the onset of the introduction to the model.

A few respondents from the interviews suggested that mentors and mentees complete personality tests which could be made available for both parties, to assist in the matching process. Mentoring literature indicate inconclusive findings on the correlation between personality traits and rewarding mentoring relationships. In fact, in a research conducted by Elizabeth Alleman and her colleague Isadore Newman, the results seem to imply that it was not essential for the mentor and mentee to have similar personalities or backgrounds. Another study by Engström concluded that mentoring relationships were seen as most successful when both mentor and mentee demonstrated high extroversion and a high level of agreeableness (defined as encompassing likeability, friendliness, social adaptability, altruism, affection, compliance). Successful relations were also those where the mentees were more conscientious than the mentor and assumes

ownership of the process and an openness to experiencing the mentoring process (Clutterbuck, 2004, p. 66).

Nevertheless, personality tests could still be conducted, and an exercise where mentors provide details about their background, expertise, experiences, interests and hobbies, and what they may be looking for in prospective mentees; and mentees highlight their aspirations, interest and inclinations, what they hope to learn from the mentors, and how they see their role in the mentoring relationship, could be administered.

In the case of the peer mentors, the BZSE mentor committee would be responsible for assigning the matches based on the results of the personality tests and the profiles of both peer mentors and their juniors. For the *pitch for your mentor* scheme, the personality test results and profiles could better inform the mentees on whom they would like to “pitch” for as their mentor, and for the mentors to have an idea of the potential fit if they were to accept the mentee and commence the mentoring relationship.

Terms of Reference of the BZSE Mentor Committee

From the various requirements described above, the BZSE mentor committee plays an important role in moderating and endorsing the BZSE mentoring process. As many of the more detailed roles and functions should be drafted and decided by the committee, it would be helpful to propose the terms of reference for the BZSE mentor committee here.

The BZSE mentor committee should be chaired by the mentor coordinator, with the director of HMS as the advisor. The members would include the BZSE course manager, the appointed learning mentor, and one or two others who may be playing the role of chief mentor.

The BZSE mentor committee would view its functions as being to:

- (a) draft the terms of reference for the mentor coordinator role
- (b) draft the terms of reference for the learning mentor role
- (c) draft the overarching job scope for the various mentor roles

- (d) provide a template for the individual agreements between the chief mentor and mentee
- (e) provide a template for the agreement between the peer mentor and mentee
- (f) provide a template for the agreement between the chief mentor and consultant mentor
- (g) deliberate and endorse the selection process for the BZSE panel of mentors
- (h) select mentees from the TCP scheme and students considered on the fringe
- (i) approve funds for necessary programmes and expenditure, including induction and training for mentors and mentees, and other related costs
- (j) design and facilitate the evaluation process

BZSE Mentors Community of Practice and Situated Learning

The process of forming the BZSE mentors panel involves the identification of like-minded individuals with a keen interest in youth development and other similar values. As mentoring is a concept that has a different interpretation and meaning to different people, induction and training are crucial to help this group of mentors from diverse backgrounds and experiences have a common understanding of the rationale and purpose of the BZSE mentoring programme, and to have a general sense of the objectives and direction of the mentoring process. This would mark the beginning of the formation of the community of practice for the panel of mentors, and in itself is a situated learning environment (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002).

It was affirming to hear from the director of HMS the suggestion of engaging consultants as trainers for the BZSE mentors as part of staff development, and that the training could be extended to external mentors in the panel as well. The induction session could also include an introduction to the BZSE mentoring model, discussions on the preparations needed, some helpful ground rules, understanding constraints and apprehensions, and some tips on how to start the mentoring relationship. As not all invited to join the panel may have had experiences in being a mentor for youth, subsequent training sessions by mentoring consultants would be useful in helping to

prepare the panel in understanding the expectations and requirements of being a youth mentor.

Subsequent meetings for the panel of mentors would be organized by the mentor coordinator. These sessions could be opportunities for updates and sharing of mentoring experiences, and provide a platform for learning and development of mentoring skills for individuals within this community of practice. This community also offers support for one another, especially in the rather challenging expectation of multiplicity of roles for the BZSE mentor, and could be a significant player in facilitating the sustainability of the BZSE mentoring model.

5. SUMMARISING THE NEW MODEL'S CONNECTIONS

In summary, the new model presents the *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* and attempts to significantly strengthen the existing components within the BZSE framework, by formalising the involvement of mentors where appropriate, and introducing the role of the learning mentor in helping to facilitate sessions of reflexive learning.

It introduces a more systematic personalised learning plan design for all students through the form of the BZSE learners' roadmap and sessions where the learning mentor could guide students in the development and review of the roadmap. This proposition aims to help students reflect on the BZSE learning journey from their point of entry in Year 1, and to highlight areas of integration in the formal and informal education of the BZSE framework more intentionally.

It also presents the *layered-mentoring strategy* that helps all students to have an opportunity to be mentored through the peer-mentoring scheme, and avails more personalised mentoring through the introduction of the *pitch for your mentor* scheme involving the matching with a chief mentor for the three groups of students described earlier.

The model also suggests the formation of a BZSE mentor committee and the appointment of the role of the mentor coordinator to oversee the recruitment of the panel of mentors and the matching processes, and to support its administration and sustainability.

6. EVALUATION AND RENEWAL

As the BZSE mentoring model construct is a pilot for evaluation, there should be plans to conduct an evaluation of the model after a certain period of trial. Depending on the objectives, scale and scope of the polytechnic's requirements, the data sources and methods adopted for evaluation need to be agreed upon. A full evaluation of the model could involve all stakeholders including the school management, mentor coordinator, learning mentor, panel of mentors, mentees, and even faculty and students not participating in the programme. This could be a case study programme evaluation applying a mixed methods qualitative approach using surveys, focus groups and interviews (Parsons *et al*, 2008).

The evaluation could focus on the process or the outcome (Rhodes, 1999), or both. A process evaluation establishes whether a programme has been implemented as designed and intended, while an outcome evaluation reviews the effects of the programme on the various stakeholders or even the greater community. In the former case, to evaluate the process would include, amongst others, the verifying of meeting sessions, period of mentoring, and number of meetings. An outcome evaluation could include questions on the social entrepreneurship traits, values and skills acquired; size of network developed; and ability to integrate formal and informal education experiences.

Further research could also be conducted on specific topics such as peer mentoring, mentoring relationships, and how mentors are coping with the multiplicity of their roles.

When investigating whether improved academic performance would be a desired outcome of the mentoring model, it was interesting that not all respondents agreed that academic performance should be a motivation or desired outcome of mentoring. They

believed that academic improvement as an outcome would be a derivative that arises from the positive values and traits cultivated by the mentoring process. This could be another area for evaluation.

Evaluation should be carried out at the end of one semester of implementation, or possibly following a full academic year, and evaluation outcomes would be most helpful in refining the model for the next semester. Longitudinal studies could also be used to understand the development of the mentee over the period of the three year course.

CHAPTER SEVEN - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The proposal for the BZSE mentoring model presented in Chapter 6 is a pilot for evaluation. As the research concludes, I would like to look at how the model could achieve its intended aims, constraints that the model poses, and recommendation of a phased implementation strategy. I would also like to underline some considerations for the sustainability of the model, its contribution to professional relevance and how dissemination and communication to parties involved will be undertaken. This has truly been an enriching experience with numerous learning moments for a novice researcher, and I attempt to highlight some reflections from the research journey here as well.

1. HOW CAN THE MODEL ACHIEVE THE INTENDED AIMS?

The thesis set out five aims at the beginning of the research, which were later expanded to eight, after including inputs and contributions from respondents during the focus group and interview sessions. This section will summarise on how aspects of the model could serve to achieve the intended aims of the research.

The BZSE mentoring model has intentionally focused on the development of a culture that is conducive for students in their learning journey over the three years. The proposed network of BZSE mentors with diverse skills, inclinations and experiences could help to enhance the expertise available and enrich learning styles within the diploma. Apart from specifically benefiting mentees by enlarging the range of social entrepreneurial traits, values and skills from which they can choose, the panel also adds to the professionalism of the BZSE diploma, expanding social capital through the relationships with a wider network of individuals specialised in the area of social entrepreneurship. The more intensive mentoring relationships also allow the mentor to help the mentee make necessary connections between theoretical understandings and real life experience. Furthermore, the introduction of the roles of the *chief mentor* and *consultant mentor* aims to provide more focus to nurture and stretch the students.

The *chief mentor* also helps the mentee develop his/her potential to align with the life goals and interests discovered through the BZSE mentoring roadmap. Where

appropriate, the *chief mentor* also introduces *consultant mentors* to mentees to cultivate them in areas of interest that have been identified. The condition that the mentee who has successfully pitched for a mentor should be a peer mentor to his/her juniors is an attempt to inculcate a mentoring mind-set in the mentees. It is hoped that those who will be mentored by *chief mentors* can realise the wealth of benefits in mentoring relationships and be inspired to be mentors to their peers and others in the course of their life journey.

The “*pitch for your mentor*” scheme was designed specifically to allow for the flexibility to achieve a match favourable to both mentors and mentees. It also taps into a skill that BZSE students should possess, which is the ability to make a genuine and impressive pitch. Though there may be some initial challenges, as will be highlighted in the next section, the concept is the outcome of discussions on a matching solution that caters to several constraints such as limited mentoring resources, flexibility in choice, and giving all interested students a chance.

This *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* is an attempt to achieve the aim of giving all students a chance to have a mentoring experience and at the same time, focus on some who may need more attention. Platforms for all students conducted by a learning mentor are available at every level. *Peer mentoring* is also open for all students who would like to participate. For those with special interests, talents and needs, the “*pitch for your mentor*” scheme is available for more personal and intensive mentoring relationships. Sessions to introduce the rationale, aims and concept of the BZSE mentoring model are incorporated to help students better understand the learning strategies in the BZSE course, and to make more informed choices as to whether they would like to seek out a mentor. The annual review sessions also allow them to make adjustments to their plans in alignment with their own developmental pace and progress. The BZSE mentoring roadmap and various platforms that cater to the personal development plan and reflexive learning in the model enable students to pause and explicitly connect what they learn within the curriculum and other activities in the BZSE course.

In essence, the proposed BZSE mentoring model seeks to meet its objectives by formalising the mentoring relationships within an academic setting. This arrangement aims to provide clarity to the process for both the mentor and mentee, by allowing them to negotiate a learning agreement with broad guidelines and moderated by the BZSE mentoring committee. The structures proposed in the model, including the matching of mentors to mentees, the Mentoring Contract, the BZSE Mentoring Roadmap, hope to promote sensitively the mentoring relationships, grounded on clear established values, and serve as a safety net for those unable to develop on their own.

The outcome of the multi-dimensional mentoring model is not so much to implement processes efficiently, but mostly to involve learning to integrate classroom knowledge and applying them in the context of the community and the needs of its beneficiaries. Therefore, the mentor's role should be to lead and direct in the early stages of the relationships. At a later stage, the mentee is encouraged to be more proactive and re-negotiate to allow for changes in circumstances, or to take a necessary course of action. Therefore this model will call for flexibility for this type of learning process and arrangements.

2. CONSTRAINTS OF THE PROPOSED MENTORING MODEL

The relationship between the mentors and mentees is a key ingredient in the success of the mentoring model. However, as mentors come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, there will inevitably be gaps in the perception of both the mentors and mentees in their understanding of expectations and outcomes of the programme, as well as the relationships' expectations between them. The management of expectation gaps can possibly generate frustration, ambiguity and at times confusion in the mentoring process.

Furthermore, one of the critical success factors of the BZSE mentoring model is the availability of suitable mentoring resources. Management representatives in the focus group and interviews were concerned that the selection criteria for potential mentors needed to be rather stringent as the role has a significant impact on the development of the mentee. The high standards required would likely pose as a deterrent to an already

limited pool of willing participants. The key person in the mentoring model is that of the *chief mentor*. Though this position is most likely to be filled by faculty members, it was also discussed that not all faculty members may be suitable to play the role. As in most other functions, staff considered suitable are usually already managing multi-portfolios and responsibilities, and may not be available to take on additional roles. Furthermore, the BZSE mentoring model has its peculiar demands, and it takes time for all interested parties involved to fully appreciate its value and benefits. Management support and the priority given in resource consideration are needed for the viability of the mentoring model.

Another key aspect of the rationale in the developmental concept of mentoring is the possible substitution of the time, demands and often long duration of the relationships expected of the traditional mentoring process, by having a *chief mentor* to manage a range of mentors to play various roles and share different expertise and experiences. This mentoring model assumes that the breadth of relationship could perhaps supplement the depth of relationships between the traditional mentor and mentee. There is no certainty that the network of mentors will make available time and resources to nurture their charge, given that they see themselves as playing only a part of the mentoring process.

While there is no formal mentoring system for students at the polytechnic, there are, what one respondent considers “teaching and learning experiences peppered with mentoring”. These various “mentor” assignments are sometimes handled by the same staff.

Erm ... I think what we have is more a desire to have the teaching and learning experience peppered with mentoring ... that means the same person who does the teaching .. does the coaching, does the mentoring ... you know everyone of us actually needs to be able to span that whole range ... er ... why I say that is because .. I mean ... exactly what you just said lah .. the same person ends up having to do a,b,c,d,e .. and that same person could be the lecturer, you know ... so I stand there and I lecture till the cows come home, the content here ... and then I step out there and I am your LO for this thing ... and then I step out there, and then I am your mentor for this TCP thing ... (Interview 2 In 838-844)

The BZSE mentoring model seeks to better utilise competing resources, impact students, and could become a mentoring benchmark by helping to formalise a

systematic model for the polytechnic. Otherwise, it would be viewed as yet another additional burden on the faculty, and may thus be counter-productive instead.

The “*pitch for your mentor*” scheme, while deemed to be a creative response to the problem of insufficient mentors, may create some challenges that need to be considered. There may be some amongst the available pool of mentors who are likely to be extremely popular with students, and where almost every student interested in the scheme would want him/her to be the mentor. On the other hand, there may be others who are less sought-after. The possibility that the demand for mentors far exceeds the pool available could result in some potential mentees not having a mentor at all. Hence, the proposal in Chapter 6 that such constraints should be communicated to the students at the onset of the introduction to the model is a logical one. It was also suggested that an exercise could be administered, where mentors provide details about their background, expertise, experiences and interests, and their requirements about their prospective mentees, while mentees highlight their aspirations, interest, inclinations and their hope to learn from the mentoring relationship.

The pool of mentors may likely include some faculty members in management capacities. It may be perceived that mentees of these mentors may have greater access to information and network due to their influence. On the other hand, these mentors may be less available to develop deeper mentoring relationships. Similarly, such considerations should also be communicated during the introduction to the scheme so that students are able to make well-informed choices.

The requirements of time and efforts in nurturing the mentee will put to test the environment and culture that HMS needs to cultivate beyond a mechanistic approach. This may not only place a strain on faculty resources, but the evaluation and change in culture may not materialise due to the uncertainty of managing change in the environment. Many factors are at play, including the heavy workload of faculty members, the demand on projects and exams, the buy-in from management, which could either hinder or facilitate the mentoring culture in the school. The pilot phase merely puts in place a foundation of the shape and structure of the model, and the challenge lies in its actual implementation and the concerns for sustainability. The

following two sections discuss some considerations in phasing the implementation, and structures and measures that could help in the sustainability of the model. Over time, more issues and shortcomings will likely emerge, and the model will need to be evaluated as to its longer term feasibility.

3. PHASING THE IMPLEMENTATION

The *multi-dimensional mentoring approach* of the BZSE mentoring model comprises the proposed BZSE mentoring roadmap or PDP, peer mentoring scheme, the chief mentor, and other mentor roles within the developmental network of mentors. As with most new initiatives, the model would require buy-in from all parties involved, and a phased implementation is proposed, to monitor the response from participants in the initial phases, and to build up the momentum for the subsequent stages. The phased implementation strategy also allows more time for preparation on areas that require more attention due to resource constraints.

Forming the BZSE Mentor Committee

The first step upon completion of the construction of the new model would be to present the proposed model to HMS management, and to recommend the formation of a BZSE mentor committee to oversee the policies, implementation and continued operations of the model. The suggestion of the phased implementation strategy will also be presented to the committee and the implementation decision left to their discretion. The description of the terms of reference for the BZSE mentor committee is detailed in Chapter 6.

Launching BZSE peer mentoring

One of the relatively less complicated structures to implement is the *peer mentoring scheme*. For a start, student leaders could be selected to form the peer mentoring committee that would oversee the BZSE peer mentoring structure where senior BZSE students could be mentors to their juniors. The peer mentors would need to be approved by the BZSE mentor committee and given oversight by the BZSE mentor coordinator.

As most student respondents from the focus group interview discussions were supportive of peer mentoring, it could also be a strategic intent to generate interest in the BZSE mentoring model and at the same time, not expanding on too much of faculty resources. Peer mentoring is also a helpful socialisation approach to facilitate new students into the culture of the BZSE course.

The BZSE Mentoring Roadmap

The BZSE mentoring roadmap would require consultation with the Teaching and Learning Centre on adopting a suitable personal development plan. Once the design is endorsed by the BZSE mentor committee, the learning mentor could introduce the BZSE mentoring roadmap to the students, and this could be timed to be implemented in the first few weeks of the new academic year. The mentoring roadmap could be executed independent of the other mentoring structures, as it caters to all students in a classroom setting.

Terms of Reference and Mentoring Contracts

The BZSE mentor committee would need to draft the terms of reference and mentoring contract templates for the respective mentors in the panel as proposed in Chapter 6. These documents should be ready by the time the committee sets out to meet and invite suitable potential mentors to join the BZSE mentor panel.

Establishing the panel of Mentors

This would be the most intensive and time-consuming phase as the BZSE mentor committee deliberates on the suitability of candidates to be invited into the panel. It would require face-to-face interactions with potential mentors to establish their interest, suitability and availability. The panel would comprise chief mentors, consultant mentors, peer mentors and alumni mentors as proposed in Chapter 6. The roles that would require more stringent selection as well as convincing for those considered suitable, would be that of the *chief mentor* and *consultant mentor*. When the pool of mentors are confirmed, training and induction sessions for the new BZSE mentors

would be necessary to develop a shared vision and common understanding of the BZSE mentoring model.

Pitch for your mentor scheme

This would be the final phase in the implementation of the BZSE mentoring model. Both potential mentors and mentees will need to be given an introduction to the model and the *pitch for your mentor* scheme. Aspirations, constraints and challenges could be addressed to give participants a clearer understanding of the selection process.

Evaluation

It is proposed that evaluation of the model be conducted after one year of implementation. If the phased implementation approach is adopted, evaluation could be done on the different phases separately. A full model evaluation can be conducted after all phases have been implemented. The BZSE mentor committee would oversee the design of the evaluation studies and the facilitation of the evaluation.

4. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MODEL

One of the main concerns in implementing any new model is the consideration for sustainability. It may be possible to garner sufficient interest or even “hype” when the model is first launched, but without a proper sustainability plan, the whole concept may fail once initial enthusiasm fizzles out.

The formation of the BZSE mentor committee comprising management and faculty is a formal structure that gives the model validity and credibility. It also sends a signal regarding the priority the BZSE mentoring model is given, under the purview of the school. All key processes in the model will have to be endorsed by the committee, as detailed in the terms of reference. The suggested roles of the mentor coordinator and learning mentor also gives a focus to the specific functions needed to provide the leadership and administration of the mentoring model.

As highlighted above, the constraint in the availability and suitability of mentoring resources could pose a challenge to the sustainability of the model. Management has indicated that it would be important to include mentoring qualities as part of the criteria for staff recruitment. While mentoring, in its altruistic nature, relies more on intrinsic motivations than extrinsic rewards, and even respondents have argued that attracting mentors through tangible incentives would be tantamount to introducing values against the grain of the mentoring concept, some consideration is needed in terms of recognition of efforts and the perceived priority management places on the role.

In terms of reward system, the last thing is to say ... or ... because I am a mentor I must be paid more or whatever ... no such thing ... and that is really really it's all about heart matter. Those who want to be a mentor it must be because your heart is there, you want to do it out of passion, out of interest, out of care ... the last thing is to dangle the carrot and say ... this is your reward ... you got to be paid more ... no such thing(Interview 10 ln 510-514)

The management of HMS has given their support and endorsement for the construction of the model and is prepared to cater resources in terms of training and priority. It is also noted that the interest and willingness to mentor and develop students are usually indicators of high performing and motivated staff.

It is also important for mentors to realise the reciprocity in mentoring. A key benefit to mentors is that mentoring enriches their own learning journey (Cullingford, 2006b; Healy and Welchert, 1990). It was also affirming to hear from the social entrepreneurs themselves why they may be interested to be mentors despite their busy schedules:

the mentor's reward is a student who eventually ... first ... the process .. the reward is .. the student is very enquiring ... and the student is interested .. I think that is the immediate reward ... to me that will be a nice reward ... the mentee becomes a useful person ... is actively contributing to society while still in the class ... that is also a reward ... and the reward that this was his mentee and ... he did very well ... look at his mentee ... this mentor produced this mentee ... and ... of course he will feel motivated to want to do better than the other mentors ... "my mentee did better" ... so a kind of indirect competitiveness can be interesting ... and a recognition that this is your baby and your baby grew up well that could be interesting too ... and so ... you motivate the mentor that way ... (Interview 5 ln 421-428)

... well to me is having more of such people around ... such social entrepreneurs around ... I mean why I want to be involved, let's say ... at the end of the day, is to have more social entrepreneurs around... ok .. I mean ... you want to see these students grow into real social entrepreneurs ... not just a diploma to hang on the wall .. so I think we need a lot more social entrepreneurs ... so for me ... that is a reward in itself if I can develop more of them ...and like you say, some might even come and work for me ... why not? (Interview 4 ln 611-617)

New forms of communications with mentors could be introduced, and could facilitate mentoring relationships in the midst of busy schedules and unavailability for face-to-

face meetings. E-mentoring, internet conferencing, tele-mentoring and social networking connections are some means that could enable more convenient communication strategies (Clutterbuck, 2004; Miller, 2002; Tarbitt, 2006).

A community of practice (Wenger, 1998) of BZSE mentors is proposed to be formed to provide the necessary training, exchange of experiences and support for the mentors in the panel. The community of practice could be further expanded to include mentees, and success stories, and even challenges encountered could be shared as a form of inspiration and support. There is a likelihood that mentoring advocates could emerge from the community of practice and they could help raise the awareness and profile of the BZSE mentoring model.

Though discussions highlighted that academic performance was not an explicit aim of the model, if it could be evidenced that mentees generally perform better academically and have improved higher order thinking abilities, the likelihood of the propagation of the model both within HMS and even at the polytechnic level is optimistic.

Sustainability of the model would be more or less assured when it can be seen that mentoring has become accepted and deemed a part of the school culture for all parties involved.

5. PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE

Even as mentoring is finding its place in professional practice, the definition of the term “mentor”, which has been used so ubiquitously, remains nebulous and has different meanings to different people (Cullingford, 2006a). The BZSE mentoring model hopes to clarify the understanding of a myriad of mentoring concepts and definitions within its context, as it presents a multi-faceted approach to mentoring. The panel of mentors and the various types of mentoring functions, provide the sometimes conflicting roles needed in the course of the development plan for the mentee. Hence, the mentor as guide, teacher, friend, role-model, coach, even disciplinarian, can be found within the network of developmental relationships introduced to the mentee.

Mentoring also contributes significantly to the improvement of social capital for mentors, students and the school (Miller, 2002). Mentors benefit through the interactions within the network between the academia, business and community arena, raising awareness of current issues and bringing relevance to the role of education within the BZSE course. In the case of students, the introduction of different mentors into their lives helps to expand their network, source of influence and connections with the real-world, enabling clearer directions in life goals, further education and career prospects.

The story of the student who initiated the “Soule” project is an example of such a beneficiary. His testimony on how the mentoring network has helped his idealistic dreams become a more tangible and workable project, and raising their profile through publicity and networking, makes a fine account to be shared during peer mentoring sessions. These relationships could also facilitate strategic alliances between the school and industry partners, adding professionalism to the course.

In the course of the research, it was highlighted that the design of assessments in the curriculum has an implication for how mentoring affects academic performance. Assessments that focus on testing of recall, concepts and theory may neglect higher order thinking and reflective abilities nurtured through the process of mentoring. A review of curriculum assessment with inputs from mentors, industry and institutions of higher learning may add to strengthening the BZSE curriculum assessment qualities.

Apart from the TCP programme focused on identifying and developing academically-performing students, there is no formal mentoring programme for students at the polytechnic. The BZSE mentoring model would serve to introduce a formal mentoring approach that is multi-dimensional, catering to the needs of the various interested parties, yet achieving aims that are commonly agreed.

Mentoring is a process that helps to inculcate lifelong learning for all participants. Mentors experience reciprocal learning from mentees, and at the same time, may need to keep themselves abreast of current knowledge and technology to be better equipped in their role. Mentees begin to understand that learning is beyond the curriculum, and especially in the context of the BZSE mentoring model, explicit connections between

formal and informal education are made which can help mentees better appreciate lifelong learning and enhance their personal development plan as part of the BZSE mentoring roadmap. The community of practice for BZSE mentors will encourage exchange of ideas and experiences, thereby igniting interest in lifelong learning within the community.

Personally, I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to explore and contribute to an area that has the potential of creating transformational change through education, which has also experienced recent phenomenal growth, and is in all likelihood, moving towards professionalism of practice (Clutterbuck, 2004; Colley, 2003; Cullingford, 2006b; Miller, 2002). My hope is that the BZSE mentoring model could be effectively implemented and evaluated, with outcomes demonstrating positive transformations within the community of practice.

6. DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

A summarised report elaborating the proposed BZSE mentoring model for evaluation, the recommendations for phased implementation and discussions of professional relevance from the research could be disseminated to the policy makers, BZSE management and faculty, panel of mentors and students. Policy makers in this case would comprise the director of HMS and the director of the Teaching and Learning Centre. BZSE management and faculty would consist of the BZSE course manager, assistant course manager and the faculty teaching BZSE modules. A more condensed version with relevant highlights could be communicated to the panel of mentors and students once management has approved of the proposal and the implementation approach. A detailed presentation of the model and implementation plans could be made to the BZSE mentor committee once it is approved to be formed.

PERSONAL “TAKEAWAYS”

I recall how I was trying to gather inputs and ideas for the construction of the BZSE mentoring model during the early stages of data collection at the faculty focus group

discussion. We arrived at points of frustration when participants wanted to know aspects of the model I had in mind, and were rather exasperated when I offered a blank slate.

L: If you are saying that the lecturer is going to be the mentor ... then can you clearly define ... sorry ... I need the definition ... can you clearly define ... what do I do as a lecturer ... and what do I do as a mentor?

Fac: Right ... it's not done yet at the moment ...(FG Faculty In 719-722)

There were moments when the research seemed to be getting nowhere as the torrent of comments and suggestions appeared to make little sense or headway. Looking back, though these dialogues may have been rather amusing, it was certainly no laughing matter at the point when I was trying to make sense of the whole picture myself. I later realised how precious the focus groups and interview data were, as I pieced together the trends of thought and rationale for the construction of the BZSE mentoring model. And I believe this is the satisfaction of qualitative grounded theory research, when the piece of art finally takes shape and form, when the montage is finally completed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

The role of teacher-researcher has allowed me to take a step back to reflect on the potential of mentoring in youth development and education. I could see how naturally the roles of mentor and educator could synergise, and with the introduction of other professionals and expertise, the promising possibilities for student development. This process has also helped to strengthen the understanding of theoretical concepts underpinning the experiential thrust in the mentoring model.

I have also been pondering over the motivations of a mentor. Behind the mentor who is willing to sacrifice time, personal attention and resources, usually with little extrinsic reward expected, is someone with an altruistic interest for the development of the mentee, who, hopefully emulates this same inspiration in the course of their lives. Though Jones (2006) highlighted that with the trend towards the professionalism of the role, reflected in systematic training, increased regulation and accreditation, the aspirations of mentoring may not maintain such levels of altruism, my hope is that the community of practice of BZSE mentors could sustain and inspire such values and motivations.

7. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

This research has enabled me to spend time to listen to the views and aspirations of different groups of participants, and to translate their inputs and my “dreams of transformative education” into a workable mentoring model. I am fascinated at how the grounded theory approach I adopted has enabled the process of conversion from inputs to ideas, from data to design, through a journey of investigation and discovery.

Moving on, if the pilot proves to be viable for implementation, the model could be replicated across the other six diplomas at HMS and with adaptations, possibly with the other diplomas within the polytechnic, and across institutions of higher learning. There would be peculiarities of each diploma that need to be considered in the respective mentoring concepts, but the structure and system could be extended to include mentors from the respective courses.

I trust this study will pave the way for further research that could be conducted on areas such as the co-relation between mentoring and academic performance, mentoring relationships within the developmental network, the impact of a multi-dimensional mentoring model, graduate outcomes as a result of the model, the development of the community of mentors, and other topics specific to the BZSE mentoring model in Singapore.

Hence, I hope the research has not only resulted in a model with clear potential to enhance the effectiveness of the BZSE course, but the new ideas and concepts introduced could contribute purposefully to the nature of professional mentoring practice both within NP and even, in the longer term, the Singaporean educational context more widely.

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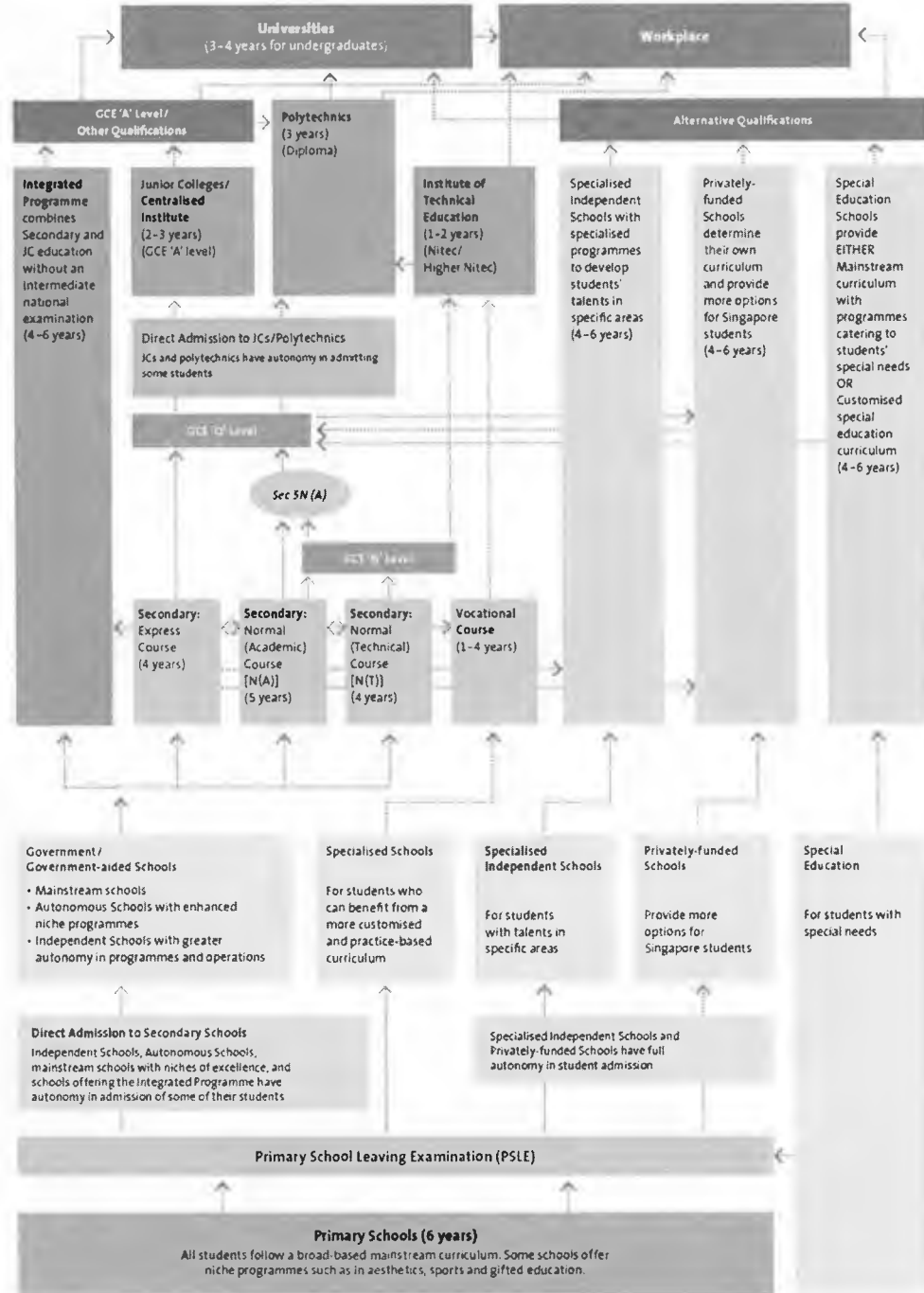
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- The Singapore Education Journey

(MOE, 2010)

The Singapore education journey



(Ng, 2007)

Learn to have a heart and turn a profit

Ngee Ann Poly's new course will prepare graduates for a career in social enterprise

By JANE NG

IT TAKES a special blend of skills to make money running a company with a deep-seated social conscience, but a new course at Ngee Ann Polytechnic hopes to produce graduates who can do just that.

Ngee Ann Poly's new diploma in business and social enterprise, which is among a handful of courses to be introduced in April, will also train students interested in working with the money-making arm of a charity.

The term "social enterprise" refers to businesses, big or small, designed to help society.

Their profits may go towards helping the disadvantaged, for instance, by providing services to the disabled or former prisoners.

The course aims to provide graduates with the right mix of skills to understand both social problems and turn a profit.

The director of the school of humanities at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Mrs Choo Cheh Hoon, said there is a growing demand for professionals trained in both business and social enterprise.

"Many young people are keen to make a difference but passion is not enough. They need the skill-sets as well," she said.

"Many of them are trained in just one area, either social science or business. We want to train a hybrid professional who has an understanding of business fundamentals and an element of training in community services," she said.

She believes this is an important area that is still not fully developed here.

"Many voluntary welfare organisations that have a social enterprise arm may employ people who are not fully trained in that area. There are also a growing number of profit-making companies who are more socially aware these days and they have a corporate social responsibility arm," Mrs Choo said.

Students in the three-year course will get a foundation in subjects like business fundamentals, crisis management and the law.

They will also undergo an internship in their final year.

Graduates will be able to work as community development officers, marketing or corporate communication officers or human resource executives in non-profit or for-profit companies.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic will also offer a new diploma in international supply chain management, a course on efficiently coordinating the moving of a product from supplier to customer.

jnong@aph.com.sg

PASSION AND SKILLS

"We want to train a hybrid professional who has an understanding of business fundamentals and an element of training in community services."

MRS CHOO CHEH HOON, director of the school of humanities at Ngee Ann Poly

Poly plugs gap with new diploma course in business and social enterprise

LIN YANQIN

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THEY have the passion to run a sustainable business, but not the skills. They also lack support. These were some of the problems confronting social enterprises that a committee recently identified – and now, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) will take a step towards addressing these issues.

Its School of Humanities is offering a new diploma in business and social enterprise. For its first intake next year, the school plans to take in 40 students for the three-year programme, which will cover a mix of business and social enterprise

modules from the principles of accounting to non-profit organisation management. Just as importantly, students will also be mentored by local and foreign social entrepreneurs and gain hands-on experience by working on social projects.

In their final year, students will be attached to private and public-sector organisations to work on a social enterprise project, either locally or overseas.

Said industry practitioner Alfie Othman, a member of the Social Enterprise Committee: "It's good that a specialised course is being offered and not something that's just part of a bigger course."

Mr Othman, the managing director of

Ikhlas Holdings, a catering company that hires ex-offenders and single mothers, added: "This course and the infrastructure recommended by the committee will encourage people to commit to and take a shot at the industry."

On the other hand, while teaching the basics of running a business "would be helpful", the passion and creativity that social entrepreneurship needs is not something to be taught in the classroom, said Lien Foundation Centre for Social Innovation centre director Carolyn Seah.

Its report last week on social enterprise recommended that more courses be launched at the tertiary level to teach the application

of business skills in a non-profit sector. "We can create all the infrastructure and support, but that's just half the component. You still need the heart component, which can't be taught," said Ms Seah.

NP's School of Humanities director Choo Cheh Hoon, underlining the "growth potential" of the sector, said the course could help make the sector more "robust" and equip students with a social heart with the right business skills.

A possible partner in the mentorship scheme is the Schwab Foundation for Social Enterprise, which also helps to find internships worldwide. The school will hold its annual open house next month.

(Arshad, 2007)

Businesses with a heart can expect more funding

High-level panel proposes ways to govt to help social enterprises succeed

BY ARTINA ARSHAD

SEVERAL ideas have been tossed up to grow Singapore's social enterprise scene and encourage businesses and entrepreneurs with a heart.

A high-level panel is recommending more money for start-ups, as well as leadership and business training to give these enterprises a better chance of success.

Also on the cards: an association and a development centre to provide networking opportunities, raise awareness and give the sector a higher profile so that more will be drawn to it.

The Social Enterprise Committee, set up in August last year, yesterday revealed ideas to boost the new and growing social enterprise scene here.

Social enterprise refers to revenue-generating businesses, big or small, that set out to meet certain social needs.

They may put their profits into helping the disadvantaged and marginalised, or make it their mission to employ or provide services to the disadvantaged – including the disabled, former prisoners, single parents, or older workers, among others.

These enterprises may be started by businessmen or charities, but always aim to fulfil unmet social needs.

The 15-member committee is led by Spring Singapore chairman Philip Yeo. The Government will consider its recommendations and respond in March next year.

The panel wants a Social Enterprise Association to become a focal point for the sector, by promoting the concept, raising awareness and educating those interested in it. A pro-tem committee led by panel member and Member of Parliament Penny Low has been set up.

A DIFFERENT BALL GAME

"Many people have a good heart, but running a business is a different ball game. We need to train them and equip them with the business skills that they may not have."

SPRING SINGAPORE CHAIRMAN PHILIP YEO, who heads the Social Enterprise Committee

Another idea is for a Social Enterprise Development Centre that will help build the capabilities of those involved in the sector.

The committee also wants the \$3 million-a-year ComCare Enterprise Fund – which provides seed money to new social enterprises – to be strengthened to help more such enterprises get started.

"Many people have a good heart, but running a business is a different ball game. We need to train them and equip them with the business skills that they may not have," said Mr Yeo.

Nothing that the sector showed promise, he added: "We must be successful capitalists first, before we can be useful socialists."

He told a press conference at the Biopolis that the objective is to create economic opportunity for the needy and disadvantaged, and provide them permanent income and employment to support themselves.

Another idea is to start a "Caring Companies" initiative, likely to cost \$1 million a year, to encourage employers to show their care by providing jobs and skills training to disadvantaged people.

There are about 150 social enterprises here, 60 per cent of which are set up by voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) and not-for-profit groups. Most are small business ventures such as hair salons, cafes, and gift shops.

As of August this year, 66 social enterprises had received government funding. Forty-six are still operating, while the rest have yet to start, or have shut down.

Committee member and social sector veteran, Gerard Ee said social enterprises provided charities a way to depend less on donations. But those who do not know how to run a business well could fail as "it is not just about passion and ideas but knowledge and skills of running an enterprise".

He hoped that the proposed association and development centre, expected to be set up by the middle of next year, will strengthen leadership in the social enterprise community.

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WHEN BUSINESS AND WELFARE MIX, HOME H6

Key proposals

- ▶ A new "Caring Companies" initiative, to encourage companies to hire the disabled or disadvantaged. Funds provided can go towards training or redesigning of jobs for these people.
- ▶ A separate Capability Development Fund to enable charities' staff to have the right skills – such as accounting – to run a business.
- ▶ A lifting of the current one-year cap on the ComCare Enterprise Fund (CEF). Instead, funding for operating expenditure can be given to social enterprise start-ups for up to two years.
- ▶ Social enterprise start-ups can also opt to pocket profits after several years in operation.
- ▶ There are also proposals to set up a Social Enterprise Development Centre to provide support, create partnerships and educate the public; and a Social Enterprise Association, which will be made up of these social entrepreneurs and perhaps, also academics and others involved in the sector.

Appendix 4a – Focus Group: BZSE Students

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP

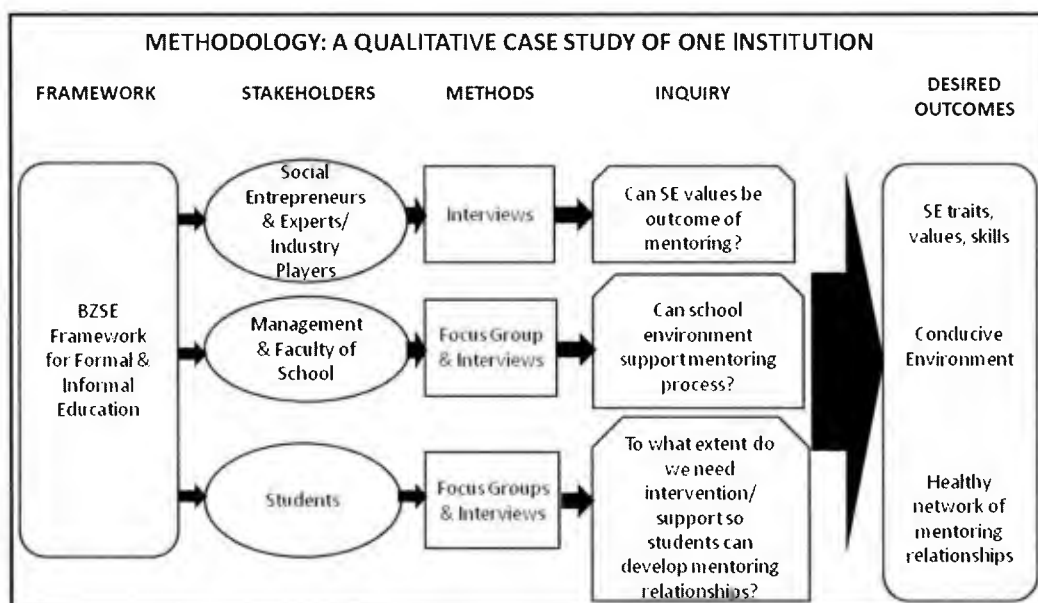
Date	Name	Gender	Level	Class
Time				
Venue				

Thank you for your availability as a respondent in this focus group session.

This semi-structured interview is part of a doctoral research *to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma.*

The following questions are only a guide. Please share any other areas not covered in the questions which you deem helpful for this research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



1. In what ways have you been mentored?
2. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for a youth?

The BZSE diploma hopes to help students develop mentoring relationships as part of the learning model. (Briefly explain the BZSE Framework and desired outcomes).

THE BZSE FRAMEWORK

FORMAL EDUCATION	INFORMAL EDUCATION
<p>A. Curricular Classroom Lectures, Tutorials</p> <p>Experiential Projects, Field Visits, Study Trips</p>	<p>C. Co-curricular Student Projects Student Competitions Leadership Training Programmes Expeditions Other Assignments</p>
<p>B. Internships/ Work Based Learning (WBL) Attachment Project</p>	<p>D. Personal Beyond school</p>

Figure 1 – BZSE Framework for formal and informal education

3. In your opinion, do you think this framework would be effective in helping achieve the desired outcomes? (a) Nurturing of Social Entrepreneurship values and skills in the students
(b) Psychosocial development of students
(c) Improving Student Academic Performance
4. How could this framework be improved upon? (Year 2's may be able to share some experiences from what they have gone through in the first year).

While the BZSE Framework serves to provide the necessary contacts and availability for the mentoring process, it is expected that the mentee takes the initiative to develop the mentoring relationships.

5. How could you support and improve on the proposed BZSE framework?
6. If you view positively the value of a network of relationships as a factor in your growth, what might the ideal size of this network be, and why?
7. How can you initiate this network of relationships given the BZSE Framework?
8. How would you see your role within this network of relationships?
9. Will this BZSE Framework be a valuable model to enrich the BZSE diploma?
10. What is your view on formal and informal mentoring? Which type would be more suitable for the BZSE Framework?

Appendix 4b – Focus Group: BZSE Faculty

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP

	Name	Gender	Designation
Date:			
Time:			
Venue:			

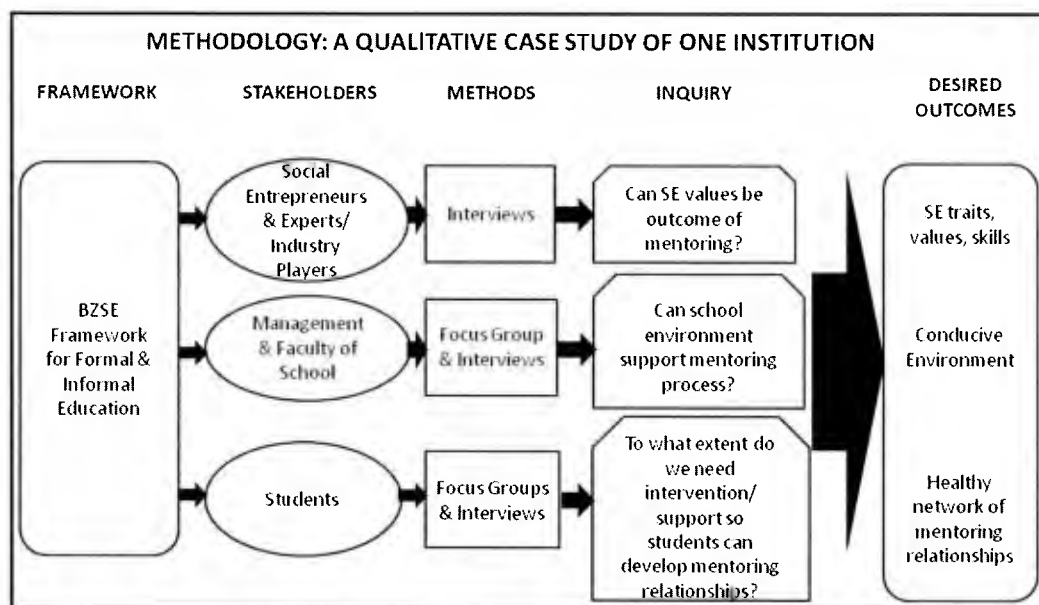
Thank you for your availability as a respondent in this focus group session.

This semi-structured interview is part of a doctoral research *to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma.*

The following questions are only a guide. Please share any other areas not covered in the questions which you deem helpful for this research.

The Research Problem

This research seeks to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma.



1. The research will take into consideration the definition of a “mentor” within the relationship constellation, and examine the problems associated with the definition of the traditional mentor in the light of the relationship constellation or “developmental network” relationships.

Higgins and Kram (2001, p. 268) define an individual’s “developmental network” as the set of people a protégé names as taking *an active interest in* and *action to advance the protégé’s career* by providing developmental assistance. Here, an individual’s “developmental network” is a subset of his or her entire social network. It comprises those relationships the protégé identifies at a particular point in time as being important to his or her career development.

Questions:

- A. What is the difference between (a) the traditional mentor and (b) mentors within the developmental network?
 - B. Given the current school system, which mentoring approach would be more suitable?
2. The term “social entrepreneur” would also need to be constructed in the BZSE course of the study, as it begs the question “who can impart social entrepreneur skills?” This would have implications for the selection of mentors within the “developmental network” relationships.

Questions:

- A. How do you define a social entrepreneur in your context?
 - B. How do we select mentors who can impart social entrepreneurship ethos and skills?
3. The aim of the mentoring model is to help students develop social entrepreneurship qualities, social skills, interpersonal skills and academic grades. The current framework for formal and informal education within the BZSE diploma already includes some elements of mentoring, however, the intent is to develop a systemic approach to mentoring where it is ascertained by all stakeholders in the school.

FORMAL EDUCATION	INFORMAL EDUCATION
<p>A. Curricular Classroom Lectures, Tutorials</p> <p>Experiential Projects, Field Visits, Study Trips</p>	<p>C. Co-curricular Student Projects Student Competitions Leadership Training Programmes Expeditions Other Assignments</p>
<p>B. Internships/ Work Based Learning (WBL) Attachment Project</p>	<p>D. Personal Beyond school</p>

Figure 1 – BZSE Framework for formal and informal education

Questions:

- A. *Is the school culture conducive to implementing a mentoring structure?*
- B. *Are there inherent support structures that will make the “developmental networks” mentoring approach sustainable?*
- C. *What specific graduate outcomes could be attained in this mentoring model?*

Appendix 5 – Interview brief

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW

Date:	Name:
Time:	Gender:
Venue:	Designation:

Thank you for your availability as a respondent in this interview session.

This semi-structured interview is part of a doctoral research *to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma.*

Background

The diploma course of interest is the diploma in Business & Social Enterprise (Dip BZSE), a new course, and first of its kind, introduced by the School of Humanities, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, in April 2008. Dip BZSE was initiated by the polytechnic in response to a perceived growing need for a new cohort of diploma graduates with skills and knowledge in the business domain, identification with social issues, and a conviction to resolve these issues. Recent scams in the charity sector and attempts for nonprofits to become more sustainable have surfaced the need for social sector managers with business and accounting knowledge and management skills.

The rationale for this research is to develop a model that can enhance learning by facilitating formal and informal education within dip BZSE. Dip BZSE aims to produce graduates with desired outcomes that include social entrepreneurial traits – passion, skills, apart from academic achievements.

Dip BZSE hopes to adopt mentoring as a complementary learning approach for students over the period of three years. Each year, the intake size is about 40-45. The large number of students with a relatively small pool of mentors available is a major constraint to implementing one-to-one mentoring. Furthermore, it is unlikely that any single mentor can adequately deliver every mentoring function or operate effectively in every critical role with a student, and students should be open to the notion of benefiting from multiple faculty role models, advisors, mentors, supervisors, and peers.

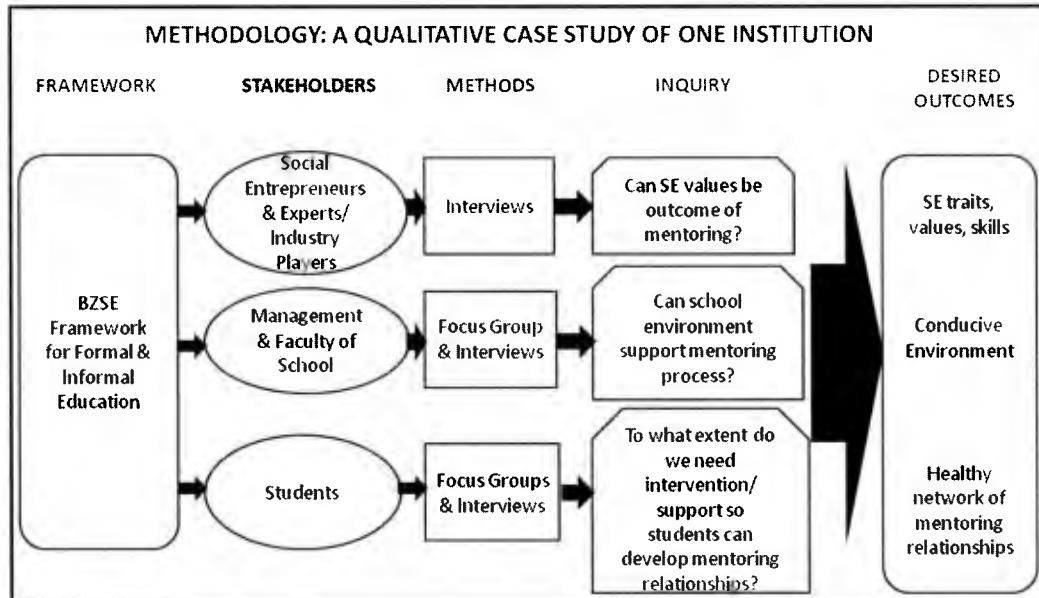
The table below summarises the modules being taught in the Dip BZSE curriculum.

Dip BZSE Curriculum Modules	
Level 1	Level 1
Introduction to Social Enterprise	Introduction to Social & Environmental Studies
Economics 1	Speech Communication & Presentations
Business Management	Introduction to Statistics & Research Methods
Written Communication	Social Psychology
IT Applications	Principles of Accounting
Creativity and Applied Thinking Skills	Life Management Skills
Sports & Wellness 1	
Level 2	Level 2
Project Management for Social Enterprise	Principles of Marketing
Human Resource Management	Legal Frameworks for Social Enterprise
Financial Management	Entrepreneurial Creation & Development
Cross-Cultural Communication & Practices	Public Relations & Events Management
Economics 2	Business Communication
Interdisciplinary General Module (semester 1B)	Innovation & Entrepreneurial Action
Interdisciplinary General Module (semester 2A)	
Level 3	Level 3
Overview of International Systems	International Project
Crisis Management & Corporate Reputation	
Non-Profit Organizations and Development	
Corporate Governance	
Managing Social Enterprises	
Interdisciplinary General Module	
World Issues – A Singapore Perspective	

The figure below summarises the research strategy and methodology.

The Research Problem

This research seeks to assess the feasibility of constructing “Developmental Relationships” as a relevant mentoring model for the BZSE diploma.



Higgins and Kram (2001, p. 268) define an individual’s “developmental network” as the set of people a protégé names as taking an active interest in and action to advance the protégé’s career by providing developmental assistance. Here, an individual’s “developmental network” is a subset of his or her entire social network. It comprises those relationships the protégé identifies at a particular point in time as being important to his or her career development.

The quadrants below highlight the formal and informal education currently existing in the BZSE framework.

FORMAL EDUCATION	INFORMAL EDUCATION
A. Curricular Classroom Lectures, Tutorials Experiential Projects, Field Visits, Study Trips	C. Co-curricular Student Projects Student Competitions Leadership Training Programmes Expeditions Other Assignments
B. Internships/ Work Based Learning (WBL) Attachment Project	D. Personal Beyond school

Figure 1 – BZSE Framework for formal and informal education

To date, 3 focus groups have been conducted – BZSE Year 1s, BZSE Year 2s, BZSE Faculty including Dir/HMS. In-depth interviews will be conducted with the following:

NP/HMS Management

- Director/Teaching & Learning Centre
- Director/HMS
- Course Manager/Diploma in Business & Social Enterprise

SE partners/consultants

- In-house Business Consultant
- SE who has worked with students, Founder, WTO
- SE who has worked with students, CEO, MINDS
- Chairman of National Mentoring Steering Com – National Youth Council
- CEO, Centre for Non-profit Leadership

Students

- Student 1
- Student 2

The in-depth interviews are also a follow-up to the themes highlighted in the focus group discussions.

A mind-map of the themes that surfaced from the focus group discussions and interviews is attached.

Interview Questions

The following questions are only a guide. Please share any other areas not covered in the questions which you deem helpful for this research.

Questions for respective participants will be inserted here

Thank you very much for your time and insights.

*** End of questions ***

Appendix 6 – Interview Questions

Interview – NP Business Consultant (in-house)

Appendix 6a

1. From your experience on mentoring, what are your views on it as a youth development tool?
2. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for our BZSE students?
3. What are your views about using a mentoring model to facilitate the integration of formal and informal education?
4. The BZSE diploma hopes to help students develop mentoring relationships as part of the learning model. In your opinion, do you think this framework would be effective in helping achieve the desired outcomes? (a) Nurturing of Social Entrepreneurship values and skills in the students (b) Psychosocial development of students (c) Improving Student Academic Performance
5. From your experience in mentoring BZSE students in 2 settings (Soule as incubation project, and student project groups on MINDS Contest), could you share (separately for each project) regarding:
 - a. How were the students being mentored?
 - b. What were the student learning outcomes?
 - c. What support/resources are needed?
 - d. How to develop the ideas further for implementation?
 - e. Do you think your role and involvement is an important part of the BZSE mentoring model?
 - f. What improvements could be made?
 - g. Have you received any feedback from students? (on your role as a mentor, or on the project in general?)
6. What is your view on formal and informal mentoring?

Interview - Director, Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC), Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Appendix 6b

1. What is your personal view on mentoring as a youth development tool?
2. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for our BZSE students?
3. What are your views about using a mentoring model to facilitate the integration of formal and informal education?
4. The BZSE diploma hopes to help students develop mentoring relationships as part of the learning model.
In your opinion, do you think this framework would be effective in helping achieve the desired outcomes?
 - (a) Nurturing of Social Entrepreneurship values and skills in the students
 - (b) Psychosocial development of students
 - (c) Improving Student Academic Performance

5. What are some environmental factors you deem necessary to support the BZSE framework?
Eg. Culture, Resources, Reward, Opportunities, Network etc
 6. What would be some barriers to enabling such factors?
 7. How can these barriers be reduced or overcome?
 8. How do you see this model in the light of other mentoring initiatives in NP? Eg TCP, NP Advisor scheme, etc .. Is there potential for BZSE to infuse a connected and integrated mentoring system?
 9. Would TLC be supportive of such a mentoring model? How can TLC support this model? (Resources? Training of staff & facilitators? Others?)
-

Interview – Chairman National Youth Mentoring Work Group

Appendix 6c

1. From your personal experience on mentoring,
 - a. What are your views on mentoring as a youth development tool?
 - b. How did you mentor youth/students?
 - c. What were the mentoring outcomes?
 - d. Were there any positive or negative feedback from students about the mentoring process?
 - e. What is your view on formal and informal mentoring?
2. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for a youth?
3. How would you advise a school/teacher regarding,
 - a. Managing the mentoring process, in terms of working with external parties (in this case social entrepreneurs and external advisors)?
 - b. How would you advise regarding the relationship between the external mentor and his students?
 - c. Are there boundaries to be mindful of?
 - d. What intrinsic/extrinsic reward would be necessary to develop a mentoring culture and framework for the school?
4. As a member of the National youth mentoring workgroup,
 - a. What are your views on youth mentoring at the national level?
 - b. What is the rationale and framework on which this National youth mentoring sector is being developed?
 - c. Can you elaborate on some of the youth mentoring programmes at the National level?
 - d. What is your view on the effectiveness of the programme?
 - e. How do these mentoring programmes benefit the schools?
5. What are your views regarding inspiring/developing social entrepreneurial traits and values in students by social entrepreneurs through mentoring?

6. How would you like to be involved in the BZSE mentoring process?

Interview – Social Entrepreneur, CEO, Movement for the Intellectually Disabled in Singapore (MINDS)

Appendix 6d

1. Have you had any experiences on mentoring youths?
 - a. How did you mentor youth/students?
 - b. What were the mentoring outcomes?
 - c. Were there any positive or negative feedback from students about the mentoring process?
 - d. What is your view on formal and informal mentoring?
 2. What are your views on mentoring as a youth development tool?
 3. From your understanding of the learning model of dip BZSE, and your working experiences with the staff and students on projects which give exposure to social entrepreneurship, what do you see as the role for social entrepreneurs in the learning process of BZSE students?
 4. As a social entrepreneur, what would be the values, traits and skills you hope to inspire in the students?
 5. Your involvement with dip BZSE has been in the form of (a) the curriculum-based MINDS Business Plan Contest, and (b) in engaging BZSE student interns in the coming semester.

How do you see mentoring as a possible learning strategy to help guide students towards the desired outcomes of dip BZSE?
 6. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for a youth?
 7. What are your views on formal and informal mentoring? How does this fit into the BZSE framework?
 8. What intrinsic/extrinsic reward would be necessary to develop a mentoring culture and framework for the school?
 9. What capacity would you like to play in the BZSE mentoring model?
-

Interview – Social Entrepreneur, World Toilet Organisation (WTO)

Appendix 6e

1. Have you had any experiences on mentoring youths?
 - a. How did you mentor youth/students?
 - b. What were the mentoring outcomes?
 - c. Were there any positive or negative feedback from students about the mentoring process?
 - d. What is your view on formal and informal mentoring?
2. What are your views on mentoring as a youth development tool?
3. From your understanding of the learning model of dip BZSE, and your working experiences with the staff and students on projects which give exposure to social

entrepreneurship, what do you see as the role for social entrepreneurs in the learning process of BZSE students?

4. As a social entrepreneur, what would be the values, traits and skills you hope to inspire in the students?
5. Your involvement with dip BZSE has been in the form of (a) one of the participating social entrepreneurs being interviewed by students in the module – Introduction to Social Enterprise at Level 1.1 and (b) possibility in engaging BZSE student interns in future semesters.

How do you see mentoring as a possible learning strategy to help guide students towards the desired outcomes of dip BZSE?

6. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy for a youth?
7. What are your views on formal and informal mentoring? How does this fit into the BZSE framework?
8. What intrinsic/extrinsic reward would be necessary to develop a mentoring culture and framework for the school?
9. What capacity would you like to play in the BZSE mentoring model?

Interview – Dip BZSE students

Appendix 6f

1. Do you think that mentoring would be an important learning strategy for the BZSE student? Why or why not?
2. As a BZSE student, what are the values and skills you would like to be mentored in?
3. What kind of a mentor would you look up to?
4. Who should be mentored?
5. Should students have an option about being mentored?
6. How can we make HMs conducive for a mentoring culture? (value system, skill sets, framework)
7. Do you find the concept of (a) one mentor for an intense prolonged period or (b) a network of developmental relationships with various mentors, more appropriate and effective as a mentoring strategy?
 - If your answer included (b),
 - What would you consider as pros and cons in building this network?
 - How do you see the other people in the network play their role?
8. For how long would you like to be mentored by the/each mentor?
9. How would you propose that peer mentoring could take place? How can it help to develop the desired outcomes?
10. How much time are you prepared to spend outside the classroom environment to build your relationship in the mentoring process?
11. What are your views on formal and informal mentoring?
12. From your experiences in Year 1 & 2, what has influenced you most in terms of social entrepreneurship values and skills? How can mentoring play a part in these experiences?
13. For future projects and internships, how would you like to be mentored?
14. How could mentoring be an intentional learning strategy for the BZSE student?

Interview – Course Manager, Dip BZSE

Appendix 6g

1. Have you had any personal experiences on mentoring youths?
2. What is your view on mentoring as a youth development tool?
3. As the BZSE course manager, what are your desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate?
4. What is your take on mentoring as a learning strategy to complement the BZSE framework in attaining the desired BZSE graduate outcomes?
5. Should/Can all BZSE students be mentored?
6. How would you like mentoring to be incorporated into the BZSE framework?
7. What would be the value-add of a mentoring model to the BZSE framework?
8. What are some concerns you may have of incorporating mentoring into the BZSE framework?

Interview – Director, School of Humanities (HMS)

Appendix 6h

1. What is your view on mentoring as a youth development tool?
2. Have you had any personal experiences on mentoring youths?
3. As Dir/HMS, and the one who birthed the BZSE diploma, what are your desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate in particular?
4. How do you see mentoring within the BZSE framework as part of the goal, mission and purpose of HMS? Would it fit into the organisational culture of HMS?
5. Would mentoring be a necessary tool to facilitate the complement of formal and informal education in the BZSE framework, in helping students acquire the necessary competencies, skills and attitudes to achieve the desired outcomes? Would you consider it the best approach for this purpose?
6. One problem of the BZSE diploma is that it is not the diploma of first choice for many of its students. In your opinion, how could the mentoring model help to create a “transformation” in mindset and orientation regarding the diploma?
7. What are your views regarding peer-mentoring as part of the BZSE mentoring model?
8. Should all BZSE students be mentored? Who should be mentored?
9. What are your views regarding the “do-it-yourself” mentoring plan as part of the BZSE mentoring model
 - where individuals are asked to take on the responsibility for their own personal development with the help of a range of formal and informal advisory relationships.
10. Who should be mentors?
11. What should be the criteria in the matching of mentors?
12. What, in your opinion, do you think are critical success factors for such a mentoring model to work in HMS?
13. How ready is the organisation to sustain such a mentoring model – sponsorship both financially, general goodwill and commitment, formal resources in terms of staff load, recognition, etc?

14. With regards to the many “mentoring” roles of the NP lecturer. Would it be possible to rationalize – integrate or disintegrate? Eg. TCP mentor, Liaison Officer, Advisor, etc
 15. Would you be prepared to act as a mentor yourself?
 16. What are some concerns you may have regarding the BZSE mentoring model?
-

Interview – CEO, Centre for Non-profit Leadership

Appendix 6i

1. Could you explain about the rationale for the CNPL mentoring programme?
2. What is the structure and framework of the CNPL mentoring programme like?
3. How do you select the mentors?
4. How do you select the mentees?
5. How formal or informal is the mentoring programme?
6. How do you measure the outcomes of the mentoring programme?
7. What are some challenges you face in the implementation of the CNPL mentoring programme?
8. Are there areas to highlight the significance and relevance of the CNPL mentoring programme?
9. We are pondering over whether all students in the diploma should/could be mentored over the 3 years. Would you have any advice to share on this aspect?
10. Do you think there could be possible collaboration with the proposed dip BZSE mentoring model?

3. KEY ISSUES FOR DISCUSSIONS

The need for Mentors

(FG Faculty In 83-88)

... first of all, in my whole life, I never had a mentor ... or if I had one, I never really called the person a mentor because, what is in the name, you know ... Because you might say ... oh, my mum is my mentor ... my father is my mentor ... my sister is my mentor ... but I never called it a mentor ... I just called it my sister, my brother or whatever you know ... or my uncle, my teacher ... so ... so ... I think we look through different people, you know, erm ... for help when need advice and so on. So, generally we think of those people as our mentors, or we see them as our role models, and we look to them and say, hey.. you know, that's what I want to do

(Interview 3 In 18-19)

... if the youth had someone that played a significant part in caring and loving and helping ... they are less likely to get involved in things that will get themselves into trouble

(Interview 6 In 3-7)

Yeah ... I think it's quite important as in it's very useful ... because, as students, right ... as in we learn in class and everything ... but when have mentor, or we see something that is experiential ... like ... mentors itself ... like we can look up to them, and see like what they do in their lives also ... then ... when we find relevance and relation to what we learn right ... in relation to what they do and our books, then ... I think we will be more inspired to learn also ... and willing to learn ... because we can see ...

The Mentor in the BZSE context

(Interview 10 In 389-396, 440-446)

Ln389-396

I did mention that day, when they talk about mentoring students, they must really want to work with youth ... they must have some at least basic understanding of youth, and worked with youth before ... some experience as well ... erm ... and they really must be good listeners ... they have to ... not to put our students into ... almost like template ... treat them all equally ... because I have seen people who are trained to be so-called career counsellors, erm ...and so-called mentors, but they can't help it ... they will stereotype young people ... so that is not a good thing ... because we are talking about developing everyone to his fullest potential ...and what is the strengths of each one is different again ... and how do we discover how to stretch them further? So it's a very exploratory thing ... so the person cannot come with a very fixed mindset ... it's very dangerous.

Ln 440-446

... but at the end, it's not to ... you must be able to make the person be very comfortable to talk about their fears ... their aspirations and so on ... and be there for him when things work and when things don't work ... so that I feel, is the role of the mentor as well. And success should not be measure by ... of course ... all the tangible success, and what people think about you ... yeah ... the mentor must be one that really really give that shelter, that anchor, that the person can come back to ... you know ... I really need to talk to you ... I am in this crossroad ... and so on ... I mean ... that would be ideal lah ... that is ideal ...

(Interview 8, In 295-311, 429-431, 446-454)

Ln 295-311

erm ... not just for the academic ... academic being a given ... erm ... I think that the faculty should be interested in the lives of the students. I think that's #1. That they should have a stake in the students' future. How do we know this? Because they spend the time beyond the classroom maybe ... or even within the classroom, because some of our faculty do have constraints about spending time outside ... but within the classroom, they show a 3-dimensional appreciation of the students ... it's not me to you, but really

show individually knowing the students' needs and being able to see the students' 4-dimensional beings. Being able to ... not being always judgemental ... if they didn't do well in the exam ... if they are always late for example ... to be able to appreciate why ... show their interest and finding out why ... before passing judgement ... I think these are good mentors because it shows ... and the students will know ... and the students will in turn be interested in learning more about this individual, because this individual has not passed judgement to him, and the student has kept his window open ... for this person to view him ... rather than the students become very defensive ... so that's my take on the suitability of the faculty ... of course, as I said ... the faculty should also have lived a life of what we want to be an ideal mentor ... so that that will come when we view each other ... that will come ... and you don't need to tell your students – hey ... I have lived life with compassion and passion ... no, the student will know ... and as I said, this is the difference between academic teaching – teaching you really bring it forward ... in this case, the student teases it out of you, you know ... and sees you ... and students are like ... they know whether you are lying or not ... they know whether you are genuine or not ... so ... they don't need to really put it up front ...

In 429-431

Again in the same principle, I think the SEs should be one of ... they should qualify for exactly the same things I said of the faculty ... they should be passionate and compassionate, and people with integrity ... of course, we do that all the time ...

Ln446-454

Er ... there are core values that are non-negotiable ... living lives of integrity, ethical transactions, honest business dealings ... beyond that, when it comes to values about ... for example ... whether they are family oriented or whether they are single oriented, or whether they are alternative lifestyle oriented, or whether they are into sports or whatever, this is what they value the most ... I think these ones are negotiable ... these ones our students can suss out which one they are interested in, or whether which one are they for example, more towards ... their cause is perhaps more political, say ... for dissemination of information about candidates, or if they are talking about the disabled people, these are negotiable ... but whatever they do, it has to be honest, it has to be ethical, and it has to be with integrity ... these are the things that are non-negotiable ... whether religious or non-religious, these are other issues that the students can ...

(Interview 10 In 234-239, 394-395, 467-480)

Ln 234-239

... they all have potential which we must see and believe and stretch them to the fullest. I see mentoring as that ... believing and seeing that this is a rough diamond, we can further polish and shine, and stretch them. No one is identical, of course... this may be a very small diamond, and the other one is a very big diamond, and so ... some may not be diamonds, they may be rhinestones only, but so be it, but be the best rhinestone. So that is where I am coming from.

Ln 394-395

because we are talking about developing everyone to his fullest potential ... and what is the strengths of each one is different again ... and how do we discover how to stretch them further?

Ln 467-480

... can the mentor steer the person to say ... but it's almost like a coach you know ... so the line is very very thin ... actually if you say ... because ... but in our academic profession here, the mentor is almost a coach ... it's very very close to a coach ... so because time is so short ... I cannot let the student be totally derailed and do something that ... I know it's not going to work ... and I will say that ... "No ... I don't think you should do that ... you should cut the proposal into half, and just concentrate on part one and not do part 2 for example ... that's one possibility" ... or that I said "that idea is very very good, but I think you should combine with so-and-so ... and there are all these other challenges that you should look into ... etc" ... so ... must be very clear so that you can reign them in and let them focus correctly because ... and so ... some mentors, if they don't and they are ... we don't have the luxury of ..., if you are talking about ... depends on what you are saying ... because certain things have no ... there is a time limit ... time will run out ... you know ... so you cannot say ... "yeah ... you know ... so ... why don't you explore this way, that way ... and so on ..." So they can spend the next few months just doing all the exploration work and nothing done ... in the end they are going to fail, you know ... right? So that's not fair, isn't it? So that is my concern.

(Interview 4 In 230-246, 264-266)

Ln 230-2246

K: I think for MINDS, I think what we also want to see is ... an understanding of why we are doing it ... I think that primarily drives our objective ... why we are going into social enterprise ... so ... for me, educating

them in my cause is the base that definitely has to be covered ... because without understanding the cause, well ... it's very specific, I must say ... so it's not general ... answer ... because I ... really, like I say, I'm still learning also ... what other people are doing ... but for me, I feel strongly that they need to understand why we are doing it ... and having done that, why we are doing certain things ...

Fac: so that means... you are saying that ... for every social entrepreneur ... they have their own cause right ...

K: ... mmm ... they must first identify a cause that they want to support ... right ... it cannot be ... I just want to do a social enterprise ... and ... I guess the cause also will drive the kind of enterprise you go into ... like for me, important to understand ... is ... if I am going to create employment opportunities, you need to understand the capability of such people ... you cannot come to me and say ... ok, I want to run a restaurant, and then ... make them a cook ... when definitely there is no way ... so there is an important starting point, you see ... so it's very very result oriented in that sense that ... end of the day, I want to be able to create employment for this group of people in particular ... right ... so it has to be something that can work for them ... so to me, that will be the very very initial area that they really need to be like ... I won't say "taught" ... but to share with them.

Ln264-266

K: yah ... so like I said ... they need to identify or determine the cause first ... otherwise it's going to be a very general course, you know ... I am teaching you social enterprise, I run through all the financials, you need to learn all these ... but at the end of the day, what is it that you are doing for? So ... it's important lah ...

(Interview 7 In 71-77)

er ... I think ... we must be constantly reminded and taught about what is the real ... model of social enterprise ... because that is no clear definition ... till today ... everyone has a different definition ... but I feel that social entrepreneurship, at the end is ... there is still a ... value and concept behind every social enterprise ... it's doing well, and doing good ... and I like what Jonathan says ... having a mind of a businessman, and a heart of a social worker ... I really love that ... I shared that with SIF and it was used by a student from another poly ... so we need to be reminded of all these kinds of things ...because if we are not being taught these kinds of things, we can very easily veer back to just being an entrepreneur

(Interview 6 In 58-62)

... I thought another skill is ... like ... measuring our social impact ... I actually learnt this from Dr Sarah from Aidha ... I am not sure if this is a skill, but it's something that we should be mentored in also ... because when we have something to measure, we should also account to stakeholders and we ourselves know like how our mission and vision is executed and effective ...

The desired outcomes of a BZSE graduate

(Interview 8 In 179-186)

that they demonstrate the skillsets, the attitudes that we have given them ... er ... critical thinking, discernment, ethical behaviour ... these are the things that I want our BZSE kids ... if they become a social entrepreneur, that's a very big bonus ... but ... no ... that's not my outcome for the BZSE graduate. They should at least be able to get the very basic and retain ... they will get the basic of business ... but what I meant was for them to retain the very essence of business, which is the ability to manage people fairly, and the ability to manage the books honestly, the ability to run an organisation including their families as an organisation ethically ... these are the things that I want them to be ... so ... that is my vision of the BZSE graduate ...

(Interview 4 In 281-285)

... basically I think ... COMPASSION is basically a very important aspect of a social entrepreneur ... if you are talking about entrepreneur alone, it's very different already ... right ... here it's social, and that I think is the basic value that we expect there ... they must have a heart for it first ... otherwise if they are just profit driven ... you know ... end of the day, how does it benefit the cause? So to me, to be compassionate, of course, plays a major major ...

(Interview 5 In 13-15, In 119-122, In 111-117)

Ln 13-15

... the type that are really interested in changing the world type ... the type that ... very curious ... ask a lot of very simple, fundamental questions ... contrarian thinking ...

Ln 119-122

I think in the end they appreciated the learning of things in the real world ... I always say "this is the real world". You know ... in the classroom you can make mistakes ... your teacher will forgive you... but here in the real world ... if you make mistakes, the whole event cannot take place ... then what happens? ... so it's very real to them, you see ... I keep reminding them this is real, you know ... whether you do right or wrongly, it will show ...

Ln 111-117

... so ... the student needs to feel that they are the centre of this whole learning process ... not the school reputation, you know ... if their job is to improve the school's reputation, that would be putting the cart before the horse ... their job is to be very useful people, and in the end, regardless of their marks, they actually went to society and deliver a lot of goodness, and you can say that this was a student taught by us ... and because of the unique way that we are teaching ... we turn out many of these ... here is a list of 15 of them who actually went to change the world in spectacular manner, that we ourselves were also amazed ... that should be the way ...

(Interview 6 In 39-45)

... and I think humility is important ... because, like in regards to being a social entrepreneur, we think like ... oh ... we are taught to learn that we are the persons who start things first ... or like ... oh ... we are the self-employed boss kind of thing ... but it requires humility also, because when you are a social entrepreneur, when you first start, you are the one who photocopies, you are the driver, you are the one who makes coffee, I mean, yes, you get the name like "Director" or yes, you are a social entrepreneur of a particular thing ... but you really need a lot of humility because I think ... a lot of things that requires serving also

(FG Faculty In 1113-1143)

R: I hope it's the least of their concerns. If we are going to do a mentoring thing ... I hope it's not the grades that they are chasing ...

Fac: That who are chasing?

R: That the students are chasing ... if they have to learn something from the mentor ... I mean ... it's good if they are focused on ... I mean ... as a collateral the grades will improve ... that's what we want ... but if they are focusing on the grade itself, they will lose the texture and the richness of the experience of being with the mentor ... please take note that social entrepreneurs are a different class of individuals. We have noted that they are mostly ... well, not mostly as a stereotype ... but they really do not do so well in school themselves .. and so, again ... the value ... that's why my question is ... is it even transmissible ... erm ... as a model for ethos, maybe .. to see if they are above board ... and they do make under the table deals ... and that they make their success through sheer hardwork and a generous dose of love ... yes !! Maybe that can be transmitted. Social entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs in general ... that means they are risk takers ... but not ... what you call this ... they take risks, but they do not take hazardous risks, I suppose ... it's not ... they take calculated risks ... and these are the things that they can learn ... the passion ... can be ... as I said, like a virus that can be transmitted .. but ... whether they have within them that internal compass ... I don't know if that can be taught or not Some people have it, some people don't..

Dir: Erm .. the I don't know why you put grades there, actually, as a desired outcome ... er ... because I think that if the values are in place ... the values are so important, I feel ... because it drives everything else ... and values here I mean their character as well ... their integrity, their resilience, and they dare to change, etc etc ... for the good ... for good reasons etc Then it should impact ...

Fac: translate?

Dir: yes ... the knowledge acquisition and also the wanting to do better in terms of skill sets and so on and so forth you see ... that very likely will translate to good grades ... the ones that drop out actually are very intelligent people ... but they choose not to complete their degrees ... their studies ... because the missed opportunity is there, you know ... one of my students ... like this is my golden opportunity ... I must go into

the industry ... And launch this project ... And by the time they got so immersed into it, they cannot come back to study anymore ... those are very exception to the rule ...

(Interview 5 In 10-13)

... the type that are very scared to ask questions ... the type that ... the worst type is ... they come hoping to get good marks ... those types I think they are probably going to get good marks, but they are useless in the end ... and they are probably going to get all the degrees and diplomas ... but they will be a useless person in society ... because they are very selfish ... they only want to get marks ...

(Interview 8 In 508-515)

er ... yes and no ... I believe that some of them will convert and become passionate enough to translate into scores ... but some of them ... learn a lot of things that still does not improve the scores, and for me, it's not a waste also ... er ... academic improvement that you mentioned ... I was thinking about that, and a lot of the things for example ... when they learn how to be honest in their business dealings, it won't translate into any grades ... for example ... but it will change their lives ... and that will probably change them more than what they learn on how to balance the books properly, or something ... or a lot more valuable than what they would learn in economics, for example ... so ... yeah ... er ... it's very, very important ... I think ... unless we find other models, this mentoring I think is ... because BZSE is really about a lifestyle, more than anything ... practising a lifestyle ...

(Interview 2 In 543-549)

So in total ... if what you've described it is what it is ... then the total ... or the summarised grade or the average grade lah ... which is the average of all the performances... should improve ... even if nothing happens in the academic subjects ... you know the content-heavy, dry, theoretical, whatever ... the other parts should go up, theoretically. Whether it actually happens or not, you will have to test and see lah ... theoretically, if this is going to give them an edge into how they behave, how they see themselves ... how they are able to see how others see themselves, and therefore, you know ... dadadadada... you know, and develop those SE fluencies as you say, then yes ... theoretically yes..

(FG BZSE2 In 157-161)

Urm ... regarding the mentoring and improving student academic performance ... like I see like how does the mentoring help with the academic ... I don't see that, because academic performance is like from all the exams and tests which test on theoretical concepts. Those things are very dead. When we talk about mentoring, its more about learning from other people's experience and these are more dynamic aspects, academic performance are more of the theoretical things. Maybe I am wrong, but I can't see the link between them.

(FG BZSE1 In 395-402)

For me it's not as important to look at academic performance, but more important for them to have the values and knowledge and skills, it's more important ... because .. what you are studying for is what is all the skills you need, and if you don't have the values and don't have the passion to be a social entrepreneur ... then, you wouldn't want to start an SE, instead you just want to have your own business ... so ... I feel that the experiential stuff may help a lot to ... it's very useful for the students and helps them to learn more about the SEs and how they function, how they work ... it gives them a wider picture ... some of the students do not have a very clear view of what an SE does ... so they do not know whether they want to run a business or social enterprise ..so ... this curricular can help.

Developmental Network of Mentors

(FG Faculty In 174-175, In 780-781, In 790-834)

Ln 174-175

I think the point here is that this is happening for everybody's life, you know. Just that many of us may not be aware. So if we really want to make this work in a more effective way ...

Ln 780-781

You must have a vested interest in the student ... these people that they go through short term, they don't have a vested interest

Ln 790-834

Fac: I think, now ... all cannot lah ... ok ... in fact this discussion is very interesting ... Because you all are actually turning the original assumption of ... discussion of

Dir: Developmental relationships

Fac: Yes ...

R: Yes ... we are just shooting ...

Fac: It's fine ... it's fine ... it's really fine because it's about construction ... I'm not saying it must be that way ... but ... we want to then bring out all ... and I think it's really good ... because if at the end of the day we find that ... hey ... actually that traditional mentor ... is

Dir: not such a bad idea ... it's just that ... you must draw upon the other like-touch mentors around you know ...

L: It depends on what's traditional mentor ... if traditional mentor is the one that imparts all value and does everything without getting help from other people ... then ... yes ... your idea of the developmental will ...

Dir: be better

L: is better ... meaning ... but you still have a larger mentor ... but assisted by smaller pockets of people who offer expertise...

Fac: which we are not calling them as mentors .. but ...

L: But they are probably people with

Fac: Aides ... or assistants ... or

R: Or we call them domain experts ... we send them to domain experts ...

Dir: But ... sometimes students want to see them as mentors ... because ... you see ... it's all relationship-based ... they will like to have a conversation and a cup of tea with people telling them this ... because, they can see that ... you know ... I can resonate very well ... and he is very encouraging ... and then ... another person for something else ... you see ... so ... they can be called mentors ... and some people just want to facilitate that role and nothing else as well...

Fac: Right ... so it begs the definition again ...

Dir: Yeah ... because there can be spiritual mentors ... can be skill-based mentors and so on ... right ??

L: Yeah ... you'll have to define what your mentors are ... and then maybe is it over 3 years? Or is it for this semester ... these students will be mentored in the area of ... I don't know ... something lah ... and then they will go to this mentor for this short while ... and then the next semester they move on to somebody else ... then that vested interest is also not so long on the mentor ..

Should ALL students be mentored?

(FG Faculty In 597-602)

L: ... and also have to take into consideration that students may not want to be mentored ...

Fac: ok ... that is an interesting point. What do you do with students who do not want to be mentored?

R: Do they even have an option?

(Interview 10 In 365-366)

Yeah ... I feel that is very very fundamental. Because some people don't want to be mentored, some people feel they don't need to be mentored ... it's a waste of time ...

(Interview 7 In 148-151)

Because some people may not want to be mentored ... some people may say ... I don't want to be mentored ... I want to do things on my own ... you cannot force it on them ... there will be people like that ... I can't predict the future like what kind of people will come to BZSE ... but definitely there will be some people ... that will be ... they don't want to have any ...

(Interview 3 In 632-646)

... but mentoring is more than youth-at-risk. That is also one of the things that I tasked the communications committee to do – we must change the public image that mentoring means “youth-at-risk”. Because mentoring is a very powerful “youth-development” tool... unfortunately, it has always been associated with kids, or youth with problems.

Fac: Is it?

SL: yes ... just like counselling now ... tell a youth – you need counselling, and he'll say – what's wrong with me? You tell a kid – you need to go for mentoring – he'll tell you – what's wrong with me? Don't sentence me ... they will see mentoring as a sentence ... they won't see this as a fun

Fac: why is that so?

SL: because of the stigmatisation that comes with it lah ... you know, when you are in school, when you misbehave, they see their friends that are not doing well, they are sent for mentoring ...

(Interview 10 In 10-11)

... I think it is going to be very very hard ... for all youth to be mentored ... because there also must have the inner need for the individual wanting to be mentored ...

(Interview 6 In 104-106)

but I think maybe for me ... you should have some level of interest ... and doesn't have to be across the board like every single BZSE student to be mentored ... because I think it takes both ways ... active interested mentor ... but also an interested student ...

(Interview 10 In 28-34).

thing ... so ... that then therefore also made me think that if only there was like a formalised programme ... then some of us would be thrown into that programme ... and will get the benefit of it ... you see ... I know where my friend who said that mentoring must be such where the mentees seek out the mentors, but there will always be people like myself and my son ... will not seek out people ... to be our mentors ... we admire them from the distance ... and never cultivate the relationship to get the benefit of getting someone to help us, guide us along the way, or just a good platform ... a sounding board ... and so on ...

(Interview 2 In 149-154)

Fac: That also brings me to another question that I want to ponder ... and that is ... should all students be mentored, or should it be...

S: Which is an excellent question, because ... actually there are two things ... should all students be mentored, and do all students need to be told by us that they need to be mentored? Because, like I said, quite a number of them actually are beginning to seek their own mentors, but it's not recognized, and it's not credited in that sense..

(Interview 4 In 175-180)

but on the other hand, when I hear that you want to allow them not to have mentors, I am a little bit concerned lah ... right ... because I think they all should have a mentor ... whether it's their own father or not, it's still a mentor ... if you are open to that ... they say ... ok, I am choosing my father to be my mentor ... because he is an expert in this area ... I think that can be allowed ... but to allow them not to have mentor at all, I am a little bit worried for that lah ... hor ...because I think if once you build it into the curriculum, it really really needs to be adhered to ... and I believe it will help them tremendously ...

(Interview 7 In 163-168)

... the choice should be given to them whether they want to be mentored or not ... but there will always be people that will want to be mentored ... and there are always people that want to be mentored ... and if they want to be mentored, I feel that there should be an option available for them ... that they can find the mentors that will help them ... for example if they have an idea ... who is going to help them to make their idea come to reality ... if they don't know ... they don't have the skills, they don't have the experience ... I feel that if mentorship is what it takes, then the school should be able to provide it ...

(Interview 6 In 98-102)

For me ... when I first saw this question, I thought those who should or need to be mentored are those who are already keen on starting something up themselves .. yeah ... as in ... it's not something like bias ... like you got interest then I mentor you kind of thing ... but in terms of like the need kind of thing ... students who are keen in setting up a social enterprise should be mentored, especially if they have an idea also ... they should be mentored because they need a lot of guidance ... and it's important for them as they go along this journey ...

Who should be mentors?

(FG BZSE1 In 623-628)

I think that the most important mentor here is lecturers .. cos in the 3 years, er ... we need to learn the skills first ... but .. the SE comes in when we need the experience ... we need to know what they have been through, how they started it up ... then ... it will help us in more like .. we will get to know more things ... more complete set of knowledge ... be it values, knowledge or experience ... but most important I think is still the lecturers ... because ... 3 years here ... so far we only worked one time with the SE, but we get to know, and we get to bond more with the lecturers ... so, knowledge still comes first, then experience.

(Interview 2 In 175-177)

... who are your mentors? Because .. erm .. why should it be the staff? Why can it not be a second year, or third year or a graduate, for example ... or someone in another poly, for example ... er...

(FG Faculty In 231-234)

... retired businessmen People who have done well in their business and who are now retired, why so because they do appreciate what a social enterprise is all about. But businessmen, being shrewd, particularly the successful ones, they would impart in them the thing which is needed in social enterprises, which is sustainability.

(FG BZSE1 In 701-704, 722-724)

Ln 701-704

I feel that also peers can be very good mentors. Because of the question part ... they dare to question ... and the other thing about lecturers being your mentors, I feel that they do not go through what we as students go through ... just like if they give certain assignments, we might have different mindsets from them .. because they might be more mature and so on and so forth ...

Ln 722-724

I feel that peers not only question you and give you different viewpoints ... they might also affect your viewpoints because who you hang out with is most likely who you will turn out like right The birds in a feather flock together ... yah ...

(Interview 9 In 218-225)

You need the people who are good at what they do, and also able to guide and teach and journey together. He's a very good travel companion, as I said ... you have horrible travel companions who know the country very well, but it's not fun to travel with them ... and you have those you really love to travel with them, right? Yeah ... so ... we look at these as through referrals to me, and they come through a trusted network of people that within the charity sector, and even outside, that they would recommend to me, and from there I'll have a chat, and discuss, because again, you are dealing with a volunteer right... I have to

treat them all with respect also ... and I'll share on the programme, and our expectations .. and also understand their motivations

(FG Faculty In 278-285)

I think you mentioned the point, Joyce, that, some people we may invite, and some lecturers, may just not be a mentor and just be one that comes and gives information, and gives skill sets, and that is their role only ... because that is all they intend, and they achieve the objective ... and they don't intend to see beyond that... because I think to be a mentor and to want to do that, you want to achieve a higher goal than the immediate results ... and who can impart social entrepreneur skills ... certainly not necessarily a social entrepreneur alone ... because a social entrepreneur .. sometimes ... you know, it's like I can dance, but I cannot teach dancing ... I can sing I can't teach singing .. you know what I mean? Possible .. and you can have somebody who is a wonderful cook, but cannot teach, and he can teach better

(Interview 10 In 494-497, 507-510)

Ln 494-497

I think if you are going to have outside mentors, you've got to really be very careful in your selection, and they've got to be part of our team. Because if you are talking about their 3 years with us and we have some key deliverables, it cannot be such a loose framework. We have to be very careful about selection. So, bear that in mind in your selection of mentors and who should be in. There should be real commitment, you see.

Ln 507-510

this person should be able to see the person through 3 years, or this panel at least, so you can see the process of mentoring until they leave NP, leave the school and so on, until they come back, then of course it's part 2 of a mentoring system. We shouldn't scale up too much for a pilot project.

(Interview 7 In 531-541).

Ju: Yes ... correct ... I feel that ... if we want to focus on social enterprise ... social entrepreneurship ... you need lecturers or mentors that really believe in social entrepreneurship ... if they don't believe in social entrepreneurship, they will forget about it.. it doesn't mean anything to them ...

(Interview 5 In 344)

So how do you select the teachers? Is the teacher passionate themselves .. or they are again trying to do KPIs

(Interview 8 In 277-285)

That brings me to the point that every faculty that we will be hiring we should be conscious of this fact, that they should be people who have ... passion, compassion, lives of integrity, who have .. well, it will be interesting if they have interesting lives ... because the students will ... I mean, this are competing in the realm of students ... they are competing with video games, and the internet and an interesting life is a good attraction for the kids to take on them as mentors .. and we want our kids to live interesting lives too ... so ... I think that's yeah ... erm ... what else ... that they are multi-faceted individuals ... so when we hire them, if we want them to be mentors, we want this particular set of requirements from our teachers, not only being academically strong, because they in a way when we hired them, they are already several notches higher than our students, so the knowledge should already be a given ... so...

(Interview 2 In 195-203)

the reason why I am saying ... what is mentoring and you need to be clear is because I see the different stakeholders or participants here having very different mentoring values ...ok? Which is why I said Siew Yong stood out to me as ..ey .. a cluster or a category quite much on it's own ... because, like to me, Jack SIm and all these others, I see them as mentor mentor .. they may not be correcting... and they may not see themselves as wanting to do that either ... erm ... but their value is .. they are out there, they are modelling, they are telling you, you are learning from their practice, from their mistakes, their whatever else .. but it may not be their role to tell you what your mistakes are, for example .. or they may not see it as their role ... but someone like Siew Yong, and I think there is a need to build the pool of people like that ... who have that experience of being out there, but their role here is also very much to "correct", erm .. basically to do that coaching and correcting, which may be a little bit more intense than what your partners outside would do.

Matching of Mentors/Mentees

(Interview 7 ln 57-60)

... but I feel that being mentored you need to be able to choose your mentors also ... because some people may not have the same values as me ... may not believe the same thing as me ... so when I talk to that person, there is even a clash ... so straight away I know cannot work with this person ...

(Interview 6 ln 273-279)

... er ... at the end of the day I think it's also good to let students themselves decide, and discover along the way ... and decide for themselves ... which kind of side they want to take, and how they want to develop it ... because ... even though if we tell them something that is all cohesive among every mentor right ... it may not carry through reality when eventually a student wants to do something ... because the world is always changing ... so even if everything is cohesive ... maybe the real world would really need you to take a management that is totally different from all the mentors that you have done ... because it's just special to your circumstance ... yeah ... so it's for students to decide ...

(Interview 7 ln 296-309)

Ju: I think firstly must know that person's personality ...

Fac: How would you know? Let's say you come in as a Year 1 student ...

Ju: Personality test lor ... for me ... what I am doing in my church ... DISC ... I know every member's DISC ... so I ask them to take a test ... then ... I know they are "I", "S" ... so what happens is ... every year, Easter we have a lot of people ... and then usually when we have a lot of new friends ... one member will have one whole group of new friends, and usually it's very intimidating for the member ... because you are like one person and you are running around talking to everybody ... so ... this year what I did was ... I tried a buddy system ... like pairing them up ... like 2 persons ... so how I did was ... I know this person is an "I" ... he can talk non-stop ... and talk until the cows go home ... so, I will not pair him up with another "I" ... because it will not fully utilise all my members ... so I will pair an "I" with a "S" ... same thing, I cannot pair a "S" ... a person that always don't want to talk ... very quiet ... will sit down ... I will not pair him with another "S" ... 2 of them could just sit down there and do nothing ... you know ... so I'll probably pair an "I" and a "S" together ... or an "I" and a "C" together ... or a "D" and a "S" together

(Interview 2 ln 115-116, ln 122-129, ln 292-294, ln 331-334)

Ln 115-116

ok ... I ... probably yes ... probably ... but then again, we also have to think through, how ready are they to be able to know what they need ...

ln 122-129

erm ... but going back to are they mature at this point ... mature enough to actually tell you ... ok, I need ... I think I am weak here ... or I would like to develop here ... or whatever it is ... are they matured enough to actually do that ... I think that is a struggle that actually NP has gone through.. with the I&E framework.. where ... technically, the premise that it was built on was that the students were able to ... that they had already developed very good reflective skills in term of their own needs, their own strengths etc..etc..etc.. And I think we can safely say that that premise has been tested and is not working as well. It's not working for the majority. There are students who are already there and ready to fly. But the majority are unable to.

Ln 292-294

which is then my point about self-selection and so on comes in laah I mean ... I am telling you that I want to learn this and I want to learn that and I am weak at this or I'm strong at that ... It's an important part of it. But it begs the question – are the students ready to do this ... so how do we prepare the students?

Ln 331-334

ok ... I would think that actually the preparation in Year 1 ... for the students to exercise that selection ... needs to be better done... so that the students #1 – understand or have a better appreciation of ... you see ... in an I&E framework, what is the content? The content is the individual person, actually ... your habits, your habits of mind, your attitudes towards life etc ... that's actually...

(Interview 10 Ln 18-24)

... at one point I wanted to have my son mentored by somebody I admired very much ... and I approached him and said ... so and so ... can you mentor my son? And he said ... no ... and I was very fed-up with him ... I was so fed-up with him ... like ... how can you say no to me? You know, it's like, when I say ... wow ... you mentor my son ... I must really admire you ... therefore I want you to mentor my son ... then he said to me ... if your son wants me to be his mentor, he must ask me himself ... because he says he believes that the mentee must seek out the mentor ... and then it will work ... that will be the best relationship ...

(Interview 5 Ln 48)

yeah lah ... they seek me out lah ... I don't ... look for them ...

(Interview 5 Ln 128-133)

Mentoring is 2-way street, right? A good mentor needs a good mentee to motivate him to give more ... the mentee also needs a good mentor to bring out the potential in the student ... so ... your choice... if everyone is different ... every student is different, every mentor is different ... so ... how to match ... for example if I said to you I want the very enquiring type ... then you give me the enquiring type ... right ... maybe another one just wants to teach them everything in his life experience ... I don't know ... maybe the student likes that type ... and you need to know who are your mentors, who are your mentees ...

(Interview 2 Ln 593-598, 851-854)

Ln 593-598

... in this case I think the key resource has to be availability of mentors that the student can identify with ... that the student can see perhaps, as himself or herself in the near future ... there is some sort of connection that the student can make ... ok ... and that's not going to be easy ... of course, then you talk about time ... you talk about time ... you talk about how do you document this ... blablablabla ... opportunities for mentoring to grow ... I mean, it has to be something that has to grow ... er ... TIME ... is needed, and that's something to think about

Ln 851-854

there is one of two ways to look at it at this point ... either every lecturer has ... stretches to have all the skills ... which is going to kill some of us ... or ... you have a proper mentoring ... an explicit mentoring system ... which may be flexible ... may be broad ... may be self-selecting ... but ... very clear in how it is going to operate and what its descriptors are ... who are the people in that system ...

(Interview 3 Ln 342-344)

... but we know that the real problem kicks in when we are going for bigger numbers ... the reason why mentoring hasn't take off in Singapore is partly that the mentor pool is hard to find ...

School Culture

(Interview 7 Ln 196-211)

I think HMS is at the moment I feel that it is relatively quite conducive ... because ... firstly, it's physically ... BZSE ... our cohort is very small ... it's not like BS ... you know ... BS ... there are a few hundred people at one lecture ... the lecturers may not know all the students, and so there is no relationship ... but the good thing about BZSE that a lot of my other friends also say ... they can see that when they come to HMS ... like the students really know the lecturers, and the lecturers know the students ... so it's like more conducive ... more effective ... I feel ... the learning ... because it's not just ... you go to class and you learn ... but you really have a relationship with the person teaching you ... like sometimes Dr Red cracks jokes very funny ... after class we can talk to him ... that kind of thing ... so ... you know your lecturer is very light-hearted ... is not so serious all the time ... I feel that if it's always so serious ... always so like ... just do your work ... keep quiet ... don't talk ... it wouldn't capture our ... especially because we are young adults, we are going into adulthood ... we are already out of secondary school ... so ... I think there are some lecturers ... they still want to stick to the old school ... like some IS teacher ... you know ... they like really old school old school you know ... discipline discipline discipline ... but then, they are young adults already ... they can make their own decision ... because we are not like secondary school or primary school students already ... but I feel the good thing about HMS is .. the culture is ... there's a friendship with the lecturer ... it's

helpful for mentoring ... because mentorship shouldn't be too formalise ... but it must be a relationship ... that connection ... that gut feel ... that you have with the people ...

(Interview 6 In 126-135)

I think for now, HMS is providing a good environment ... for basically our learning ... that includes mentoring ... er ... for example, I thought it was a good start that we have a lot of guest speakers ... and it makes it conducive because we don't stick to the formal kind of learning ... yeah ... like you stated in the front ... so we have a lot of informal learning also ... even through field trips or like the recent business competition with MINDS ... yeah .. I think it's a conducive environment .. but in terms of mentoring culture ... maybe not much yet ... because we exposed to many potential mentors ... but we don't exactly have any connection opportunity with them yet ... because they are mentoring us only through our single projects and assignments but not much of mentor kind of relationship yet ... to make it more conducive ... I think it's fine that you guys already provided like various social entrepreneurs for us to contact ... and even some of them we have their contact ... and I think it is conducive enough already, because you already stated so many opportunities for us ...

(Interview 8 In 489-492)

... what is it ... yah ... what is it about, what is BZSE ... and ... I think little by little ... BZSE will become part of their mental landscape, you know ... everytime they think about it ... erm ... so far the response has been good ... because all the SEs are like us, you know ... in a way I consider myself an SE being with BZSE ... because I live those values, and I try to live my life accordingly, you know ...

(Interview 4 In 432-450)

K: I see it as one of the ways, not the only way ... to help them learn ... and I always go back to reality vs idealism ... as students, we all learn in the classroom, and we imagine that is how the real world is ... then when you start working, you realise that ... you know ... a lot of what you learn in the classroom is not even real ... so I always see that as a way for them ... and I think it's a lot more helpful while they are still learning, rather than having acquired a diploma, and then come out ... ey ... the world is really different from what my lecturers have been telling me ... which why also, I guess ... you all stress on your lecturers also have ... you look for that kind of experience ... right ... so I think that is a good move ... because previously, in the schools, you are academic, you can be academic for years, and you don't even have your commercial ...

Fac: I think the poly is different from the University ...

K: right ... that's why I think the poly succeed in the sense that ... you really get these people in, you see , not full-time academic ...

Fac: industry-based?

K: yah ... you need that kind of background and experience to be able to ... so ... I don't know ... I have never been through the poly route ...but ... for me it's like ... yah ... what I learnt in the classroom ... in fact, I don't even use any of them now ... hahaha...

(Interview 10 In 505-515, 600-607)

Ln 505-515

I think that it's not about money as a constraint. Rather, 1st of all, do you have potentially good people who can become mentors? If you have, one of the 1st things would be to give them a bit of training. So the training would cost a little bit of money, and if it is not too expensive, that is not an issue. Then #2, this person should be able to see the person through 3 years, or this panel at least, so you can see the process of mentoring until they leave NP, leave the school and so on, until they come back, then of course it's part 2 of a mentoring system. We shouldn't scale up too much for a pilot project. In terms of reward system, the last thing is to say ... or ... because I am a mentor I must be paid more or whatever ... no such thing ... and that is really really it's all about heart matter. Those who want to be a mentor it must be because your heart is there, you want to do it out of passion, out of interest, out of care ... the last thing is to dangle the carrot and say ... this is your reward ... you got to be paid more ... no such thing ... even time ... what is time? If I give you 2 hours, it will never be enough ... So of course we look at staff load as a whole ... but ... how to measure in time?

Ln 600-607

Yeah. I am actually looking now at asking some training companies outside to give me a quote for staff mentoring. Whether they have a training programme to teach adults like us to mentor adults. If they have, they surely have one also for mentoring young people, and I heard that it's expensive. This is a company called "Blue-point" leadership. Supposed to be quite good, but I'm seeing what quotation they are giving us ... so ... because I think that it's good to check on what are some mentoring models in the marketplace and how ... there are good programmes in the marketplace, I believe. We don't have to invent one. And if there is good one we just send 1 or 2 staff for training, and they can modify it to suit mentoring of students or mentoring of our own staff and so on... we don't have to reinvent the wheel completely.

(Interview 2 Ln 133-138, Ln 897-904)

Ln 133-138

... do the students actually tell you I am ready to be mentored? What happens before this thing is introduced to the students is also very very critical. Erm ... and the development, the reflective maturity of the student is very very critical. Developing, or having some sort of pre-work to develop that is very very critical. I think in the BZSE framework it's probably built-in already? But I am just sharing what we have been experiencing in the I&E framework.

Ln 897-904

S: I think ... erm ... but given that you have a small cohort ... it's probably more doable ... and then like I say because of the nature of the diploma ... it's probably more doable as well. You've got less battles to fight in that sense ...

Fac: the small cohort is actually very helpful ...

S: yeah ... erm ... and I think you would have just dispositions-wise, more lecturers or more staff open to doing this ...

4. MISALIGNMENTS IN CURRENT FRAMEWORK

Connections between Formal and Informal education and students' life journeys

(FG Faculty Ln 935-939)

... how do you help the student to map everything into this whole bigger picture to let them know that actually in my 3 years ... and even in this semester, I am learning different things that make a lot of sense to me in my ultimate goals or ambitions or career progression or whatever you want to call it ... to become a social entrepreneur or set up a social enterprise ... you know ...but somebody somehow must help this student to do this.

(Interview 10 Ln 254-264)

Definitely then ... you know... because I think some students cannot see for themselves how the formal education is going to help them in their life. Yah ... or how a CCA for example, an activity outside, a volunteer job outside, is helping them, enriching their life goals or their career goals. So I think if there is a mentor in place where they can turn to, or a mentoring system .. that means a panel of mentors, then, that can help the student and help them reflect their journey, and say "what have you been doing so far in terms of your courses, in terms of the modules you have studied", and let them talk about it to someone, and some of the activities they are doing outside school, and so on ... and help them talk through this, have these conversations with them, and help them pinpoint how all these pieces of jigsaw puzzle can be connected together. Sometimes students may not see that but through the conversations, they can piece it together. And a good mentor can also share their own experiences about what they have done in school, what they have done outside of school, that help them to be what they are today. I think if that is what you are talking about... so it's ok.

(Interview 1 Ln 384-386)

... this team is a bit slow, because they do not understand accounting ... they do not see a lot of costs that do not come in ... they do not take into account a lot of costings ... they are very passionate ...

(Interview 6 Ln 503-509)

... experiential learning ... so ... I mean ... could be through a particular 2-year kind of competition or some like some programme that we need to do and complete as part of assignment ... or it could be ... I don't know ... some kind of initiative that the school does ... then mentoring can play a very important role ... I think it really really help the students learn ... because when we are thrown with some problem on something that we need to fulfil right ... then we really learn a lot more also ... because sometimes when we learn through the books ... then the books also like very boring right ... it just comes in different lah ... the input to our perspective ...

(Interview 2 In 381-383)

yes ... but 99% do not get the feedback, the mentoring that is required to get them to this point ... and do not actually start with seeing that ... hey I need ... or I can benefit from this sort of an experience..ok? Because if I can see that ... I will make the connections myself ...

Differing perceptions of mentoring's value

(Interview 2 In 302-308)

... they do have the students self-selecting ... but I think the ... so they can select their pathways, for example, they can select their timeslot ... they can select ... ok ... I want to do whatever type of project ... so ... all that is open to the students... but it falls flat because the students self-select based on ... oh ... I want to go home early tomorrow ... so today, I select ... you know what I mean? So the intent is good ... but it's just falling flat because the framework within which the students are exercising those choices ... is ... to me ... from a learning and development point of view ... not developmentally mature yet. So they are selecting based on very strategic ... very ...

(Interview 10 In 28-34)

but there will always be people like myself and my son ... will not seek out people ... to be our mentors ... we admire them from the distance ... and never cultivate the relationship to get the benefit of getting someone to help us, guide us along the way, or just a good platform ... a sounding board ...

Mentoring Programmes for some

(Interview 2 In 780-790)

... the type of student is actually quite homogeneous, in the TCP. There is a certain type of student that goes in ... er ... and the type of mentoring that they go through ... or advisement that they go through and coaching ... is also very geared towards the desired outcomes ... and those desired outcomes are very very clear. Very very clear ... erm ... if the student goes through other transformations and ahas... er ... that is a nice to have ... the way I look at it lah ... the way I heard students say and what I know of the programme ... erm ... but the mentoring ...k, two things – it's very very focused, and it can be very personalised to the student ... erm ... but you see ... these people come in with one big plus factor ... and that is they are very ...they are high performing, and they want to be higher performing ... and they are very clear about their academic ... it is their academic performance that they are actually looking at. And they are very clear about what type of academic performance ... so ... and where you know, they are putting their energies ... so the broadening and deepening of the student is still very much within that very defined end product ... or end goal ...

Conflict of interest between Academic Achievement and Mentoring Outcomes

(Interview 2 In 518-533)

... if your academic performance is going to be heavily measured on concepts, recall, theories ... the micro application of those theories ... and so on and so forth ... erm ... then I think it may persuade many a student to say this is not the path that's going to help me improve ... I am still going back to the self-selection bit ... er ... but if my ... whether it can or it cannot is another issue ... but I'm taking it from the ... where the students come from ... yeah ... but if my academic performance is about my ... how I interpret, internalise and manifest some of these concepts in my life, in my thinking, in the things I want to do ... in the things I am actually doing ... whatever lah ... in BZSE that they do ... their projects and so on ... erm ... and in terms of how it is increasing my SE quotient ... however you measure that ... so not the concepts per se, but how this actually increases my fluency towards being this effective SE person out there ... then I would say, yes ... because I would very much want to ... because then the ... one big area of how I learn

would be observing ... and imbibing ... er ... habits and practices of an actual person. So basically ... I wrote it somewhere ... in answer to question 3, I said ... yes ... the mentoring model actually provides me with a living example ... a living case study ... a living example ... it's actually the content in action ...ok ... the content of SE, but in action. Er ... and no matter what, your academic curriculum cannot put that across to the student. Because it all becomes second and third hand report already. But here, I am there. I am watching it in love colour, and I am reflecting on it as in ... so it's reflection before, in and through and after action ... kind of thing.

(Interview 8 In 554-560)

R: Well ... one of the concerns that I have had, I mentioned ... is that when we try to articulate with the University, right ... erm ... that one is ... as I said ... competes in terms of focus ...

Fac: some conflict in that sense?

R: Yeah ... especially with our focus of mentoring ... specifically mentoring ... because ... as I said ... if we give it to exam, then the mentoring ... you know ... so it's something that we have to find a balance ...

(FG BZSE2 In 157-161)

Urm ... regarding the mentoring and improving student academic performance ... like I see like how does the mentoring help with the academic ... I don't see that, because academic performance is like from all the exams and tests which test on theoretical concepts. Those things are very dead. When we talk about mentoring, its more about learning from other people's experience and these are more dynamic aspects, academic performance are more of the theoretical things. Maybe I am wrong, but I can't see the link between them.

(Interview 4 In 294-309)

Fac: ok ... some have highlighted things like ... the perseverance, the resilience, because it's not easy ... it's even more difficult as a social entrepreneur compared to an entrepreneur... because you want it to succeed right ... then you also want it to have that social cause ...

K: yes... yes ... but I am more thinking in terms of the time frame that they have ... sometimes you tend to close one eye lah ... ok ...because ... for me, basically, I am also very concerned that I am affecting their results ... end of the day, you tell me they are all graded ... that is something I always am very fearful that they may cause them to not do so well ... so ... whether ... while it's a valid concern ... but whether is there a way to address that, I am not sure ... because they definitely have to finish it within the time that you have ...

Fac: yes ... it's part of their deliverables ...

K: yah ... so, in that sense, sometimes I would say you would tend to accept it, even if they don't do it quite right ... right ... er ... so ... perseverance is one thing ... but no matter how ... you still have to do it within that time ... and so ... I am not sure ... I thought about that ... but whether it's fair to expect perseverance when they have that sort of pressure behind ...

Students operating strategically

(Interview 5 In 67-68)

... they found that they are told more than they want to know ... so they will say ... ok ... enough already ...

(Interview 5 In 84-85)

... but when you teach them FEAR ... fear of failure, fear of getting too low marks ... fear of not handing the right answer ... fear, fear, fear ... then it's terrible ...

5. IDEAS FOR A NEW CONSTRUCT

Personalised Learning Environments

(Interview 2 In 588-590, 705-709)

Ln 588-590

something needs to be done to prepare the student ... erm ... to enable the student, maybe it's a better word ... to enable the student to actually be more involved in his or her own development ...

Ln 705-709

... if you look at some of the literature in eLearning now ... and social networks and so on and so forth ... and learning lah ... basically ... they talk about personal learning environments ... and in your personal learning environment, one of the key activities they ask you to do is to construct your personal learning ... I mean ... you know ... make visible lah huh, in whatever format you want ... your personal learning environment ... and it forces you to integrate the formal and the informal ...

(Interview 10 In 141-152)

... so to put that kind of framework in BZSE ... maybe we can chop it to 3 parts ... year 1, year 2 –certain items should be addressed ... year 3 – and so on, you know ... but ... yeah ... you must, we must address the values ... you know ... and that is very important ... that is very huge component ... and maybe when they first come in year 1, you want to visit the idea of – WHO YOU ARE and WHAT YOU ARE ... you know ... WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES? WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IN? ... then about ... they should reflect on their life experiences ... and from childhood days until now ... you know ... erm ... walk that journey again ... we have to ask certain questions they have to address that you see ... in this journal whatever ... and ... but must match to some of the goals we are trying to reach ... and then they may have to ... at year 3, look back at this ... what they wrote in year 1 ... and whether they need to rewrite that ... or what ... or affirm some of these things and add on ... or whatever ... you know ... and also, I think they must know what are their strengths and weakness through some of these very ... there are some very good personality tests in the market ... we don't have to reinvent them ...

Mentoring Roadmap

(FG BZSE1 In 501-524)

K: Yeah ... then from there, it's only natural that I work out another method, another framework, for instance ... to build up how one can apply anything they learn, everything they learn, into their lives ...

Fac: So, who works that out? You yourself work it out for yourself?

K: If it's me facing the problem, yeah, I will work out ... but then if there are people around me facing the problem, we will get together and give our points of views ... cos usually or some people learn ... whatever they learn, they learn for the sake of learning ... for the sake of scoring well, for the sake of the cert ... but whatever they learn, it's all confined in their head ... they don't apply it ... they don't know what to apply ... they don't know how to apply ... so when they face a problem, they don't know what to do ... so that is only being book smart ... streetwise, they are super dumb ... so what we can do on a general level now ... what I propose is that ... there must be a moderation between how much you learn and how much you apply ... when lecturers teach you things, they must teach you how to apply it ... to a certain problem ... so that's how the framework should be framed out ... so that everyone gets the best benefit in future ... they do anything regarding this ...

Fac: So you are suggesting that ...at the end ... or at various points that there will be a bit like a checkpoint for yourself?

K: Yah ... for you to apply whatever ...

Fac: A reflection point of ... have you learnt, have you not learnt ... did you learn correctly ...

K: yah ...

(FG Faculty In 935-939)

... how do you help the student to map everything into this whole bigger picture to let them know that actually in my 3 years ... and even in this semester, I am learning different things that make a lot of sense to me in my ultimate goals or ambitions or career progression or whatever you want to call it ... to become

a social entrepreneur or set up a social enterprise .. you know ...but somebody somehow must help this student to do this.

Various mentor roles in the panel

(Interview 10 ln 345-450)

From year 1, to year 2 and year 3 ... but on the ... really for anyone to be mentored well, it's one-to-one, or one-to-a small group, and even sometimes for a group of students that we want to select for closer mentoring, and more intensive mentoring, that group of students should have a panel of mentors, because no one person I feel, can be the ideal mentor ... because the students have different needs ... different adult or peers can provide that different sounding board, sharing, network, or it may sometimes turn into a coaching session, then different people can fulfil those different areas of needs. Yah ...

(FG BZSE1 ln 701-704, 722-724)

Ln 701-704

I feel that also peers can be very good mentors. Because of the question part ... they dare to question ... and the other thing about lecturers being your mentors, I feel that they do not go through what we as students go through ... just like if they give certain assignments, we might have different mindsets from them .. because they might be more mature and so on and so forth ...

Ln 722-724

I feel that peers not only question you and give you different viewpoints ... they might also affect your viewpoints because who you hang out with is most likely who you will turn out like right The birds in a feather flock together ... yah ...

(Interview 6 ln 382-387)

... and to even be willing to share what they know ... because maybe some of them also want to do well ... so when you are like placed in charge of this small group ... you will also be empowered to not just be selfish, and keep mum about what you know ... but to share with you other friends ... but for the other friends, I feel it's good because for those who maybe do average and they join the small group ... they can also be quite motivate to do well ... so that they can in turn teach other students, and find that it's effective lah... when everybody learns together ...

(Interview 7 ln 382-387)

Ju: I think if we can encourage peer mentoring will be a lot better ... because ... HMS manpower don't know enough ...

Fac: maybe seniors and juniors ...

Ju: Seniors and juniors ... but we are around the same age ... when we are inspired by someone around the same age ... it's different from when someone 10 years older ... honestly it's lot of difference ... when I know like ... someone around my age ... like ... there's character ... this person has ... you know ...

Fac: Peers can be part of the network ... and you think can be powerful to inspire the students ...

Ju: Definitely will inspire the students ... but need to be very wise who you choose as your student mentors ...

(Interview 8 ln 531-543)

R: erm ... yah ... I think we should, for example ... implement a lot of things ... especially the ones that involve from the students coming up ... the student committee for example ... the peer mentoring ... er ... we need to strengthen the peer mentoring ... we should make them, for example, accountable to each other ...

Fac: Some formality in peer mentoring ... I mean ... I don't think that is existing at all now ... if at all, it's really, really informal ...

R: yeah ... but we for example, want them to be able to activate their own resources ... I want them to come to us and tell us, for example ... who needs help with what ... and they decide what kind of help, and just ask us for help in the resources, for example ... erm ... that should be the case, if they could have their own academic committees themselves, and they decide ... who and what ... erm ... that's practising the SE lifestyle, you know ... knowing who is the weaker among the group and helping them up ... in a way, that is a microcosm of their society, right ... and learning how to help each other ... that's one ... I would start with that ...

(Interview 10 Ln 468-474)

... can the mentor steer the person to say ... but it's almost like a coach you know ... so the line is very very thin ... actually if you say ... because ... but in our academic profession here, the mentor is almost a coach ... it's very very close to a coach ... so because time is so short .. I cannot let the student be totally derailed and do something that ... I know it's not going to work ... and I will say that .. "No ...I don't think you should do that ... you should cut the proposal into half, and just concentrate on part one and not do part 2 for example ... that's one possibility" ... or that I said "that idea is very very good, but I think you should combine with so-and-so ...and there are all these other challenges that you should look into , etc" ...

(Interview 1 Ln 172-178, 49-53)

Ln 172-178

... I give an example using the "shoe" project as you understand... They are very passionate about the shoes, but again when we looked at the shoe, we tell them ... competition is tough ... you need to be realistic ... but because the passion is there ... alright ... we as a mentor do not discourage them ... we allow them to explore ... because ultimately, we still want them to come to a desired outcome that is still passionate ... so we do not let the passion die ... we allow them to explore ... we allow them to make mistakes ... and when they make mistakes, we can correct them on time... so in the process when they explore ...during the mentoring, we will explain the them ...

Ln 49-53

I would think that because of the mentoring ... we shorten the process of the students getting to the marketplace. In fact, we help them to ... I won't say leapfrog... but at least to go straight into the marketplace where [without mentoring] they could have made more mistakes themselves, or where they could have given up on the project... and even if students have executed the project, and we are still mentoring them, we could still ... put them back into the right path if they should deviate from the path of what we want them to do.

(Interview 10 Ln 633-640)

... If you really really want to help the student who is being mentored, to understand and pull together all these different mentoring relationships that they are becoming aware of, there must be a Chief Mentor ... like a Mentor at Large ... that coordinates the mentoring sub-components, and say hey ... because I find students must ... even adults, not just students ...we all fight very hard sometimes, to map it all together for ourselves. It's very difficult. We don't realize it. And that all these link up together in a very meaningful manner if we only see the picture for it ourselves. So I think you know someone right in the centre here ... in a sense pulling it together for ... so if you really really ... because you are talking about duration of time ... and you are going to measure it .. they are going to have 3 years with us ...

(FG BZSE1 Ln 181-188)

...because ... it's easier for me to focus and communicate with only one mentor ... for a very long period of time ... because ... slowly, as you move on you get a better understanding not only on the topic you are on, but of each other ... not only just building a mentor-student relationship, but then we slowly get to become friends, and people who are able to share anything we have in mind with each other ... whereas if there are various mentors, it's very difficult for me to communicate with one in the same way I do as to another. So maybe for one person, one of the mentors I will be able to share a lot ... but then when I move on to the other mentor, it is possible that there is no link between us ... then whatever I want to share, I will feel uncomfortable sharing ...

(Interview 6 Ln 237-245)

I think it's quite helpful, because in terms of this structure that we have right .. it's more of to the advantage side than disadvantageous ... because when you have a "chief mentor" or kind of like a main core team of mentors ... then it's good because they are more likely in charge, then when you have a varied spread,

then students can also go to the specific ones ... the specific diversions of aspects ... in terms of Business, or social enterprise ... that kind ... so I think it's not a bad idea ... especially when you just start ... because when you just zoom straight into specific mentors or just one person, sometimes, maybe we can ... sort of by circumstance, maybe get more of those who are in the business side one ... then it may become very skewed to one side of social enterprises, and may become very difficult ... so the "chief mentor" sounds fine ... actually, it's a good start for students who are yet to be exposed ...

(Interview 2 In 120-130)

And that's why the other ... the "wiser", the "chief" comes in ... erm ... and whether they get to select their chief, and whether their chief needs necessary to be an NP person, or someone else ... again we ... you know ... I mean ... blank slate lah ... we can put all these things down ... erm ... but going back to are they mature at this point ... mature enough to actually tell you ... ok, I need ... I think I am weak here ... or I would like to develop here ... or whatever it is ... are they matured enough to actually do that ... I think that is a struggle that actually NP has gone through.. with the I&E framework.. where ... technically, the premise that it was built on was that the students were able to ... that they had already developed very good reflective skills in term of their own needs, their own strengths etc..etc..etc.. And I think we can safely say that that premise has been tested and is not working as well. It's not working for the majority. There are students who are already there and ready to fly. But the majority are unable to. And the fact that they are unable to already predisposes them to failure through that whole experience. It is already turning them off. And whoever you put as a mentor is just seen as a pain.

Matching Strategies

(Interview 8 In 250-265)

Fac: So I am just saying that ... should it be even in the framework ... that allowance for convincing ... so, we say ... ok ... we will mentor if you are interested to be mentored ... come and pitch to us ... or something ...

R: erm ... I think the onus is on us not to lose anyone ... there could be different constraints for the students, that they don't have the chance, or they don't know how to make a pitch for example ...

Fac: or maybe we ... for a start, like you say ... it's for all ... then, those who want further ... to pitch ... or something like that ...

R: yes yes ... that is correct ... even the second one might be show interest, you know ... because they will be constrained for time and other resources ... so you will know who will make the effort ... and then the next one will probably be pitched depending on the resources you want to spend on them ... in terms of mentoring ... if it's really quite intensive resource, then they will probably have to compete for it ... like, you know ... we have an expert who can only mentor 5 ... or in our case if we had to travel and bring them abroad, then we can only bring so many ... so these are the things ... but the other ones which are low usage of resource should be offered to everyone ... that is my take ...

(Interview 7 In 289-317)

Ju: I mean ... pitching for a mentor is like ... because if they pitch for the mentor ... they may not know the mentor yet ... but ... they may pitch because of credentials, like you say ... like this person may be a bit more recognised than the other mentor ... a lot of people will want to pitch for this mentor ... but then ... some people may not ... but I feel that ...

Fac: What can work?

Ju: What can work ... I think must strategise ... I think firstly must know that person's personality ...

Fac: How would you know? Let's say you come in as a Year 1 student ...

Ju: Personality test lor ... for me ... what I am doing in my church ... DISC ... I know every member's DISC ... so I ask them to take a test ... then ... I know they are "I", "S" ... so what happens is ... every year, Easter we have a lot of people ... and then usually when we have a lot of new friends ... one member will have one whole group of new friends, and usually it's very intimidating for the member ... because you are like one person and you are running around talking to everybody ... so ... this year what I did was ... I tried a buddy system ... like pairing them up ... like 2 persons ... so how I did was ... I know this person is an "I" ...

he can talk non-stop ... and talk until the cows go home ... so, I will not pair him up with another "I" ... because it will not fully utilise all my members ... so I will pair an "I" with a "S" ... same thing, I cannot pair a "S" ... a person that always don't want to talk ... very quiet ... will sit down ... I will not pair him with another "S" ... 2 of them could just sit down there and do nothing ... you know ... so I'll probably pair an "I" and a "S" together ... or an "I" and a "C" together ... or a "D" and a "S" together ...

(Interview 5 Ln 462-469)

Fac: which is why I was thinking ... should there be a pitching ... you know like ... let's say I want J.S to be my mentor ... but would J.S. want me to be his mentee ... so how would I convince you that I am worth to be your mentee ...

J: yah ... and that process can be something of self-discovery ... good ... this is good ... where they pitch for the mentor of their choice ... and why they ... how they can in their own words ... if you try and coach them, then they will come out with the right answer, and I will be fooled, right ... their own words ... I think they have to ... yeah ... once you get a good match, then they become friends, you know ... then it's very interesting ...

(Interview 4 Ln 166-171, 571-576)

Ln 166-171

... like you say, they also give feedback they want to choose their mentor ... but on the other hand you also don't want to totally leave them to choose their mentor .. because you want to make sure that they are mentored by an expert or specialist in the correct area .. because as you say ... also, you are anchoring your curriculum .. so ... you may want to consider having a panel of ... you know ... different expertise in different areas ... and maybe your idea of pitching for it ... because a mentor can only handle so many people ...

Ln 571-576

yeah ... which is why I am suggesting that you have a panel ... right ... these are 10 possible mentors ... they have expertise in different areas ... you approach them ... but at the end of the day you must tell me which one you choose .. or like you say ... pitch for it ... they must have mentors for specific areas that they want to be involved... so ... not for them to manage the network per se, but at least have that panel available for them ... right .. because I mean it's probably easier for you to find the mentor than for them to find the mentor ... and they may not know enough ...

Appendix 8 - Soule: A student-initiated social enterprise project

Appendix 8a

(Peh, 2008)



NPPath

It's A Shoe-in!

We get to the bottom of things with these shoe-lovin' souls who started a social enterprise to help the poor. *text: Joyce Peh photo: Eliza Phua*

Everyone gets excited when they see a "buy one, get one free" sign. But what about a "buy one, give one free" sign? Wouldn't that be something?

Such was the thought that prompted Justine Lee, a first-year Business and Social Enterprise (BZSE) student, to launch a project he calls Project Selfless Shoe. It all began when Justine heard his church pastor share an experience about an overseas trip he took, where he met poor locals who could not afford shoes. "This resulted in cuts and bruises that led to life-threatening diseases and infections," recounts Justine.

The story even inspired him to enrol in the pioneer cohort of NP's BZSE course. And as luck would have it, that's how he heard about the Mayor's Imagine Social Enterprise (MISE) Challenge, an initiative aimed at raising awareness of social entrepreneurship among youths and which provides a platform for them to start sustainable businesses.

His entrepreneurial spirit piqued, he shared his "buy one give one free" concept with his pals, John Tay, a second-year Business Studies (BS) student and Lim Jing Ying, a first-year Mass Communication (MCM) student. The result? SOuLE, a shoe brand which epitomises the trio's vision to provide soles for every soul. With every pair of their canvas shoes sold, they planned to donate a pair to a child who needs it more, be it an orphan or a poor student.

It was the perfect collaboration: Justine's BZSE background and unflinching passion, John's financial knowledge and Jing Ying's Mass Comm training all came in handy while planning their social enterprise. Still, the inexperienced Justine recalls knocking on the doors of countless shoe retailers just to get the contact of a shoe supplier. "It was very discouraging, but I didn't know how else to go about it, so I just kept on trying," he says.

Thankfully, help came in the form of Ms Joyce Tang, a lecturer from NP's School of Humanities, and other advisors who stepped in to guide the team along. It paid off: in August 2008, Sole Makers emerged as one of the six winning teams, out of the 40 participating squads. Their sound business plan even won them the second prize, and with it, a whopping \$25,000 funding!

The passion-driven gang has already started taking orders for their shoes, which retails at \$29.90 at their online shop, <http://selfless-shoe.blogspot.com>. "We want SOuLE to keep growing along with us. We can't wait to see what the future holds for us and for the needy we will help!" says Justine.



What's your shoe fetish?
Justine Lee: I think girls who wear slip-ons with a nice T-shirt and jeans are kinda cute.
John Tay: I can't resist buying basketball sneakers – I own seven pairs – until my mum snapped and banned me from buying more!
Lim Jing Ying: I have an uncanny ability to spot CHEAP shoes! I bought a pair of black boots at just \$10 at Mustafa, and my latest buy is a pair of \$5 polka dotted pumps.

What do your shoes say about you?
Jing Ying: I like comfortable shoes because I like to run around a lot, so perhaps that means I'm a very active and outgoing person?

Best shoes to wear while selling your SOuLE shoes?
John: No shoes on at all! What we wear, or in this case, what we don't wear can make a huge statement. It reminds our customers of our social cause – the thousands of uncovered feet in the world.

Best pair to wear to impress the opposite sex?
Justine: The SOuLE, of course! Take the opportunity to tell your date about our project, which aims to provide a sole for every soul. It's a sure way to impress a girl and show that you have a good heart.
Jing Ying: Maybe a pair of heels, but I don't really need to wear shoes to impress!

Do you have a pair of lucky shoes?
Justine: Yes! I have a pair of Warrior shoes from China, which I bought just for playing street soccer. I once scored three goals in a row in them! Oh man, I really felt like a hero!

Best way to wear a pair of SOuLE sneakers?
Jing Ying: Do it your style, your way. ☺ SOuLES are for everybody!

(From left) John Tay, Lim Jing Ying and Justine Lee

hyper 15

(Teo, 2010)

Be a sole-mate to a poor child

Ngee Ann Poly students go the extra mile in selling flip-flops to help children in China who can't afford proper shoes

By EISEN TEO

IT IS hard to imagine, with overflowing shoe cupboards in Singapore, that the children of villagers in the mountains of rural Yunnan, south-west China, can afford only flattened mineral water bottles tied to their feet with string.

That is their footwear for the three-hour, 10km treks that many must endure to get to school every morning.

Their abject poverty touched Mr Justine Lee, 19, when working with communities in Yunnan for two weeks in September 2008.

The business and social enterprise student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic decided to set up a business selling flip-flops to buy shoes for the children.

For every pair sold, he pledged to buy a pair of shoes and deliver them himself when he had enough.

He roped in two close church friends – Mr John Tay, 20, and Miss Lim Jing Ying, 18, both also from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

Calling themselves Soule, they set up a website (www.selfless-shoe.blogspot.com) in January and ran pushcarts in their school and on the National University of Singapore campus. So far, they have sold more than 200 pairs of flip-flops.

Their aim is to sell 307 pairs and buy a pair of shoes for each of the 307 pupils at Quannei Village Sunshine Elementary School in Lincang, western Yunnan.

The school is one of six primary schools in rural China built by local non-profit organisation CityCare to promote education.

But getting the business up and running was no walk in the park, and saw them scouting for suppliers in Singapore, Malaysia and China.

Many manufacturers did not treat the youths seriously. Some did not give them the colours or sizes they wanted, and others dragged their feet on sending them samples for months at a time.

It was a sobering experience. "We are idealists but we also learnt what it's like in the business world," said Mr Tay.

Last October, they cobbled together \$500 from part-time jobs to travel to Ipoh, Malaysia, where they finally found a supplier willing to offer them flip-flops at an attractive price.

Once the first batch of 325 arrived this January, the compassion of strangers took over.

Many mistook Soule for an outright charity and wanted to simply donate money without taking the slippers as well.

Soule's business plan later bagged the first prize of \$3,000 at the inaugural Young Social Entrepreneurs 2010, a five-day camp and competition organised by the Singapore International Foundation from March 3 to 7.

The participants attended workshops and were judged by social entrepreneurs such as Mr Kevin Teo and Ms Elin Chew.

Soule impressed Mr Teo, who in June 2008 founded Volans Asia, a consultancy that helps corporations with social responsibilities. "The team has an innovative approach to addressing rural poverty while fostering empathy in developed-world customers," he said.

But the trio, he added, will have to develop beyond its current "buy one, give one" model to maintain customer interest.

The Soule trio agree, and their upcoming plans include selling T-shirts and sneakers, promoting their cause to retail outlets, and even operating their own pushcart in a shopping mall.

"Eventually, we want to supply school uniforms and bags to the poor students too," said Mr Tay. "Motivate the kids to go to school because that's one of the ways out of poverty."

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