BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE AND INSPIRATIONAL MENTOR & MENTEE RELATIONSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
RECIPROCAL LEARNING AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS, CHALLENGES, AND BEST PRACTICE

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- **Academic mentoring relationship**

- **Mentor's & mentee's reciprocal learning and emotional needs and benefits**

- **Mentoring challenges**

- **Strategies & best practice**

- **Case studies**

- **Final considerations**

Mentoring relationship

Mentoring is important to mentees in that it fosters professional *skill development, confidence, scholarly productivity, career advancement*, reduces *stress and enhances job satisfaction* (Mgaiwa & Kapinga, 2021; Harker et al., 2019).

Peer mentoring is a consolidated pedagogical practice to develop a sense of belonging to a community whilst enhancing the learning development of both mentees and mentors (Fox et al., 2010).

Reciprocal learning and emotional needs in Mentoring

Mentee's benefits

Professional development

- Professional skills development and exploration of the best decisions for career advancement (Marino, 2021; Harker et al., 2019).

Psychological well-being

- Mentee's positive self-image, psychological well-being and self-regulation (Marino, 2021; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Eby et al., 2008).

- Inter-personally supported in their career path (Oberhauser & Caretta, 2019; Linden et al., 2013).

- Young researchers' performance and career satisfaction (Diggs-Andrews et al., 2021; Beech et al., 2013; Shea et al., 2011).

Mentor's benefits

Objective career outcomes

- Promotion and salary (Kalpazidou & Faber, 2016; Allen et al., 2006; Gentry & Sosik, 2010).

Subjective career outcomes

- Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career satisfaction, and subjective ratings of job performance (Mendez et al., 2019; Chun et al., 2012).

- Positive impact on the academic personal environment (Diggs-Andrews et al., 2021; Beech et al., 2013; Shea et al., 2011).

We cannot teach people anything;
we can only help them
discover it within themselves.
Galileo Galilei

Building an effective mentoring relationship

Building a *trustable relationship*

Exploring mentee's *goals* and making an *action plan*

Helping mentee to *explore formative and professional needs*

Guiding your mentee to explore academic and no academic opportunities

Exploring the *challenges* that the mentee is facing

Facilitating *community building*/reciprocal support among mentees

(Bussu et al., 2018; Bussu & Burn, 2022)
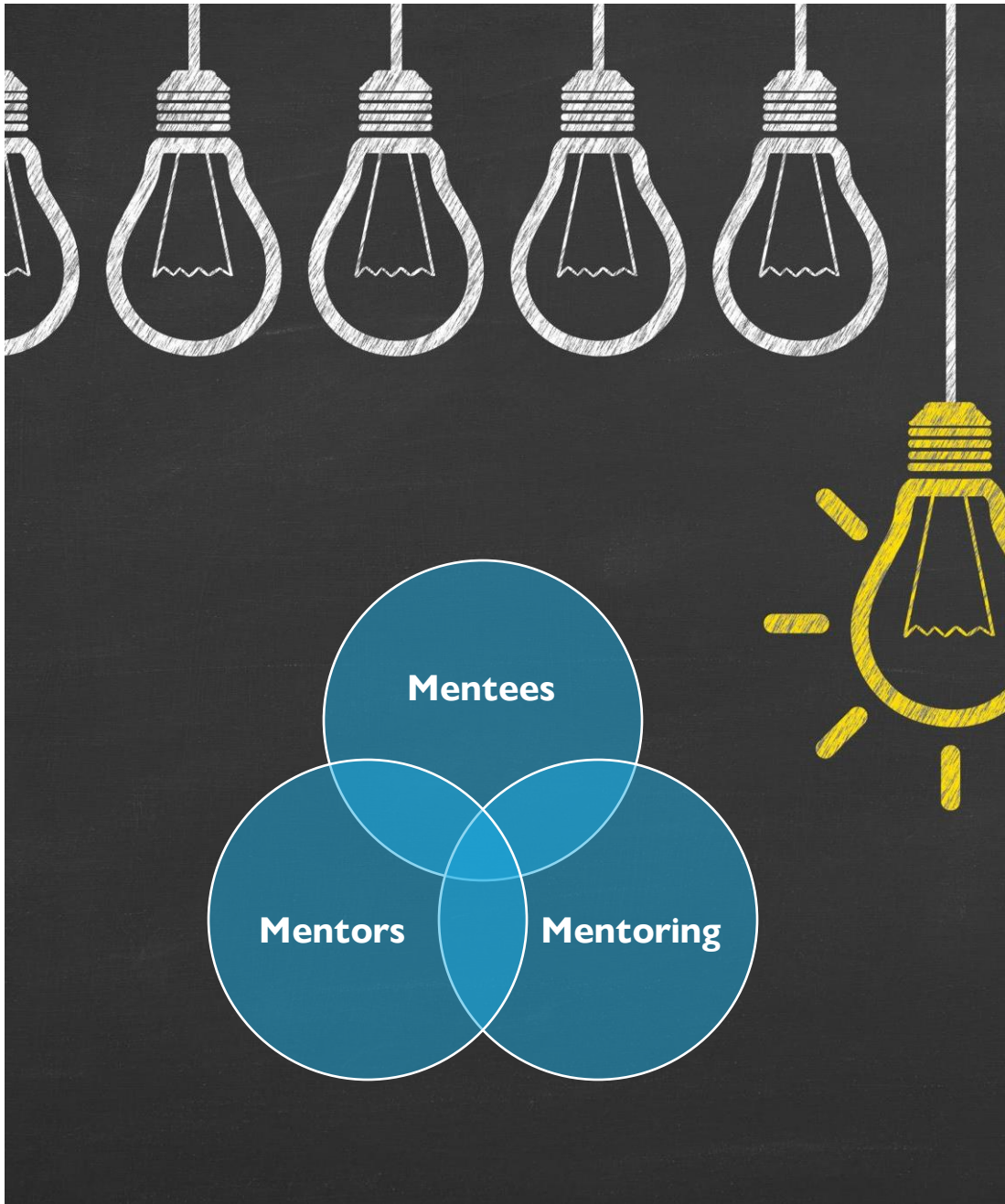
CHALLENGES

Mentee

- Mentee's low commitment &/or self-awareness;

- A mentee may not successfully meet agreed-upon goals because of personal difficulties or external problems;

- Some mentee problems may overstep the boundaries of mentorship;

- Mentors may need to assist mentees in the development of novel career pathways.

manipulator

jealous

(Barker, 2006)
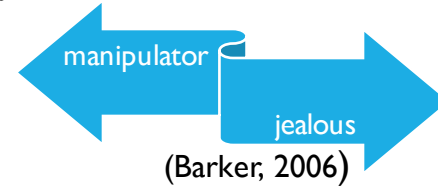
Mentoring

- Communication misunderstanding;
- No clear reciprocal expectations;
- Challenges may also arise because of the intensity of mentoring relationships and the potential for misunderstandings;
- Generational differences can significantly alter the mentoring relationship (Diggs-Andrews et al., 2021).

Mentees

Mentors

Mentoring

CHALLENGES

(Darling, 1986: Rahman, 2022)

Mentors

▪ **Mentors' self-awareness/leadership**

- Often academic **mentors are not adequately informed** about potential peer mentoring resources, tools and best practice, or training opportunities for developing peer mentor identities and duties that are consistent with high-quality mentorship (Diggs-Andrews et al., 2021).

- Frequently academic mentors adopt observational direct experiences to inform their mentoring practice and **they do have not the opportunity to discuss their own cases,** and how they have managed them, with experienced, trained peer mentors (Roosevelt et al., 2007; Pfund et al., 2014).

- To prevent a dominating relationship, academic Institutions can also implement a "**multiple mentoring"** approach, when different mentors support the mentees based on their own possibilities, skills, and abilities or *collective mentoring* when collectively senior colleagues and the department take responsibility for constructing and maintaining a mentoring team (Felisatti, Scialdone, Cannarozzo, & Pennisi, 2019).
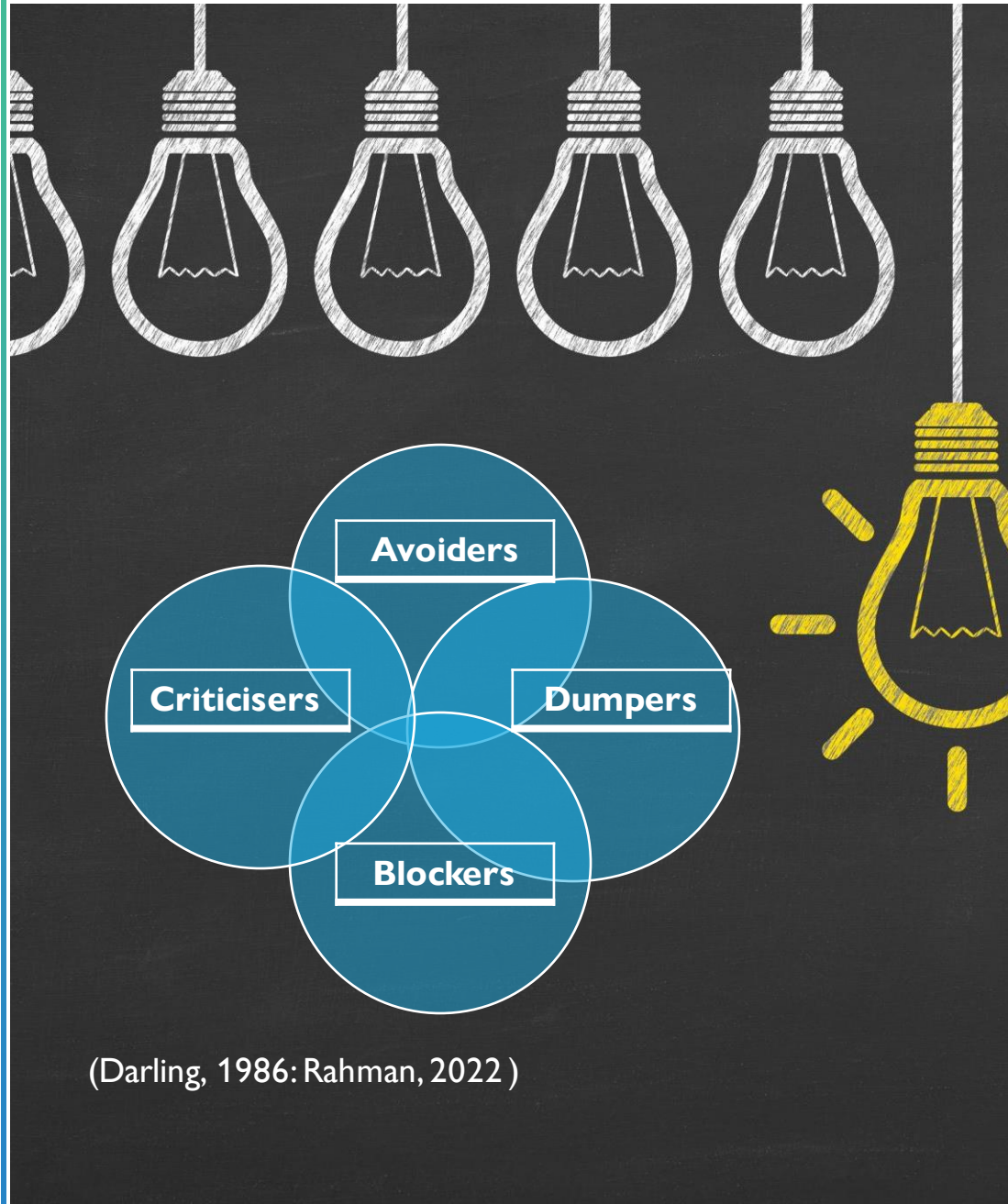
Goals setting & making an action plan

SMART — SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RELEVANT, TIME-BOUND

- Mentor-mentee Relationship/ agreement
- Problem Identification and Goal Setting.
- Resources
- Options/Activities
- Timetable

Tasks →

Grow Model

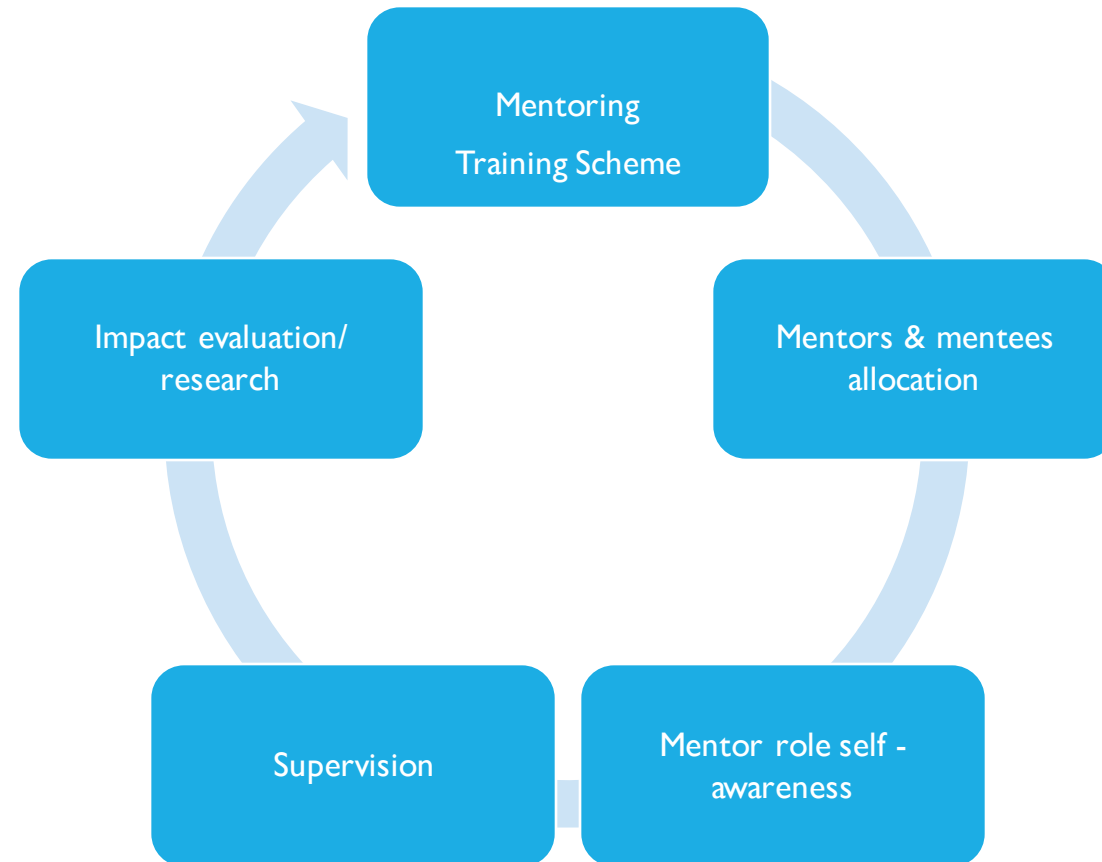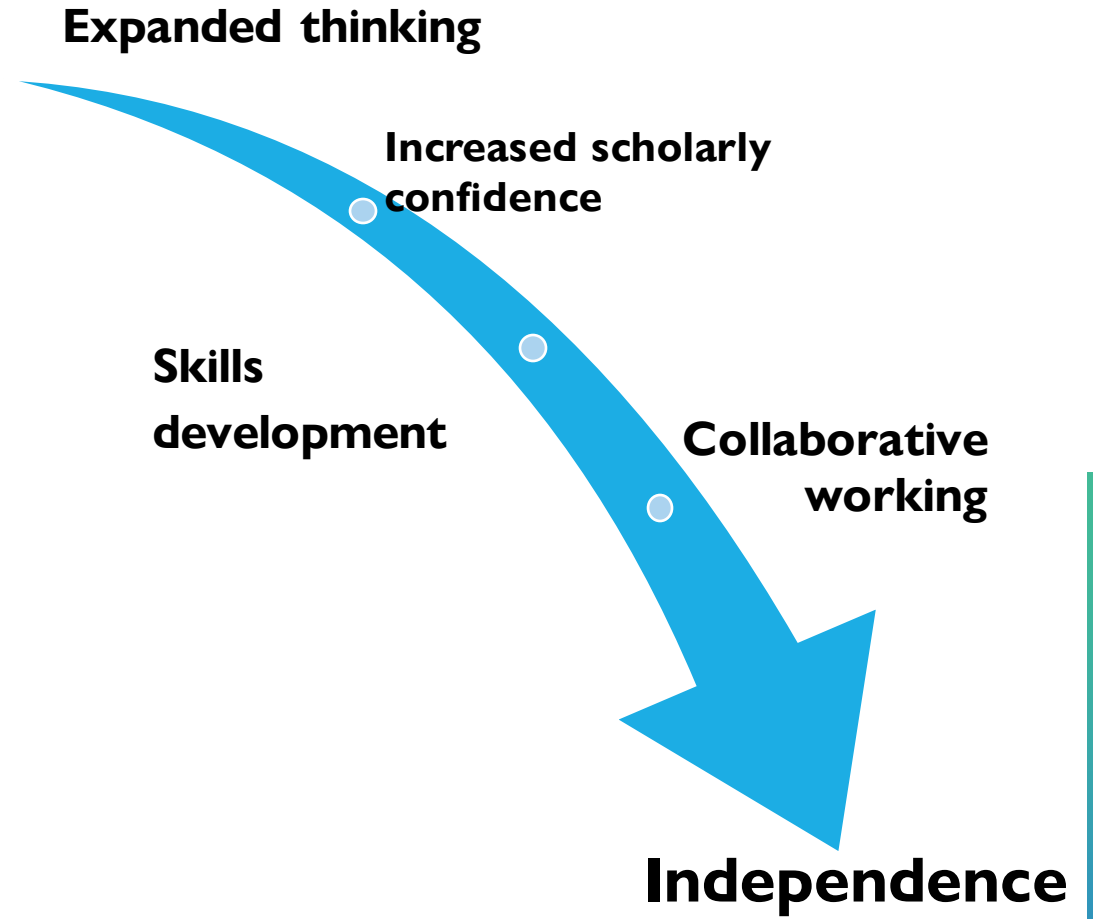| G	R	O	W
GOAL	REALITY	OPTIONS	WILL
What do You want?	Where are you now?	What could you do?	What will you do?
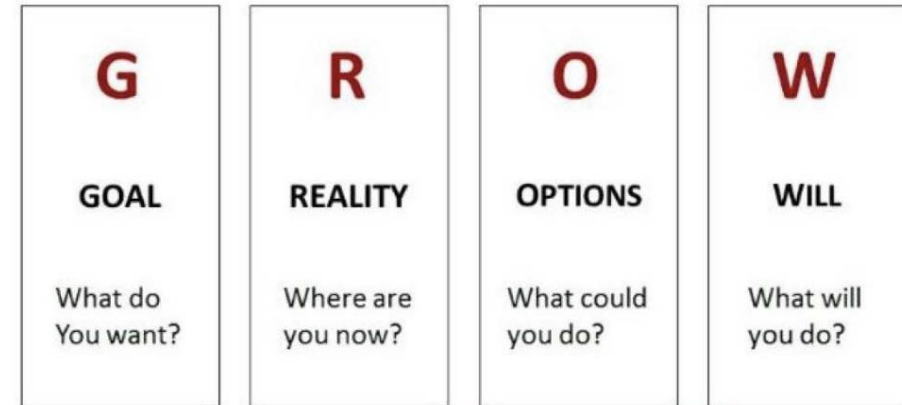
(see Grant 2020; Whitmore, 2002)

- ❖ **G (G-oals)**: goals and aspirations;
- ❖ **R (R-eality):** current situation, internal and external obstacles;
- ❖ **O (O-ptions):** possibilities, strengths and resources;
- ❖ **W (W-ill)**: actions and accountability.

STRATEGIES & BEST PRACTICE

Bussu, A., & Contini, R. M. (2022). *Peer mentoring universitario: Generare legami sociali e competenze trasversali*. FrancoAngeli.

STRATEGIES & BEST PRACTICE

**PERSONAL
&
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Expanded thinking

**Increased scholarly
confidence**

**Skills
development**

**Collaborative
working**

Independence

THE SAI MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE

Sociological Association Of Ireland

If you wish to take part as a mentor or mentee or if you have any questions, please contact us on/by April 31 st 2023 at saimentoring2023@gmail.com. You do not need to have any experience of being a mentor or mentee to participate. We will also match mentors and mentees so you do not have to source anyone yourselves. Mentors of all levels of career development are greatly appreciated, and will be matched appropriately with a mentee.
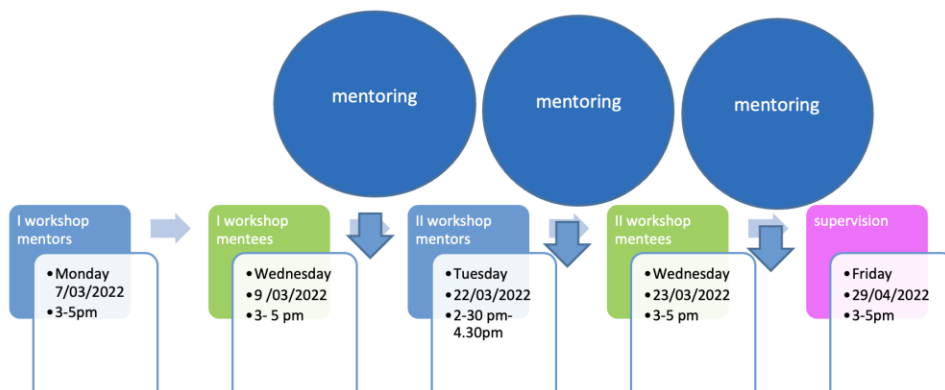
SAI - Sociological Associatio...
@Soc_Assoc_Ire

Exciting news! 🎉😱

SAI Mentorship Initiative Update 📢

After its amazing success last year, we've decided to run the SAI mentorship initiative again! Interested in this one-of-a-kind scheme? See below for more!

9:47 AM · Apr 18, 2023 · **795** Views

Results

❑ **Mentoring effectiveness**
❑ **Mentees' and mentors' satisfaction**

Best practice:
❑ **Peer mentoring training scheme and learning content for both peer mentors and mentees**
❑ **Supervision**
❑ **Peer mentoring allocation**
❑ **E-mentoring benefits (see e.g. Febria et al., 2022; Poppelaars et al., 2022)**

mentoring | mentoring | mentoring

I workshop mentors	I workshop mentees	II workshop mentors	II workshop mentees	supervision
•Monday 7/03/2022 •3-5pm	•Wednesday 9 /03/2022 •3- 5 pm	•Tuesday 22/03/2022 •2-30 pm-4.30pm	•Wednesday 23/03/2022 •3-5 pm	•Friday 29/04/2022 •3-5pm

CASE STUDY 2: STUDYCIRCLE PEER MENTORING SCHEME

Peer mentoring model "StudyCircle" implemented in Italy (2014-2015), Ecuador (2015-2016) and UK (2017-2-22) (Bussu et al., 2016; 2018; Bussu et al., 2020; Bussu & Burton, 2022).
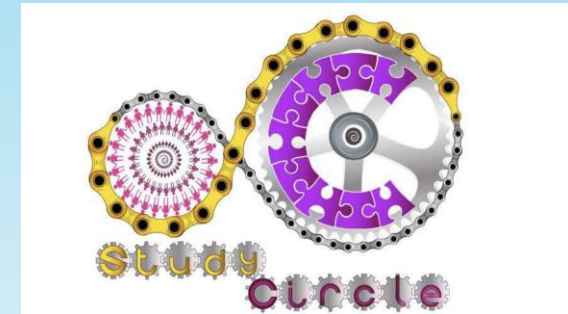

UK, University of Edge Hill 2017-to 22

Ecuador, University of Guayaquil 2015-16

Italy, University of Sassari 2014-15

Results

- ❑ Peer mentoring effectiveness
- ❑ Peer mentoring one-to-one/ group mentoring
- ❑ Mentees' and mentors' satisfaction
- ❑ Life skills development,
- ❑ Community building
- ❑ Peer Mentoring Accreditation (UK)
- ❑ Domino effect (e.g active participation in the academic governance/ activities with schools, public events)

Best practice:
- ❑ Peer mentoring training scheme
- ❑ Supervision
- ❑ Adoption of innovative and active methodologies and restorative practices
- ❑ MDA
- ❑ Impact evaluation

"StudyCircle is not a simple project; it is a 'way of life' that permits mature and interpersonal relations. I say this because I am autistic, and I had a communication problem, but by attending this training, I learning to overcome it." (Peer mentor)

How to enhance in Higher Education the mentoring relationship among academics to improve learning and teaching quality?

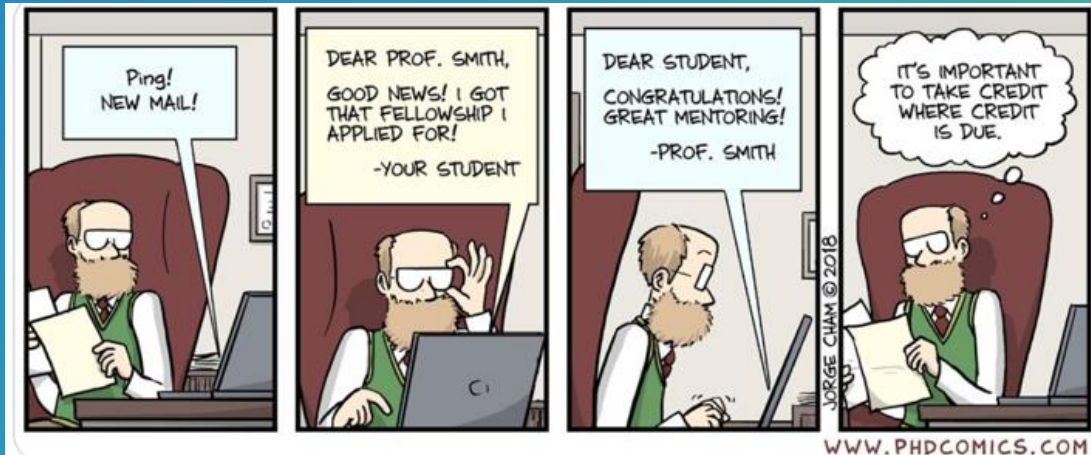Provide spaces for professional mentoring training

National policies

Provide adequate tools for mentors and mentees to effectively build and nurture positive relationships

Institutions need to actively support and offer mentoring initiatives
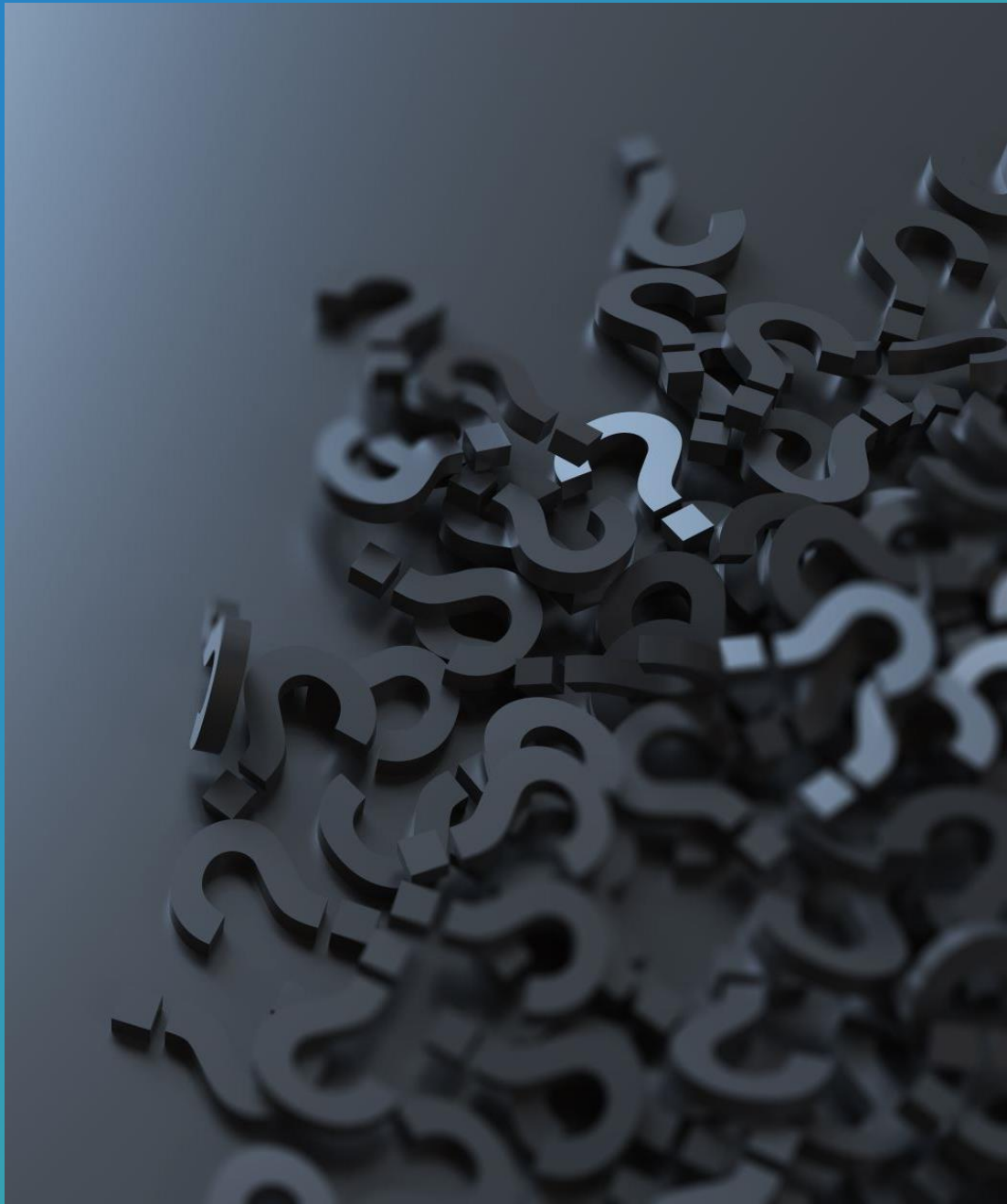
Final considerations

Academic mentoring is a crucial undertaking.

Senior academics need to see mentoring as part of their professional responsibility.

Mentoring impact on senior academics.

Recognise and enhance mentors' roles in our institutions.

Thank you!
Any questions?

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