



# Reimagining the First Year Experience through Peer Mentoring

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UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND,  
JOHANNESBURG



100  
1922  
2022



# Overview



# The Wits First Year Experience

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100  
1922  
2022

# The Journey: Academic-Social Transition & Engagement

Gateway to  
Success  
[Orientation]



The First Year  
Experience  
Programme



Peer Mentoring

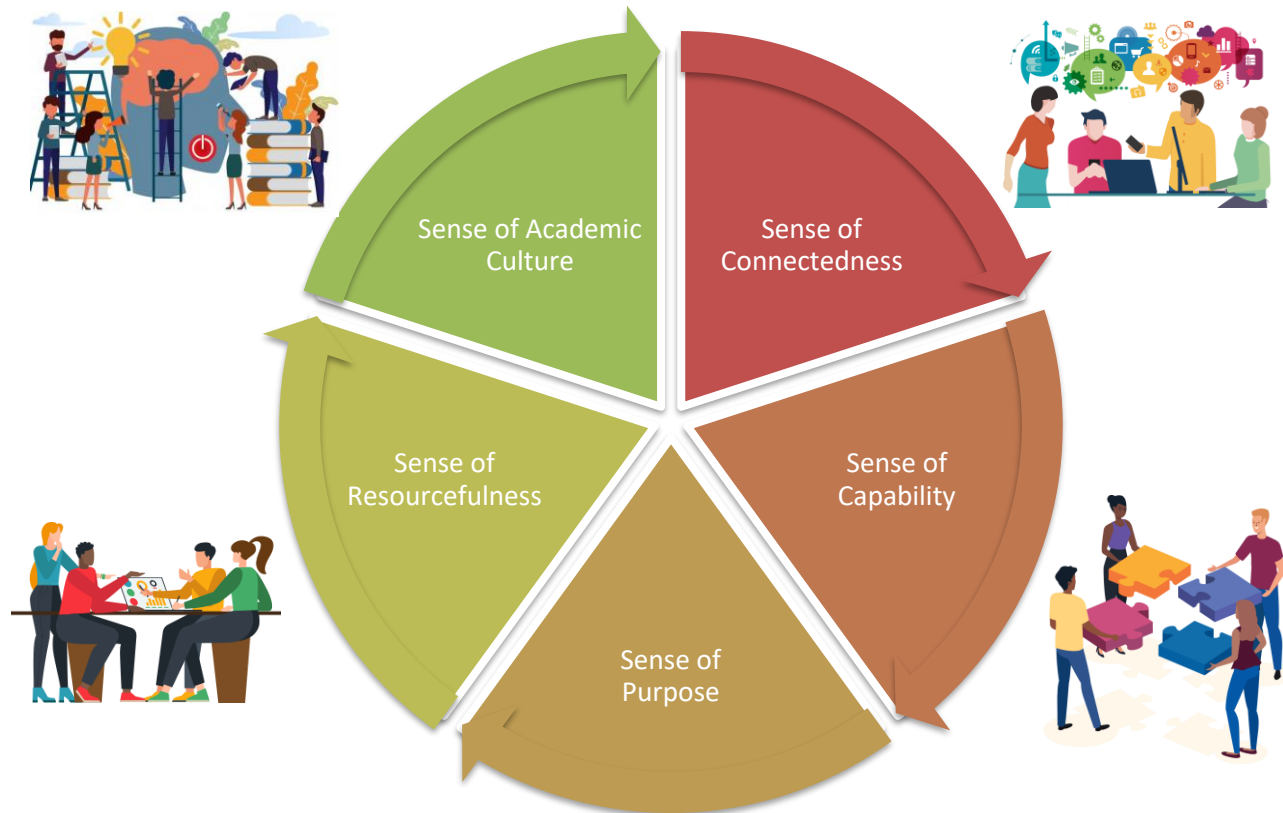


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# Gateway to Success



Lizzio's Five Senses of Successful Transition

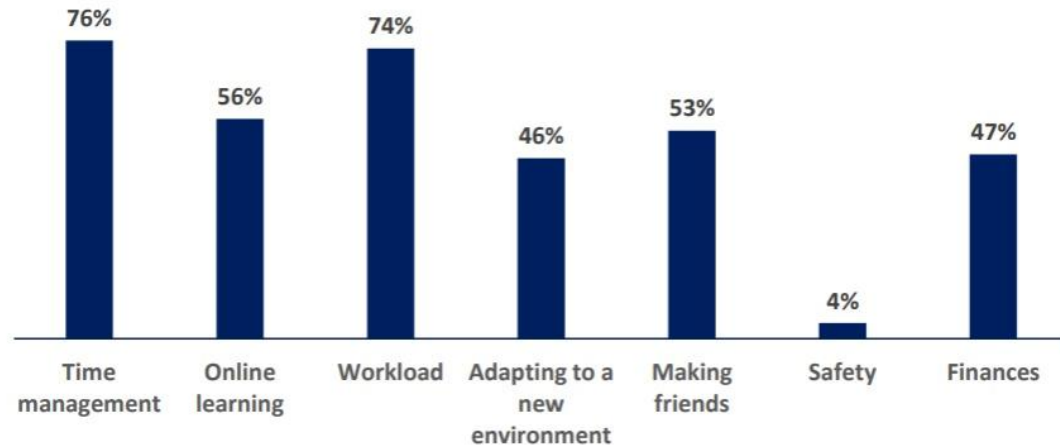
# Gateway to Success Student Life Component

Sense of Academic Culture	Sense of Connectedness	Sense of Capability	Sense of Purpose	Sense of Resourcefulness
The Grid	Dean of Students Address	<b>Personal Mastery First Year Experience Programme</b>	<b>Peer Mentoring Programme</b>	Hollard Streetwise Finance
Wits Against GBV Night Run	Meet Your Mentor			Drama For Life: WITSFLUENCER
SRc Orientation: Amplify Your Voice Academically	Adjusting to University Life			Time Management
Young Alumni Talk	Your Mental Health Matters			Resilience
	SRc Orientation: De-Stress Zones			Support Services
	Wits Spirit Game			Communicate Effectively
	SRc Orientation: Meet Your SRc			
	Your Health Matters			

# Monitoring & Evaluation

# Review: 2021 First Year Experience Survey – General Challenges

Response:  
25% of  
First Years



- In the beginning of the year when students completed the Biographical Questionnaire, the above were mentioned as challenges they feared they would face. At the time of collecting data for the First Year Satisfaction Survey, the students reported that time management (76%) was the biggest challenge they were facing followed by workload (74%) and making friends (53%).

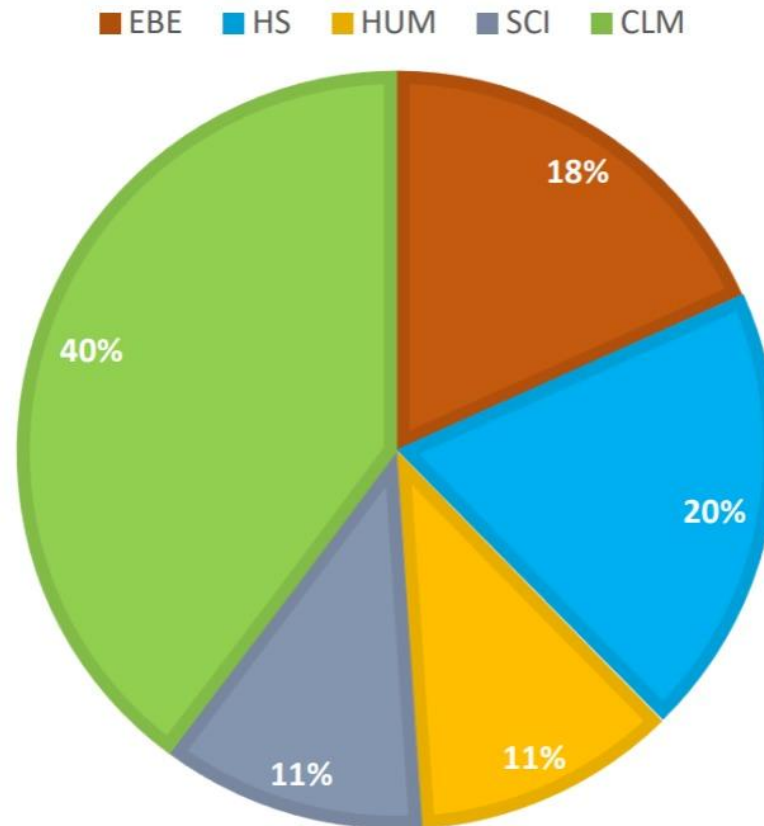


# Connecting the Dots



# Tracking Mentor Engagement: Mid-Year Review

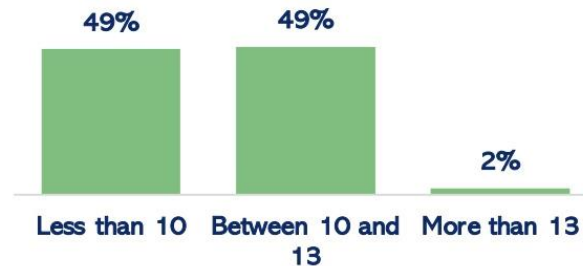
Ulwazi  
Engagement:  
30% of Mentors



# Review: 2022 Mentor-Mentee Engagement

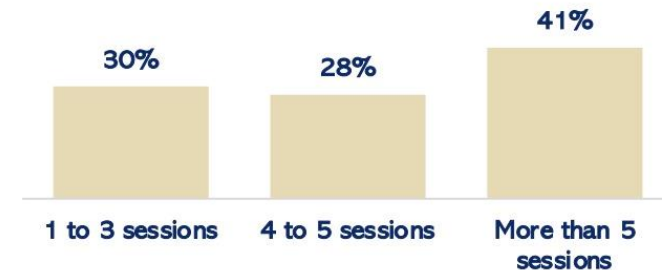
Response:  
25% of  
Mentors

Number of Mentees Allocated



*The findings reveal that only 2% of the mentors were allocated more than 13 mentees.*

Mentor Sessions Arranged Following GTS



*Slightly more than 40% of the respondents reported that they had organized more than five sessions following GTS.*

*Mentors who were allocated more than 13 mentors cited reasons related to being allocated mentees who did not have mentors, mentees from different faculties who did not have mentors and mentees who liked a specific mentor during GTS and therefore decided that they wanted to be mentored by the preferred mentors.*

# Review: 2022 Mentor-Mentee Engagement

Response:  
25% of  
Mentors

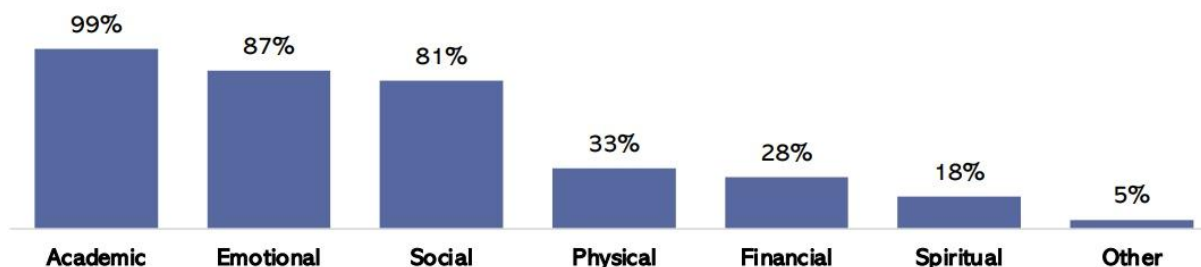
## Modes of Communication



**Other Modes of Communication:** Zoom, Google Meet and student email address.

*Most of the respondents used WhatsApp Calls and Chats to communicate with their mentees.*

## Session Topics Discussed



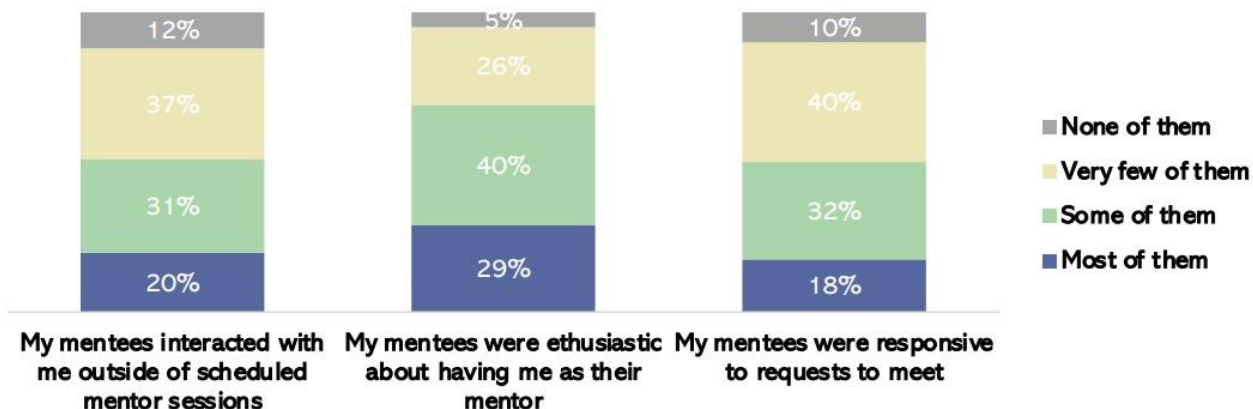
**Other Topics Discussed:** Work/employment related

*Almost all the mentors discussed academic issues during their sessions (99%), which was followed by emotional and social issues, 87% and 81% respectively.*

# Review: 2022 Mentor-Mentee Engagement

## Mentor-mentee Interactions

Response:  
25% of  
Mentors



*At least 20% of the mentors reported that most of their mentees interacted with them outside of scheduled mentor sessions and that they were enthusiastic about having them as mentors. Forty percent of the mentors indicated that very few of their mentees were responsive to requests to meet.*

# Co-Creating Peer Mentorship

# First Year Experience Stakeholders

Development  
& Leadership  
Unit



Student Equity  
& Talent  
Management  
Unit



Mentors



Faculties:  
CLM, EBE,  
HUM, SCI, HS



Counselling &  
Careers  
Development  
Unit





# Designing Across Spaces

How do we equip Mentors to Effectively Facilitate an Engaged Relationship to ensure the Student Success and Successful Transition of First Years from High School to University?





# Reimagining

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# Season's & Phases

Rapport  
Building



Progress  
Making



Moving  
On



Direction  
Setting



Winding  
Down



# Mentor Training & Development Programme Design

## Programme Purpose Statement

Equip mentors to effectively facilitate an engaged relationship to ensure the student success and successful transition of First Years from high school to university.

## Programme Objectives

- Equip selected reliable senior students (mentors) to act as optimistic, adaptive and collaborative peer support facilitators to first year students (mentees) through mentorship to bridge the gap of the transitioning period between high school and university.
- Provide mentors foundational leadership principles and an inclusive engagement support framework to connect to mentees, through courageous vulnerability, so that they can create safe spaces for mentees to express themselves.
- Establish a platform for mentors to be present, curious, and build a trusting, accountable, and responsible relationship between themselves and their mentees to create a proactive, shared, goal-orientated and caring relationship.
- To develop a platform for mentorship to be ethically practiced with integrity, through humility and a growth-mindset, so that mentees experience a considerate, respectful, none-judgmental and open-minded relationship and are partners in their learning journey.

# Mentor Training & Development Programme Design

## Programme Learning Outcomes

- Mentors will be able to understand and identify the phases of the mentoring journey and recognise applicable interventions.
- Mentors will be able to demonstrate personal leadership through emotional intelligence so that mentors provide the necessary support to their mentees.
- Mentors will be able to build an interpersonal relationship with their mentee(s) through social and cross-cultural intelligence to foster an authentic and vulnerable relationship to create a community of practice.
- Mentors will be able to examine a situation and construct an engagement framework with their mentee(s) using leadership, novel and adaptive thinking.

# Road Forward

Tracking  
System



FYE  
Programme  
Review



Co-  
Curricular  
Transcript  
Recognition



M&E



Mentor  
Experience  
Programme  
Review



# Let us Engage further!

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