

Engaging students in the capacity of student mentor: Does it enhance their employability skills?

Miss Karolina Klimczak, Dr Vivek Indramohan, Professor John Deane

This session aims to:

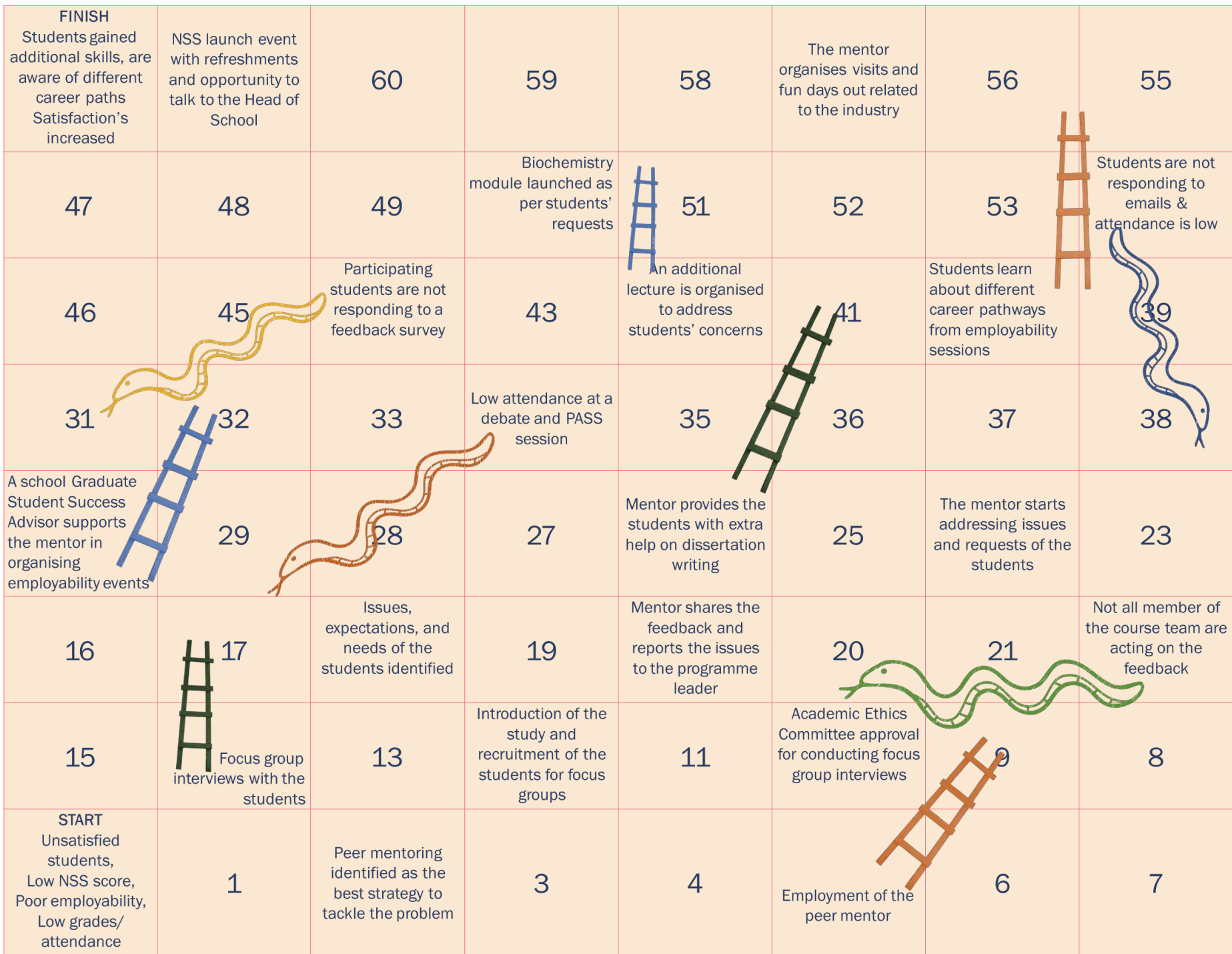
- Explore the rationale of undertaking the study
- Share the methodology adopted to implement the proposed intervention in response to the problems identified
- Discuss various bottlenecks that a novice academic staff member experienced while engaging in such an educational research

Problem / Rationale

- Improvement of satisfaction, academic achievements, and employability of students undertaking a STEM programme.
- Peer mentoring was deemed as an intervention that would be beneficial for both the mentor and the mentees

Methodology Adopted

- Funding acquirement – Education Commissioning for Quality (ECQ)
- Recruitment of Student Mentor or Research Assistant (Part time)
- Ethical Approval
- Participants recruitment - 70% of the cohort signed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study of their perceptions and experiences.
- Data collection: Focus group interviews were used to identify the issues and needs of the cohort and to plan interventions.
- The activities organised by the student mentor were available to all students of the cohort and following each intervention student experience was evaluated.



Results

- 91.7% of the participating students responded to a survey after 2 months from the implementation of the project.
- They agreed that the study gave them opportunities to share feedback about their course and that they feel this feedback is being acted on. Additionally, taking part in the study positively affects their sense of belonging to the university.

Results (Cont....): Quotes from Students....

'Gave me a great insight into the food industry something which is in my interest'

'Yes, the session was very good. Great current information for planning my future'

'It has given me a wider view into nutrition field'

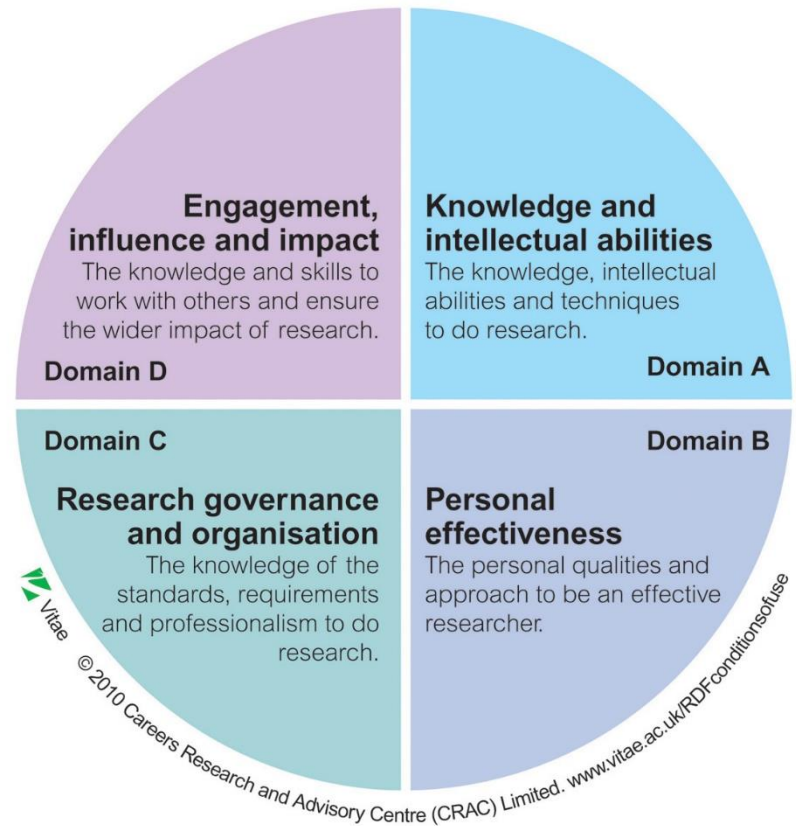
'The information was very valuable to my future career plans'

Reflection from Student Mentor / Research Assistant

- Teamworking with the faculty staff
 - Working with the faculty stakeholders
 - Event organisation
 - Conducting focus group interviews
 - Preparing questionnaires
 - Public speaking and delivering sessions for students
 - Preparing and presenting conference posters
 - Liaising with a range organisations
 - PASS supervisor training (the mentor can both deliver and supervise PASS sessions)
 - Time management
-

BCU Graduate Attributes at Undergraduate and Postgraduate Level:

- is professional and work ready
- is a creative problem solver
- is enterprising
- has a global outlook



Food for thought...

- What are the pros and cons of involving student RA's / Mentors in a scholarly activity?
- Is there anything that you would need to specifically consider in your own area of expertise that might help or hinder the process of involving students as co-researchers?
- Can you identify the streams that are available for staff within your faculty/institution that would support you to undertake a similar activity if need be ?
- Do you recon that engaging student mentors is a win-win situation?

Thank you....