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Acquiring skills for a globalised world through a peer mentoring scheme: a UK law school experience

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Corresponding to the recent shifts on the significance of skills development in higher education, a peer mentoring scheme for international students by international students was integrated into the academic curriculum at Newcastle Law School. The aim of the scheme is to facilitate the development of skills and values of the appointed mentors that translate into the workplace and into life. This empirical article discusses, first, the place of skills today in institutions worldwide, and their influence in the globalised world of work and in the life of the graduates; second, the analysis of the relevant skills developed by mentors in their role as a mentor in the peer mentoring scheme; and third, how they transfer to the workplace.

1. External drivers and legal education¹

The dynamics of twenty-first century education are reshaping the aims of pedagogy by forging an appreciation of diversity, skills and values. Education sectors around the world aspire to mould graduates to become competent as both learners and workers. The significance of education today is not merely about the pursuit of knowledge. It also extends to personal development, skills and values. The recent Browne Report in the United Kingdom is proof of these ideals where it suggests a “closer fit” between what is taught in higher education and the skills needed in the economy.² As a result of an ongoing debate on the place of skills in the higher education agenda, Newcastle Law School pioneered its own skills enhancement programme through a peer mentoring scheme. It is envisaged that the scheme will develop the skills of the appointed mentors, while facilitating integration of the new international students into

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¹S. Kift, in her paper entitled “For Better or For Worse? 21st Century Legal Education”, Invited Presentation LAWASIA Downunder 2005, Gold Coast Convention Centre, March 2005, at 1, argues that graduates are entering a far different professional legal environment from that which pertained a decade ago, owing “to external drivers such as globalisation, competitiveness, and competition reform, information and communications technology and by a determined move away from the adversarial system as the primary dispute resolution method”.

²Browne Report, “Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education” (2010), available at www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report.pp23 (accessed 20 January 2011).

the academic curriculum found here. The scheme thereby seeks to “kill two birds with one stone” to achieve its fundamental aims: creating an environment or community among international students that is mutually co-operative and supportive. It is of significant value that mentors apply the skills acquired from the mentoring scheme when they seek employment after their study and also improve the quality of their lives in their respective communities. The aim of this research is not to prioritise skills enhancement over knowledge derived from classroom teaching, but to highlight the significance of the combination of appropriate skills and relevant knowledge in their delivery in the work environment and in life in general.³

1.1. *In the United Kingdom*

In the UK, attempts to integrate doctrinal study of the law with the practical aspects of a career date back to 1758, when Blackstone illuminated the twin purposes of an academic legal education as being a civilised education and a foundation for professional practice.⁴ This movement has now found a place in the paradigm of legal education in the UK in promoting skills as a useful feature in liberal legal education, and has found expression in many contexts. The fact that the United Kingdom is the second most popular destination for international students after the United States of America again demonstrates the need to maintain standards in line with other competing institutions across the globe.⁵ A focus on skills and their place in higher education is evident from the various reports and initiatives that have been implemented recognising the changes taking place in the social and economic sector. An example of this is seen from comprehensive studies commissioned by the government to address and assess skills acquisition and development, among other issues; for example, the Dearing Report (1997);⁶ the DfEE’s 1998 consultation paper, “The Learning Age”;⁷ the Report by the Lord Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct (ACLEC) (1996)⁸ and the Leitch Review of Skills

³G. Johnstone, “Liberal Ideals and Vocational Aims in University Legal Education” (1999) 3 Web JCLI observes that majority of law lecturers “are still deeply attached to a narrow vocationalist image of university legal education”.

⁴B. Hepple, “The Renewal of the Liberal Law Degree” (1996) 55(3) CLJ 470–487, at 472 referred to “Of the Study, Nature and Extent of the Law of England”, published as the introduction: Section 1 of Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol. 1.

⁵Browne Report, *supra* n. 2, Chapter 1, at 15.

⁶*Higher Education in the Learning Society*, The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997), the first national comprehensive study on higher education commissioned by the government since the Robbins Report in the 1960s.

⁷The consultation paper was subsequently integrated into the Subject Benchmarks for teaching assessment by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2000–2002.

⁸First Report on Legal Education and Training. The Committee’s review was undertaken under the provisions of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, s. 20(1) and Sch. 2.

(2006),⁹ to name but a few. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has also come up with a student employability profile template and generic employability competencies for academic institutions in Scotland (2008).¹⁰ A report entitled "Progression and Academic Development" (2010) focuses on the personal development planning (PDP) of students in higher education institutions. It aims to encourage students to become more effective, independent and confident self-directed learners.¹¹ It also recognises the need to encourage a positive attitude to learning throughout life.¹² Another consultation that had been initiated in the UK is the high level skills strategy known as "Higher Education at Work – High Skills: High Value" (2008).¹³ This consultation sought the views of employers, learners and higher education providers on what more needs to be done to equip the workforce with the skills required for an innovative and competitive economy.

Harvey and Mason echo the need for skills and express the desirability of graduates in employment as "lying in their transformation potential, rather than in their specific knowledge".¹⁴ Bridges states "the argument is about the insufficiency of what might be included in a traditional conception of a liberal education and not about its continuing appropriateness as a central conception of a liberal education".¹⁵ As a result, work experience training or placements within and outside the institutions have been introduced by relevant academic institutions and the government to accommodate this demand. This includes work experience embedded or integrated in the curriculum, work placements or work-based projects and parallel development. For example, graduates entering the legal profession would need to undergo vocational training by sitting the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) or the Legal Practice Course (LPC), which will later require graduates to undergo an apprenticeship lasting one year in the former and two years in the latter.¹⁶ As a catalyst to increase

⁹"Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – World Class Skills", Final Report, 19 November 2010, available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/4/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf (accessed 19 November 2010).

¹⁰See also Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in "Guidelines for Higher Education Progress Files" (2001), available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Guidelines-for-HE-Progress-Files.aspx> (accessed 16 January 2012).

¹¹Ibid. The Report states that students need to be reflective of their own learning, development and career planning.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/con_0408_hlss.html (accessed 19 September 2010).

¹⁴L. Harvey and S. Mason, "A Quality Graduate", in *The Management of Independent Learning* (London, SEDA, 1996), Chapter 2.

¹⁵D. Bridges, "Transferable Skills: A Philosophical Perspective" (1993) 18(1) *Studies in Higher Education* 43–51, at 45.

¹⁶A. Boon and J. Webb, "Legal Education and Training in England and Wales: Back to the Future?" (2008) 58 *Journal of Legal Education* 79–121, at 81. The range of skills acquired in the BVC and LPC is different. The BVC has a 60% minimum assessment weighting of skills compared to the LPC's 25% minimum.

the quality of education in the UK, the Browne Report had radically shifted the paradigm of education by proposing a sharp increase in students' fees to provide an incentive to higher education institutions to step up their game in the delivery of education. This, they hope, would give the students the choice in enrolling at the institution they think would best provide education to meet their employment needs.¹⁷

1.2. Outside the United Kingdom

Outside the UK, for example, the Carnegie Report (2007) in the United States found moral and social values to be vital in teaching and learning.¹⁸ In Australia, the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) in its report focused on "what lawyers need to be able to do" rather than "what lawyers need to know", appreciating the need for a change in legal education.¹⁹ The ALRC Report (1999) relied on the finding of the American Bar Association's MacCrate Report (1992) which called for legal educators and the legal profession to work together in designing a curriculum that ensures that more desirable graduates, in terms of their employability, are produced.²⁰ Another report in the United States, entitled "Best Practices for Legal Education: A Vision and a Road Map" (the Best Practices Report), commissioned by the Clinical Legal Education Association (CLEA) stated that the need to design curricula that also apply concurrently in other jurisdictions is important in today's globalised world.²¹

2. The research

Appreciating the demands of education above, and also for Newcastle to "give something back" to the mentors appointed, who had volunteered their time under the mentoring scheme, a skills programme was initiated in 2009 for

¹⁷The Browne Report relied on the National Student Survey results as an indicator of the need to raise the standards of education, *supra* n. 2. Available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2010/nssresult.htm> (accessed 17 January 2011).

¹⁸Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. See also F. Cownie, "Alternative Values in Legal Education" (2003) 6 *Legal Ethics* 159–174 and R. Burridge and J. Webb, "The Values of Common Law Legal Education: Rethinking Rules, Responsibilities, Relationships and Roles in the Law School" (2007) 10(1) *Legal Ethics* 72–97.

¹⁹S. Kift makes reference to this in her paper, "A Tale of Two Sectors: Dynamic Curriculum Change for a Dynamically Changing Profession" (2004) 2(2) *JCLLE* 5–22, at 7. ALRC, *Managing Justice – A Review of the Federal Civil Justice System*, ALRC Report No. 89 (ALRC, December 1999).

²⁰S. Kift makes reference to this in her paper, "21st Century Climate for Change: Curriculum Design for Quality Learning Engagement in Law" (2008) 18 (1&2) *Legal Education Review* 1–30. American Bar Association, Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, *Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum*, Report of the Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap (Chicago, ABA, 1992) (the MacCrate Report). The Report also seeks to equip graduates with ethical values.

²¹Available at http://www.cleaweb.org/Resources/Documents/best_practices-cover.pdf (accessed 16 January 2012).

developing their skills in a globalised world. Evidently, a globalised world means that graduates today must be able to work in an environment that is both diverse and culturally charged.²² The need for us to appreciate changes that are taking place globally, and the impact of those changes in the workplace, become significant in the pursuit of equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to perform to a satisfactory level. This was thought to be fundamental especially for international students, many of whom will be returning home to start a career, where the cultural demands are different from those of the institution in the UK. This accentuates the significance of developing generic skills in our mentoring scheme so that they have wider application across the globe. Although many academics have resisted the idea that the curriculum of education is designed for the sole purpose of guaranteeing employment for the students at the end of their degree, the Browne Report seems to think that this move would strengthen the UK economy.²³ This is evident from many employers who are now seeking graduates who are not only academically excellent, but also demonstrate broad knowledge of the wider world. It is believed that this would help students develop a sense of social responsibility and the ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.²⁴ This means that it is to a large degree important for graduates today to be equipped with relevant attitudinal, communication and relational skills in order to succeed in the workforce.²⁵ To cater for this in the diverse and globalised world of work, higher education institutions envisage responding to the change by allowing integration of "some sense of the real world" into the curriculum.²⁶ Relevant exposure to different domains of knowledge and to different ways of thinking for acquiring knowledge is pivotal to the development of students. The knowledge acquired in the process of the educational journey also encourages respect towards other

²²A. A-Khvari, "The Opportunities and Possibilities for Internationalising the Curriculum of Law Schools in Australia" (2006) 16 (1&2) *Legal Education Review* 75.

²³Browne Report, *supra* n. 2, Chapter 4, at 28–34.

²⁴S. Ryle (1997) 'Learn as you work' *Guardian*, 23rd September, 21. Ryle reported that too much learning and not enough hands-on experience in the higher education curriculum is costing British business up to £2 billion a year because graduates have "the theoretical skills but not the practical know how". Reference is also made by the UK Commission on Employment and Skills (UKCES) in its report, "Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK" (2009), to the fact that the UK higher education system "does not produce the most effective mix of skills to meet business needs". Available at <http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications-and-resources/browse-by-title/ambition-2020-world-class-skills-and-jobs-for-the-uk> (accessed 16 February 2011).

²⁵Kift, "21st Century Climate for Change", *supra* n. 20, at 15. The recent *Times Higher Education* article, "We Can Work It Out" by Rebecca Attwood, 2 September 2010, reported that 1212 out of 1263 of UK employers would choose a graduate with "the desired mindset" who lacked the complete skill set for the job, as opposed to the other way around.

²⁶A. Utley, "Graduates Lack Real World Skills", *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 7 November 1997, at 7. See also J. Bell, "General Transferable Skills and the Law Curriculum" (1996) CIL, Vol. 2 PT2, at 3 "... the critical role of higher education argues that a higher level of learning should enable students to examine critically the external world, including the world of work, maintain their own critical space and not just conform to its demands".

cultural traditions, a significant feature that was included in the Newcastle Law School mentoring scheme. Cumulatively, this learning process will ideally create an informed and responsible citizen, who will lead a good work and personal life based on sound judgements. The ability to apply particular skills in specific contexts will contribute to student success in the diverse environment they will encounter, especially in a globalised market. The paper will now focus on the methodology of the empirical research conducted at Newcastle Law School and the corresponding skills developed in the mentoring scheme, before examining the results of the research in the findings and analysis section.

3. What are skills?

The word "skill" has been given many definitions. Skill is a term used to mean general techniques which can improve the personal effectiveness and efficiency of individuals within working or social environments. General transferable skills (GTS), on the other hand, have been defined by Bell and Johnstone as a set of skills which help the person to perform specific professional or work roles.²⁷ Typically, many labels have been used to refer to non-subject specific skills, such as personal skills, generic skills, soft skills, core skills.²⁸

A transferable skill is used interchangeably with key skills. In essence, most, if not all, skills are transferable.²⁹ For example, these skills are not separate or discordant from the academic curriculum undertaken by students in the institution. They overlay and interact with different skills to result in optimum utility in a specific task. Some examples of general skills developed in the study of law are communication skills, problem-solving skills and analytical skills; also included is the ability to use intellectual skills when addressing legal problems, an essential attribute required in order to become a sound lawyer.

Fleming states that meta-cognitive skills are required to adjust or adapt to different situations using the basic skills acquired.³⁰ David Bridges encourages the development of "meta-competence" of transferring skills in legal study.³¹

²⁷J. Bell and J. Johnstone, as part of the wider disciplinary project funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) as part of its Discipline Networks, produced a report entitled "General Transferable Skills in the Law Curriculum" (1998), which identifies good practice in the development of general transferable skills, transfer of knowledge on skills acquisition and, further, debates the skills and how they are acknowledged within different disciplines (including the debate about skills within what some academics would believe to be a purely academic rather than vocational discipline).

²⁸R. Dockwray and A. Moore, "Evidencing Transferable Skills in Undergraduate Music Education" (National Association of Music in Higher Education, 2008), 1–13.

²⁹See K. Whitston, "Key Skills and Curriculum Reform" (1998) 23(3) *Studies in Higher Education* 307–319, at 308.

³⁰D. Fleming, "The Concept of Meta-competence" (1991) 16 *Competence and Assessment*, Employment Department, 9–12, at 11.

³¹*Supra* n. 15, at 50; he quotes Fleming, "The Concept of Meta-competence", *supra* note 30, at 10, "Transferring skills . . . are . . . the meta-skills, the second-order skills which enable one to select,

Although the significance of skills cannot be overstated, the use of creativity and “thinking outside the box” is also important. Phil Jones states that the key feature of a reflective practitioner is not merely that he or she is skilful or competent, but that there is intention, insight, even “artistry”.³² The skills developed should also include skills applied in an “everyday” environment and life skills.

Various attempts have been made to define these skills, particularly in the last decade, which has resulted in “a plethora of superficially similar, but often significantly different lists”.³³ Examples of this can be seen below. The Dearing Report on Higher Education had recommended four key skills that should be part of every degree programme, namely communication skills, numeracy, information technology and learning how to learn.³⁴ The report made it clear that these skills are relevant not only from the spectrum of employment, but also throughout life, as the report recognises that specific knowledge will gradually become obsolete.³⁵ Bell and Johnstone’s research identified seven general transferable skills: communication, problem-solving, teamwork, autonomy and personal skills, information technology, numeracy and intellectual skills.³⁶ Dockwray and Moore in their report, identified a set of skills imperative in a music degree and their transferability in employment, or under the umbrella term of “performing arts”.³⁷

Although it is essential to identify from the outset the skills envisaged to be developed, it is nonetheless difficult to draw up an exhaustive list of all the skills engaged in a particular task or subject. This is because there is an interplay of skills, and each skill mutually integrates and supports the delivery of a particular skill in question.³⁸ Notably, skills developed may also converge with each other in the process of delivery.³⁹ Also, depending on the task, the skills established in the process would quintessentially be different in each case, based on individual facts and circumstances. In saying that, one cannot emphasise enough the significance of compiling a list, albeit a non-exhaustive one, of the skills required and how this would affect the design of the curriculum per se. The advantage of a list is that the relationship between various skills applied with knowledge of the subject matter articulates the kind of “vocabulary”⁴⁰

adapt, adjust and apply one’s other skills to different situations, across different social contexts and . . . across different cognitive domains”.

³²P. Jones, “We’re All Reflective Practitioners Now”, in J. Webb and C. Maughan, *Teaching Lawyer’s Skills* (London, 1996), at 291.

³³I. Drummond, Iain Nixon and John Wiltshire, “Personal Transferable Skills in Higher Education: The Problems of Implementing Good Practice” (1998) 6(1) *Quality Assurance in Education* 19–27.

³⁴*Supra* n. 6, at 133.

³⁵*Ibid.*, at 133–134.

³⁶*Supra* n. 27.

³⁷*Supra* n. 28, at 1.

³⁸*Supra* n. 29.

³⁹*Supra* n. 14.

⁴⁰GTS offers a vocabulary which articulates the achievements of student learning, which teachers and students can deploy in their discussions with each other and with those outside higher

that sets one graduate apart from another. The art of interchanging these skills in different contexts often puts the skills-user in a rewarding position. Kemp and Seagrave emphasise the importance of making these skills work in different contexts and further states that the “ability to contextualise skills is as important as the skills themselves”.⁴¹

A list is also useful in tracking concerns, for development of these skills does not come without potential costs. Space precludes a detailed examination, but three main concerns affecting development of these skills, which interrelate with each other, are as follows:

- (1) Although many institutions have adopted drawing up a list of skills in their curriculum, the task of embracing these ideals must be well designed and planned. It is not sufficient to say the programme works because it equips the students with all the required skills. The programme must in essence promote deeper learning and have the ability to contextualise the skills used in appropriate forums. The process of contextualising the application of different skills in particular contexts is often neglected. It is important for tutors to demonstrate to students the application of these skills in diverse contexts.⁴²
- (2) The model of good practice creates practical difficulties, but lack of an appropriate framework at institutional level can be a deficit in the overall development of general transferable skills (GTS).⁴³
- (3) The significance of feedback on the skills developed might not be adequately addressed.⁴⁴ Feedback is crucial as students need to be able to (1) identify skills that they had acquired; and (2) articulate the skills they learn and apply them in the appropriate environment.

4. Skills developed by mentors

The above factors were presented to academics at Newcastle Law School when initiating (first as a pilot) a peer mentoring scheme for international students on the undergraduate course in September 2008. The primary aim of the scheme was to facilitate the transition of new international students into the law degree curriculum in the law school. Research conducted at Newcastle had revealed

education”. Len Holmes, “A Social Perspective”, Chapter 2 in A. Assiter, *Transferable Skills in Higher Education* (London, 1995).

⁴¹I. Kemp and L. Seagrave, “Transferable Skills – Can Higher Education Deliver?” (1995) 20(3) *Studies in Higher Education* 315–328, at 316.

⁴²Ibid. See Bell and Johnstone, “General Transferable Skills in the Law Curriculum”, *supra* n. 27, at 21. They identify in their report that the tutor could be either a pure academic tutor or someone who has experience within that particular context.

⁴³Ibid., at 19, states progress in developing GTS has been “patchy” although considerable resources have been allocated to developing skills within curriculum.

⁴⁴*Supra* n. 6. The Report addressed the importance of feedback and how students can benefit from it.

that some international students experience disorientation in their initial weeks at the institution.⁴⁵ For this reason, a mentoring scheme specifically *for* international students *by* international students was initiated to ensure the successful integration of new students into the curriculum. Literature had established that minority students in an organisation tend to feel more confident within a group of people sharing the same concerns and vulnerabilities.⁴⁶ This process of engendering a community of students helped reduce some of the disorientation faced by these students in the new institution.⁴⁷ The objective in implementing the mentoring scheme was (and still is) to address the following:

- (1) To recognise the diverse social and academic backgrounds of international students and the need to facilitate integration into the new social and academic surroundings.⁴⁸
- (2) To recognise the vulnerabilities faced by international students and promote better student interaction to prevent isolation, homesickness and intimidation.
- (3) To ensure the quality of education provided is rewarding to both students and staff.
- (4) To provide continuing support to second and final year international students on the undergraduate programme, i.e. by appointing mentors from this cohort.
- (5) To provide international students with a good quality education so that they make the necessary integration to the academic culture found in the new institution.
- (6) To cultivate an environment that engenders mutual support and co-operative learning among both mentees and mentors.⁴⁹

As found in the methodology section, the research organised by the author via focus groups and questionnaires was conducted to assess the benefits achieved in the mentoring scheme by the mentors appointed against the objectives found above. The research assessed the following:

⁴⁵S.K. Ragavan, "Peer Mentoring for International Students in a UK Law School: Lessons from a Pilot Case Study", paper presented at the SLSA Conference 2009.

⁴⁶O. Villalpando, "Self-segregation or Self-preservation? A Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Theory Analysis of a Study of Chicana/o College Students" (2003) 16(5) *Qualitative Studies in Education* 619–646. See also B. Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (New York, Basic Books, 1997).

⁴⁷*Ibid.* both above.

⁴⁸C. Freeman and M.A. Fox, "Status and Trends in Education of American Indians and Alaska Natives", NCES 2005-108 (Washington, DC, US Government Printing Office, 1999) find mentoring instrumental in environments culturally different from their own.

⁴⁹See A.C. Banerjee, "Effect of Lecture and Co-operative Learning Strategies on Achievement in Chemistry in Undergraduate Classes" (1997) 19(8) *International Journal of Science Education* 903–910 and R.E. Slavin, "Research on Co-operative Learning and Achievement – What We Know, What We Need to Know" (1996) 21(1) *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 43–69.

- (a) the skills acquired by mentors under the scheme;
- (b) the transferability of the skills in related employment and lifelong learning and its application; and
- (c) the articulation of skills developed in different contexts.

The remainder of this section reports on part (a) of the research, while parts (b) and (c) are the subject of the findings and analysis section below. From the aims and objectives listed above, and in particular paragraph (4), the scheme aimed to develop skills among appointed mentors to, first, be able to discharge their duties as a mentor in the most efficacious manner and, second, to enable them to utilise the skills acquired from the scheme in the work environment and in their life. The skills the mentors should acquire from the mentoring scheme would typically be those that are generic in application. This would include skills that are important in community-building and values in society and the workplace.

The purpose of the skills to apply in a general context is fundamental in the scheme as most of the appointed mentors would leave the UK to find employment in their country of origin. For this reason, the scheme aims to develop skills and the contexts in which they apply to generic environments so as to cater for the diverse cultures found globally: varied social, political and legal constructs become fundamental for international students. At the same time, the application of the skills in a generic environment would equally apply to international students who wish to remain in the UK to seek employment.

The running of the scheme was overseen by the International Student Tutor (IST). The scheme envisaged appointing mentors who possessed good communication skills.⁵⁰ Such skills are identified as being instrumental in the mentor's role, as the need for mentees to speak to mentors about their concerns is pivotal for the scheme to work. Although this was identified to be a key skill required, the scheme does not intend to apply strict criteria for the appointment of mentors. The paramount aim of the mentoring scheme is to engender a community of international students who work together in a co-operative scheme and to extend a sense of belonging to the new environment that they need to acculturate to. The scheme also aims to promote confidence and self-esteem among the selected mentors, hence a less strict approach to the appointment criteria. A further aim of the scheme is to enhance development of skills among the mentors and not to discourage potential mentors from applying for the role.

In 2008, induction training was held immediately after the appointment process. The principal objectives of the training are as follows:

- (1) To enable mentors to facilitate transition for the first year students.
- (2) To inculcate relevant skills to work efficiently under the scheme.

⁵⁰See M. Weisz and L. Kemlo, "Improving Student Learning Through Peer Support", paper presented at the 8th Pacific Rim at the First Year Experience in Higher Education Conference, 2004, Queensland University of Technology & Monash University, Brisbane, Australia.

- (3) To achieve "role model" status, although this is not imperative.
- (4) To engender a community of students with similar concerns and interests.

All mentors underwent intensive training after the selection process. At the training sessions, mentors were asked to discuss their reasons for wanting to become a mentor: to deliberate what their expectations were under the scheme, how their role would be essential to the new international students and, in particular, to themselves. It was crucial that the appointed mentors understood how the scheme would benefit them in their own career pathways, whether in a strictly legal environment or not. Life skills were also instrumental in developing mentors to becoming citizens of good value.

During the training sessions, mentors were asked (1) to identify, in order of priority, the skills a mentor must possess in order to perform successfully in their role; and (2) to provide fictitious scenarios for the mentors to comment upon and advise. The key objective here was to develop the mentors' knowledge and understanding of the types of concerns that new students may raise, and the need to keep mentees' expectations realistic. As a general rule, listening skills played an essential part in their role. The need to also resist the urge to "fix" the problems of the mentees, or only to do so sparingly, was significant. The mentor, conversely, acted as a facilitator and challenged the mentee to resolve their concerns independently. If mentors had confronted concerns similar to those of their mentees, then mentors used their personal experience as a source of authority. On the same note, the cultural and social background of the mentees was carefully considered when deciding how the concern was to be dealt with. Awareness of diversity-related concerns, in particular academic, social and cultural concerns, was an important element of the scheme and hence mentors were aware of, and sensitive to, such awareness. Mentors were also provided with a journal for the purpose of keeping a record of all communications with their mentees so that they are able to advise their mentees more strategically. The process of keeping a record of meetings would also enable mentors to demonstrate the application of the skills, as such record-keeping would assist them to identify the skills used at meetings with their mentees.

Feedback from mentors was received via an online Blackboard discussion group as this enhances community-building among the mentors and develops information technology skills. It was thought that students who engaged in collaborative learning demonstrated a willingness to share knowledge with others and this was precisely what it was hoped the scheme would achieve. Team-working skills were especially useful in an organisation. Bouncing ideas and open discussions were significant when developing critical analysis and problem-solving skills.

Mentors also met with the IST face to face to discuss issues pertaining to their role. In relation to the content of the meetings, mentors were given

some guidance, although it was the responsibility of the mentor to design each session, bearing in mind the key objectives of the scheme. For example, in one of the sessions, mentors were asked to read academic articles with the mentees, the article to be selected by both the mentor and mentee in order to discuss the key arguments raised in it. This activity promotes analytical skills. This co-operative learning process also motivated mentors to develop life skills, e.g. community values motivated by ethical considerations. Another feature of the scheme included mentees updating their curriculum vitae, to establish the importance of work experience/placements to enhance mentees’ employability at the end of their degree. This process was intended to motivate mentors to reflect on their own career goals: reflection which often was, but should not be, left until the final year of the degree.⁵¹

The skills found in Table 1 are the skills the mentors developed (or improved) in their role via the mentoring scheme.⁵²

Table 1. Skills developed by mentors.

Cognitive skills	Interpersonal communication skills	Attitudinal skills	Relational skills
● Problem-solving and decision-making ● Discipline and ethical knowledge ● IT literacy ● Management and organisation of relationship (contents of meetings) ● Accept and make use of constructive feedback ● Assess and provide feedback on the general operation of the scheme ● Reflection and clarification	● Oral communication ● Listening ● Written communication ● Counselling skills ● Networking skills	● Ethical orientation ● Creative outlook ● Reflective practice ● Adaptive behaviour ● Proactive behaviour ● Confidence and self-motivation ● Engagement with the unfamiliar ● Empathy ● Responsibility and accountability ● Resilience ● Leadership ● Stress management	● Work independently (but to consult when uncertain) ● Teamwork ● Appreciate race, gender, culture and socio-economic differences ● Time management and prioritisation ● Meeting deadlines

⁵¹See K. Monks, E. Conway and M.N. Dhuigneain, “Integrating Personal Development and Career Planning: The Outcomes for First Year Undergraduate Learning” (2006) 7 *Active Learning in Higher Education* 73–86, at 85.

⁵²The categories of skills are imported from Kift, *supra* n. 20, at 15.

5. Methods

This research seeks to assess the following themes:

- (1) the skills acquired by mentors under the scheme and their awareness of the skills developed;
- (2) the transferability of the skills in related employment and lifelong learning; and
- (3) the articulation of skills developed in different contexts.

The principal research method was focus group discussion. This method was thought to be ideal as a research method in order to assess the themes above, as it promotes interactive discussions between the participants in articulating their views on the subject matter.⁵³ Hence a focus group discussion would for all intents and purpose of this research provide a better platform for participants to speak about their experiences in their role as a mentor. However, a set of questions in a short questionnaire was also included in the research for each participant to complete after the focus group meetings. A written questionnaire was also administered alongside the focus group questionnaires. A list of questions covering the skills mentors had developed and their understanding of employability was included in the questionnaire. As noted above, the reason behind administering this method of collecting data was to allow an opportunity for mentors to provide a more considered and reflective response to the questions, as opposed to the spontaneous response collected during the focus group meeting. Typically, this was to avoid any influence in the responses collected, considering that the issues relating to employability may be more complex than the more straightforward benefits and disadvantages of the mentoring scheme.

The significance of the questionnaire was to assess and to permit the mentors to understand and appreciate the skills developed in their role on the mentoring scheme. This can be especially useful at an interview or in a job application. One section of the questionnaire required the mentors to reflect on the skills developed by providing case examples that they had dealt with. They were then asked to rate each skill identified on a scale of 1 to 5 and the level of applicability. This exercise was significant to the study as it demonstrated that many of the mentors did not realise the significance of skills developed at degree level in HE institutions and how this transferred to an employment market. For this reason, the questionnaire included in the research made mentors aware of the skills they developed and their application in the work environment and life. Assessment of the skills periodically was equally crucial as they progressed in their role.

⁵³See A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edn (London, Oxford University Press, 2008).

Further reasons for incorporating the focus group method alongside a written questionnaire as the methodology of research were as follows:⁵⁴

- (1) The group was small; hence this method encouraged a great variety of communication and participation from all levels.
- (2) This method encouraged open discussions on uncomfortable experiences which typically would not be revealed in interviews.
- (3) This method opened up more issues envisaged by the study, e.g. issues relating to segregation, or skills developed by mentors.

The questions at the focus group meetings were semi-structured, as often discussion among a group of participants can vary with regard to the dynamics of the group. Although a focus group does not guarantee confidentiality in the views extracted, in the present case participants were given an option to discuss issues in private with the International Student Tutor (IST). Another cause for concern was the potential for a few participants to over-influence the views of others at the focus group meetings; participants were thus advised to be aware of this. Participants were also informed of the importance of providing their genuine perception of how the scheme ran, and in more crucial terms, to avoid the temptation to conform and favour the scheme purely because it is run by the Law School.

Focus group interviews were held twice in the year. The first batch of mentors on the pilot study had their focus group meeting in April 2009, while the second batch after the pilot year had their meeting in December 2009. The participants were all international students and they did not include European Union students. Eight mentors were appointed in 2008 and seven in 2009, thus 15 mentors participated in this study. The demographics of the participants were varied. At any given time, Newcastle Law School receives students from more than 12 countries outside the EU; these include mature students, some of whom have a first degree. Focus group discussions were facilitated by the IST. A copy of the list of questions was provided at the start of the meeting. An explanation was provided indicating the key focus of the study. Participants were also informed how their views would be used in the research, and of the importance of providing considered responses to the questions. The first focus group meeting on skills in April 2009 was attended by 72% of the mentors. The second one in December 2009 was attended by all mentors. The responses collected from the mentors from the pilot study year and the following year have been assimilated in the findings and analysis section below.

⁵⁴See J. Kitzinger, "Focus Groups: Method or Madness?", Chapter 10 in *Challenge and Innovation, Methodological Advances in Social Research on HIV/AIDS* (New York, Taylor & Francis, 1994).

6. Findings and analysis

The comments of mentors from the focus group meetings and the written questionnaires were collectively assessed and included in the responses. Both batches of mentors had answered the same questions. Generally, the responses recorded from the mentors had been very positive. All mentors unanimously found the scheme to be beneficial in equipping them with skills that facilitated a good relationship with their mentees. All mentors unanimously agreed that the scheme had helped to improve their confidence.

P1: I got elected as an International Officer at the Student Union. The skills I gathered through the mentoring scheme were very useful during my campaign as an International Officer.

A few of the mentors found the relationship to have been no different from the relationship they would have had with a friend. The most important part of introducing this scheme and skills enhancement was not only achieving work experience for the mentors, but rather "the meaningful engagement in the discourse and activities associated with specific 'communities of practice'." ⁵⁵ An example is illustrated by P1:

I hope to be involved in politics and may be posted to a different country. This experience prepares me for new environments.

The majority of the appointed mentors (87%), when asked to indicate the most important skill required in the scheme, stated that communication skills were paramount, but two mentors (P3 and P14) (6.7%) thought time management was the priority, as seen below.

P14: Time management, since there is a need to juggle keeping in touch and meeting with the mentees and doing our school work.

There is research to prove that oral communication is the skill to be most frequently used by law graduates.⁵⁶ Mentors indicated in the focus group that communication skills were the most important skills in their role as mentors.

P9: . . . being able to effectively communicate with my mentees has most certainly developed my interaction skills.

P13: It is helpful when dealing with various individuals in a social group; interacting skills allow for better communication.

⁵⁵G. Mason, G. Williams, S. Cranmer and D. Guile, "How Much Does Higher Education Enhance the Employability of Graduates?" (Bristol, The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)), available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/rereports/2003/rd13_03 (accessed 24 September 2010).

⁵⁶See S. Vignaendra, *Australian Law Graduates Career Destinations* (Centre for Legal Education, 1998): both law graduates and employers rated oral communication to be the most used skill.

The vast majority of mentors (80%) regarded leadership as pivotal in their role as they are seen by their mentees to have “the answers to their questions”. All of them agreed that the role necessitated much discretion and judgement, akin to thinking on one’s feet. Mentors in their role also developed autonomy and personal skills.⁵⁷ Some of the skills developed from this role included the ability to act independently, to deal with the unexpected, to reflect on one’s own actions and to accept and provide constructive advice.⁵⁸

P11: Since all of us [mentors] come from different backgrounds, it [the role] requires mentors to try and adapt to each mentee who also come[s] from different backgrounds from us.

Three mentors (P4, P8 and P9) indicated that many of the generic skills developed under the scheme especially when advising their mentees cannot be learnt in the undergraduate curriculum, which made the scheme unique.

P4: The skills developed in seminars are quite different in that they are limited, as compared to dealing with a person who is difficult or has a bad temper, which could lead to friction.

At the same time, P8 had stated that he did not expect personal skills to be taught at the university.

P8: The degree programme did provide the relevant knowledge, in addition to a few talks on how to enhance employability skills, but some of the personal skills, I suppose, would not be expected to be taught at the university.

P2, on the other hand, finds the benefits of teaching personal skills in achieving better employment prospects.

P2: I think people skills are more important than intellectual skills. If I can’t get the information across, then my knowledge is deemed useless.

The mentors also explained that the skills acquired cannot be taught but are developed on a case-to-case basis. P11 expressed that one cannot expect to acquire all the skills from the scheme as each mentor will have to address varied concerns from their mentees and no one mentor will be faced with the same concerns. For this reason, at any given time, it is considerably difficult to conclude that each mentor would have acquired specific skills in their role as a mentor. This was explained by P11 by using the following example.

⁵⁷See *supra* n. 29, at 5.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

One mentor is assigned mentees who are diligent in attending sessions, while another mentor was not able to secure the attendance of his assigned mentees; the skills developed in both instances will be different. In the latter case, the mentor may need to exercise resilience in an encouraging manner to facilitate attendance of mentees to the sessions. In this situation, more perseverance may be required. Another example is if a mentor has mentees who are typically silent and refuse to divulge any information, then the mentor will need to exercise *creativity* to facilitate and encourage communication. Mentors who were unable to secure attendance of their mentee often persisted and, after numerous failed attempts, perceived this as having a negative impact on their role as a mentor; quite often they were frustrated and, consequently, questioned their ability to perform satisfactorily. This was especially prevalent in the second semester when a few of their mentees failed to turn up at the meetings.

Although this may be perceived as a drawback to the mentoring scheme, especially when the mentees were not attending meetings with the mentors, the frustration experienced by mentors did in fact develop some essential skills. It is virtually impossible to control every situation and the need to find solutions becomes necessary to “survive” in any employment. This frustration will also strengthen their sense of perseverance and acceptance of negative elements in a more positive way. A *liberal* education focuses on the “training of the mind” in preparation for both work and life experience. At a focus group meeting, almost half of the mentors (47%) perceived this absence from meetings as a positive indication that the scheme was working; attendance at the meetings with their mentors in the first semester was almost 100%, but the percentage dropped owing to less interdependence and more independence on the part of the mentees in their new surroundings. All mentees agreed that they felt better integrated in the second semester and met with their mentors less than they did in the first semester of their study.

Another difficult situation could arise where, for example, the mentor would be unable to address the mentee’s concerns. Should the mentor be able to speak to the facilitator to provide some assistance on how the concern may be addressed? This could clearly breach the rules on confidentiality and trust. Perhaps it could be done anonymously. Mentors, typically, when asked at the focus group meeting, had indicated that they had not found the need to seek advice on personal matters, and were able to deal with their mentees’ concerns without any help. Also, none of them felt that the concern(s) raised were difficult to handle, except for three mentors, who did revert back to the IST for assistance; all had the same concern: absences on the part of their mentees to the meetings.

In January 2009, after the training sessions in September 2008, mentors in the pilot study requested a refresher training course in the form of a guidance list, which was provided for them. When asked about the usefulness of the guidance list requested in January 2008, three mentors (P3, P10 and P11) expressed the view that the guidance list that was provided during the training sessions

did not encompass all issues raised by the mentees, and stated that they needed to rely on their own judgement for the right solution. An example is seen below:

P11: I have to rely on my own judgement [personal skills] on how to deal with a person. No guidance note will help in this situation.

This ability to think independently and sensibly is crucial in any work setting. Mentors must be able to think on their feet when faced with a concern raised by a mentee.

P3: I have to cope with an uncomfortable or awkward situation, but having no choice, I have to make it work.

Although the scheme did not make it mandatory that mentors were to be seen as role models in the eyes of the mentees, two mentors (P1 and P9) were able to achieve this status.⁵⁹ Both mentors had a very good working relationship with the mentees and, as can be seen from the records, they had taken the initiative in arranging meetings and introducing their mentees to other aspects of living in the UK. One of the mentors (P1) went as far as assisting his mentee to look for suitable accommodation and this initiative did result in a role model relationship. As can be seen from the above, in order for a mentor to become a role model there is a need for an added initiative on the part of the mentor. This, however, is difficult to implement, as all mentors have different work and time commitments; it was common to find that some mentors went the distance to ensure their mentees' concerns were appropriately addressed, while others went only as far as was required. On the other hand, if the mentee was not willing to co-operate with the mentor, then it is unfair to expect the mentor to discharge his or her duties to that standard. One of the mentors (P6) requested a change of mentee as he felt that his mentee (who was female) would feel more comfortable with a mentor of the same sex. It is difficult to attribute gender differences as a factor to indicate the success of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee as, in this case, the mentee was of a very quiet disposition. The mentor was asked why he would attribute gender difference as a factor that inhibits an encouraging relationship with his mentee; the mentor indicated that it could perhaps be because of the mentee's cultural background. Thus, developing skills of "self-discovery" challenges the mentors to become good citizens,⁶⁰ or better persons,⁶¹ and constantly to assess

⁵⁹Cf. T.A. Scandura, "Mentorship and Career Mobility: An Empirical Investigation" (1992) 13(2) *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 169–174.

⁶⁰R. Brownsword, "Law Schools for Lawyers, Citizens and People", in F. Cownie (ed.), *The Law School: Global Issues, Local Questions* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999), at 271.

⁶¹A. Bradney, *Conversations, Choices and Chances: The Liberal Law School in the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford, Hart Publishing, 2003).

their own selves and indulge in the process of critical inquiry as they face new experiences.

Mentors were also asked about the organisation and design of the contents of the meetings. P10 responded:

I tried to use the same topics my mentor used for me in the first year, preparing a day before, if not an hour before the meeting.

(P10 was a mentee during the pilot study and then was appointed as a mentor in the succeeding year.)

Other mentors who were new to the scheme stated that most of the time, their mentees would approach them with a general concern relating to their academic study; mentors found it better to address their mentees' concerns instead of following a strict design at each meeting.

When asked if they would include their appointment as a mentor in their curriculum vitae, 87% of mentors responded in the affirmative, stating that they thought it would carry some weight in their future employment applications. Nonetheless, when asked how they would use the skills developed, they had only a vague understanding of their application in different contexts. For example, most mentors reported that the role encourages a working relationship with people from diverse backgrounds and understood this to be a method by which to develop tolerance among colleagues. They explained that, in today's globalised world, they would need to work in teams with people from diverse cultures and beliefs, and experiences that encourage this awareness and exposure could be extremely useful. Most mentors related the skills developed in the mentoring scheme to the work environment, as many students did not until then appreciate the fact that law schools are also about values and ethics. For example, P8 did not think there was a need for mentors to be taught "people skills" at this point, as he did not think the law school is in a position to cater for this type of need. For this reason, he was not able to highlight in a job application form the skills developed in the mentoring scheme. This example endorsed the need for students in higher education institutions to be made more aware that values extracted from their academic study play an instrumental role in their employability and in their life. This included any extra-curricular activities students took part in.

Mentors were, however, unable to explain how these skills would translate specifically in different contexts. Perhaps this is an accurate reflection of the reality as it was difficult to assess the applicability of skills in an individual context. One mentor expressed the view that, with globalisation taking place, one must appreciate diversity.

P7: As a lawyer you will always be dealing with people from different countries and cultures.

Mentors appreciated the autonomy entrusted to them, and since all communications with their mentees had to be kept confidential, felt that this could definitely be a skill that they could demonstrate to their future employer.

P2: I have to learn to deal with confidentiality. This translates to a professional environment.

P12: My future employer will be assured that I am not going to divulge clients' information.

Values in education?

The skills of teaching ethics and values which mentors develop in the mentoring scheme are also crucial. Values that address broader educational goals around personal development, citizenship and developing a broader outlook on the world are essential in the life of a successful graduate. Kennedy states that values pervade the legal academy and cannot be isolated from strict law.⁶² Armer suggests that the teaching of ethics should pervade all instruction of law.⁶³ This does not mean there should be less focus on knowledge, but an awareness of values is crucial in producing graduates who are able to discharge their duties in employment more effectively. It is also important for teachers to engage students in a process of appreciating values during their academic study.⁶⁴ Cownie echoes the same view, in that individual teachers in institutions must make the effort to implement goals that embrace values in the process of delivering legal education.⁶⁵ Ward states that, where there is real education, there are genuine human values.⁶⁶ However, it is these values that are being contested at present. Burrridge and Webb identify that [*liberal*] education enables individuals to "make effective and morally justified use of their freedom".⁶⁷

The mentoring scheme developed at Newcastle Law School also envisaged promoting values by inculcating skills that mentors may use to deal with people from diverse cultures and ethnicity. The scheme also envisages developing empathy and compassion among the mentors so that they are able to deal

⁶²D. Kennedy, "Legal Education and the Reproduction of Hierarchy" (1982) 32 (J). *Legal Education*, 591–615.

⁶³F. D. Armer, "The Teaching of Ethics in Australian Law Schools" (1998) 16(2) *Journal of Professional Legal Education*, 247–260, at 247.

⁶⁴*Supra* n. 20, at 8. ALRC states that professional skills training "should be fully informed by theory, devoted to the refinement of the high order intellectual skills of students, and calculated to inculcate a sense of ethical propriety, and professional and social responsibility".

⁶⁵F. Cownie, "(Re)evaluating Values: A Response to Burrridge and Webb" (2008) 42(3) *The Law Teacher* 302–311, at 304–305.

⁶⁶L.R. Ward, "Education and Values", in J.P. Strain (ed.), *Modern Philosophies of Education* (Random House, New York, 1971); quoted in F. Cownie, "Alternative Values in Legal Education" (2003) 6(2) *Legal Ethics* 159–174, at 165.

⁶⁷Burrridge and Webb, *supra* n. 18, at 77–78.

with the mentees and their concerns.⁶⁸ Nussbaum states that only when one is compassionate to another's vulnerability and predicament can one truly appreciate the pain experienced.⁶⁹ She particularly singles out experiences of groups found in a society, in particular members of other cultures, ethnic and racial minorities.⁷⁰ She argues that literature has "the potential to make a distinctive contribution to public life".⁷¹

The need also arises as today's society and the process of globalisation mandate awareness and tolerance towards those of different races, genders, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. So, employees must also be aware of conflicting ideas of what morality is. They must be able to adapt and adjust and, primarily, be able to appreciate these diversities before making a decision on related matters within one's working or social life. P3 explains how she was able to relate effectively her experiences as a new student in the country to her mentees:

P3: I am constantly reminded of the difficulties I faced during my first year and the ways in which I successfully overcame them.

Teaching values to students helps to ensure that they have a successful future, and one that is not only focused on monetary gains. As de Botton expresses it,

We should look to culture as a repository of useful and consoling ideas about how to face our most pressing personal and professional issues. We should look to novels and historical narratives to impart moral instruction and edification, to great paintings for suggestions about value, to philosophy to probe our anxieties and offer consolations.⁷²

Students should also have a sense of community and be able to identify and offer appropriate solutions to ethical dilemmas.⁷³ It is essential for them to work effectively and sensitively in global, and continually changing, environments.⁷⁴ For this reason, values ought to play a dominant role in the education

⁶⁸See M.C. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity, A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1998), 10–11.

⁶⁹*Ibid.* Nussbaum says the elusive concept of imagination manifests itself in the ability "to see one thing as another" (at 36), in the ability "to endow a perceived form with a complex life" (at 4), and in the capacity to conceive of "nonexistent possibilities" (at 4). She explains that imagination may be exercised in certain circumstances where individuals are "distant strangers". See also *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990) where Nussbaum emphasises the appreciation of "common good" so that one can exercise reason when faced with human emotion and further apply imagination.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, at 100.

⁷¹Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Ypsilanti, MI, Beacon, 1995), at 2.

⁷²A.D. Botton, "A Point of View: Justifying Culture", 7 January 2011, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12136511> (accessed 10 January 2011).

⁷³*Supra* n. 1.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

stream. Responses from P9 and P5 clearly depict the need for values in our teaching:

P9: We are rarely taught the value of tolerance during the degree.

P5: The values learnt in my role have helped my relations with new people outside the scheme.

The values acquired from the mentoring scheme are also found in Table 1. There is a thin line between skills developed and values inculcated and this is seen in the table referring to attitudinal skills.

7. Conclusion

Drawing from the three main themes, clearly mentors have developed skills necessary in the world of work and in life. Globalisation as a driver moulds students and graduates to achieve their full potential. Skills (beyond the merely academic) play a significant part in today's legal education. Institutions worldwide have recognised that there is a place for such skills corresponding to the demands of the market and, further, ensuring the success of graduates in other social aspects. The mentoring scheme at Newcastle Law School was initiated primarily to assist all international students to progress together with the support of a community network – a process where each student helped the others. Mentors in their role ensure that the mentees under their supervision successfully integrate into the new academic curriculum. At the same time, the mentors develop for themselves some very useful skills and values. Various factors can affect the end result of the skills developed; these include the individual circumstances the mentor and mentee are placed in, the demeanour of the mentor and mentee and, of course, the management of the scheme. All mentors unanimously agreed that they benefited from the programme and felt that they were able to “return the favour” to the Law School for all the guidance and assistance provided to them during their academic study. More importantly, the skills developed during the scheme were transferable to the workplace.

This paper does not seek to establish that a mentoring scheme will facilitate and develop all such skills, but it does attempt to show that this is one mode of equipping students with skills. A further, more proactive, step is required by institutions to ensure students are made aware of the contexts in which the skills may be applied. Once that further step has been taken, students who have received a legal education embracing the above skills will be stronger candidates for employment in today's globalised world in which, among other things, awareness of, and sensitivity to, different cultures, identities and ethnic groups can readily be translated into greater profits. Institutions

today ought to focus not only on developing students' employability skills, but also on life skills, as these impact on their future employment and life in general.

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