

Researchreport

Peer coaching in an international context

The impact of the S4S coaching project on student wellbeing and resilience

Inholland University of Applied Sciences, 22 december 2023

Lectoraat Diversiteitsvraagstukken

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PREFACE

This research on the Students4Students (S4S) project at Inholland University of Applied Sciences reflects a collaboration between students, studentcoaches and the researchers of the researchgroup Diversity (lectoraat Diversiteitsvraagstukken).

We are very grateful for all the students who participated in this research. Both the students and the studentcoaches whose experiences and insights have been invaluable in this study. Their willingness to share their journeys has been the cornerstone of our understanding of peer-mentoring's impact. Thank you, studentcoaches [in no particular order]: Daniel, Somadina, Ben, Mariella, Flor, Ahlem, Esmee, Frank, Cornel. And coachees [in no particular order]: Anna, Felix, Carl, Monique, Veysi, Jakub, Nikolas, Winner, Madina, Alice and Nanni.

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We also express our appreciation to Inholland University of Applied Sciences for their support and commitment to enhancing student well-being and academic success through innovative approaches like S4S.

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ABSTRACT

The first year of study is very exciting for many students. Everything is new: the school, your schedule, the teachers, and your fellow students. How can a university ensure a smooth transition for first-year students? For this, Inholland launched the Students for Students (S4S) project in the 2019-2020 academic year. In this project, second-year students (studentcoaches) support first-year students with their studies. They do this based on their own experience and the training they receive during their year as studentcoaches. Research shows that peer-mentoring is very successful in aiding first-year students through their first year of the study program. Peer-mentoring has the potential to increase well-being, social bonding, the feeling of belonging, and student resilience. It also ensures smoother academic integration, as peer-mentoring focuses on developing academic skills as well. Additionally, a studentcoach is often a low threshold point of contact for students where they can go with questions.

Methods: This research was conducted at the Business Innovation program of Inholland University of Applied Sciences. During the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 9 studentcoaches (the entire group) and 11 coachees participated in this research project, which aimed to evaluate the impact of S4S on student resilience and the working elements of the project. Data was collected from six different sources by the researchers and the studentcoaches. These were all brought together and analyzed based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological resilience model (contextual, relational, individual).

Results: The results show that S4S in terms of *contextual context*: goes beyond traditional academic instruction, offering a more relatable and personal form of guidance and mentorship. This approach has been central in helping students, especially international ones, acclimate and thrive in a new educational setting. *Relational context*: fostering a sense of belonging and establishing a network of peer support, the program has redefined the student experience, ensuring that students do not solely rely on teachers for support. Studentcoaches have emphasized the importance of these connections, noting that the personal bonds formed through the program often go beyond typical school interactions, evolving into friendships and, in some cases, resembling familial relationships. *Individual context*: Through their participation in S4S, studentcoaches have reported considerable growth in various personal competencies such as leadership, empathy, communication, and problem-solving skills. The experience of mentoring and guiding their peers not only builds their confidence but also deepens their understanding and compassion towards others.

Conclusion: The working elements of the S4S program can be categorized under the domains of academic and social integration, cultivation of resilience, development of individual competencies, and enthusiasm and participation. The findings from the S4S program confirm the literature's emphasis on the importance of peer support and mentorship in academic settings. However, the unique aspect of the S4S program within Inholland lies in its focus on mutual growth for studentcoaches and coachees and its tailored approach to cultural diversity. The international context of the Business Innovation program puts an emphasis on the

cultural integration and has the potential to bond these students even more than Dutch students as they do not have a local network coming to the Netherlands from a foreign country.



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Students4Students (S4S) project is a peer coaching project that believes in the power of community building. Within this project, learning never happens in isolation, but together as a group/coaching community. The first-year students meet up in a coaching community which is led by a senior student (studentcoach), who is following the same study programme as the first-year students. The coaching communities offer first-year students:

- A fixed structure where students get to know other students and learn from each other's experiences. As a result, students realize that they are not alone and are able to experiment with different ways of carrying out the role of a student;
- An accessible way for students to ask questions and discuss issues that are perhaps less likely to be discussed with a lecturer;
- A studentcoach who acts as a role model and who provides a realistic idea of the associated difficulties/hurdles and how to overcome them, based on his/her own experiences;
- Text BoxA safe (small) group in which they are not judged or assessed. A so-called safe space to be able to speak freely about issues that are important to them, separate from learning objectives and performance (Ebert, Rosalina & Zweegman, 2022).

The mission of the Inholland S4S program is to provide all first-year students with access to learning from and with fellow students within a safe community in which students are able to develop their skills and identify opportunities to choose an academic pathway that suits them. The vision of Inholland S4S is predicated on the belief that every student has talents and qualities that suit the academic pathway of that specific person. This pathway can be completed more easily if a mutual exchange takes place between students (Ebert, Rosalina & Zweegman, 2022).

The S4S project at Inholland University of Applied Sciences was kicked off in the 2019-2020 academic year as a two year pilot program financed by ECHO (Expertise Centre for Diversity Policy). The project was introduced within several (Dutch) study programs (Social Work) and one international study program, Business Innovation. The program for Business Innovation is currently running for the fifth year.

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research, the focus is on the impact of the peer-mentoring program S4S on the well-being of students in higher education. This chapter will address how Social Ecological Resilience, Sense of Belonging, and social bonding contribute to the well-being of students in higher education and how these topics are interrelated. In relation to this, it will explore what is known about how peer-mentoring can contribute to the resilience of students and which conditional aspects are important in this regard.

1.1.1 Student Well-being in Higher Education

The concept of 'Well-being' is a very broad term that can be explained in various ways depending on the research population. For the well-being of students in higher education, this research adopts the following definition: "a sustainable mental state, characterized by predominantly positive feelings and beliefs, positive contacts within the program, resilience, confidence in one's own potential, effort

and learning behavior, and satisfaction with one's own learning experiences during student life" (Noble et al., 2008). Often, the absence of mental issues such as anxiety, depression, or severe stress symptoms that negatively impact the overall well-being of the student and their academic progress is also mentioned (Deunk & Korpershoek, 2021; Gubbels & Kappe, 2019). Jolien Dopmeijer, in her doctoral research, states that at least 50 percent of students in Dutch higher education suffer from external educational issues that negatively affect their studies (Dopmeijer, 2021). Therefore, attention to student well-being is very important, especially in the current post-COVID era, where education professionals report that many students, in addition to increased mental problems, struggle with study delays and issues with motivation or concentration. Moreover, there seems to be an increasing complexity of problems among students and an increase in students described as 'vulnerable'. Increased concerns about societal conditions such as rising living costs and a tense housing market contribute to this (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, 2022).

1.1.2 Well-being and Study Success from Resilience, Belonging, and Belief in One's Own Abilities

This section will focus on various aspects that contribute to student well-being and how these topics relate to each other. In this research, "Social Ecological Resilience" (Ungar, 2011) is chosen as a central concept promoting student well-being. The concepts of 'Sense of Belonging' (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and 'Social and Academic Integration' (Tinto, 1975) will be linked within the framework of SER as subjects that can contribute to students' resilience at different levels.

1.1.3 Social Ecological Resilience

Resilience is briefly described as the ability to bounce back after adversity. Whereas resilience was often defined as a personal trait or skill (Masten, 2014), there is increasing insight that the resilience of young people arises from a relational and interactional process between the youth and their environment (Chuang et al., 2018; Li & Lerner et al., 2013; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). In this research, the concept of Social Ecological Resilience as explained by Ungar (2008) is central. He defines resilience as a transactional process in which individuals are enabled to utilize available and accessible sources of resilience in a contextually and culturally meaningful way (Ungar, 2011). He distinguishes three levels of resilience that interact with each other and affect the health and well-being of the youth; 1) individual; 2) relational; 3) contextual (Ungar, 2008). Which sources exactly fall under which levels of SER has been explained differently by Ungar over time and has varying interpretations in various studies. For the purpose of this research, the different levels are loosely based on Ungar's initial classification and corresponding to the conversation tool 'My Support System' developed within the context of the research "Youth in Transition to Adulthood" (Banen, Van Dijk, Van Goor, Kaulingfreks, Leijenhorst, Uitman, Van Vliet & Wiersma, 2021).

At the individual level, personal characteristics, traits, and properties such as self-confidence, agency, and motivation are located that strengthen adaptability after setbacks. At the relational and contextual level, the sources of resilience available in the context of the youth are placed; the individual's supportive network consisting of friends, peers, parents, family, partners, and other important relationships for the youth, and at the contextual level the physical supportive resources and contexts in which the individual moves and finds support such as sufficient financial means, supportive services, resources and persons in the

educational context, a supportive and safe living environment, religious contexts, etc. (e.g., Ungar, 2008). While the different levels of resilience are distinguished here, it is important to emphasize the interactional process between these levels; thus, the individual level of resilience is formed in interaction with the relational sources of resilience and the contextual contexts and facilities that are accessible within them (Vaughn & DeJonckheere, 2021).

1.1.4 Social and academic and integration, and sense of belonging

For student well-being and to prevent dropout, it is important that students achieve a certain level of academic and social integration by connecting with both the content of their studies and the people involved (Tinto, 1975; Deunk & Korpershoek, 2021). According to Tinto, educational institutions consist of a social and an academic system within which students, depending on how the institution facilitates them, achieve these two forms of integration (Meeuwisse, Severiens & Born, 2010; Tinto, 1975; Deunk & Korpershoek, 2021). These systems cannot be seen independently; students find their way in the academic system through interaction with fellow students and teachers, and this interaction is partly determined by the design of this academic system (Deunk & Korpershoek, 2021). Tinto suggests that a higher degree of integration in the academic and social communities within the educational institution increases the likelihood of completing the study (Meeuwisse, Severiens & Born, 2010; Tinto, 1975). In Tinto's revised model from 1993, he distinguishes formal and informal forms of integration within the academic and social systems. Formal academic integration is formed by academic success and informal academic integration by interaction with educational staff. Formal social integration takes shape through extracurricular activities, and informal social integration arises from contacts with peers (Tinto, 1993).

For the purpose of this research, based on additional literature, we assume a broader definition where academic integration is seen as both academic success (expressed in study results and increasing knowledge and skills) and the attitudes, opinions, and skills that contribute to this, but also the extent to which the student feels able to keep up and move smoothly through the academic system. Social integration, besides contacts with peers, also includes contacts with teachers and the connection felt with the program and the institution, as well as identifying oneself as a student (Deunk & Korpershoek, 2021). The availability and accessibility of contextual sources of resilience within the educational institution could thus promote the academic integration of students, while the sources of resilience found at a relational level can contribute to the social integration of students.

According to Tinto, academic and social integration contribute to the 'Sense of Belonging' or the feeling of being at home for students (Tinto, 1975). According to the 'need-to-belong' theory of Baumeister and Leary (1995), humans have a fundamental motivation to form connections. A 'sense of belonging' is experienced when within important contexts such as school, work, or families, regular various satisfying social interactions are engaged in (Leary & Baumeister, 1995). Diverse educational psychological research has shown that belonging is important for study success, motivation, and the well-being of students (Allen, Gray & Baumeister, 2021); Students who feel more at home within the educational institution feel more motivation and an obligation to continue their studies than students who experience this less, and a sense of belonging contributes to preventing dropout during the first year of study (Dopmeijer, 2021; Freeman et al., 2007; Hausmann et al, 2007; Meeuwisse et al., 2010; Kappe, 2017).

1.1.5 The effect of peer-mentoring

Peer mentoring, when effectively implemented and facilitated, can contribute to the well-being of (first-year) students. A recent literature review of mentoring projects with newly arrived immigrant and refugee youth suggests that peer mentoring relationships at school can promote a range of positive outcomes, such as social integration, a sense of belonging, acculturation, and academic performance. Colleagues of the same age or slightly older can act as mentors. Ideally, a mentor is someone whom the mentee can look up to and be an example of (Dubois & Karcher, 2013). According to earlier research by Claro & Perelmiter (2002), mentoring has a number of positive effects on students. Mentor relationships are associated with fewer absences, less school dropout, and higher educational expectations (i.e., the educational level students think they will achieve), greater expectations of school success by students, and a greater feeling of belonging to the school (Sanchez et al. 2005). According to the actual meta-analysis, mentorship has a positive effect on student well-being. Well-being here consists of 'internalizing behaviour, negative affect, and self-esteem. Internalizing behaviour refers to actions that are self-directed and harmful, as opposed to internalizing behaviour that consists of lashing out at others (Hansen et al., 2017). Negative affect is defined as the stable and pervasive tendency to experience aversive emotions (Watson & Clark, 1991) and serves as an umbrella term encompassing the entire spectrum of negative affective states. Self-esteem is a personal evaluation that indicates the extent to which someone thinks they are competent, successful, and worthy. In other words, self-esteem is expressed in the attitudes, both positive and negative, that someone has towards themselves (Coopersmith, 1981).

1.1.6 Group vs individual peer mentoring

According to Crooks, Kubishyn, Noyes & Kayssi (2022), limited research on mentoring by newcomers shows that group mentoring can offer greater benefits to newcomers than individualized approaches (see Kuperminc & Thomason, 2014; Pryce et al., 2019). Previous work with structured group programs showed that the group-based environment enabled young people to develop collective social capital (in addition to individual coping resources and strategies (Lapointe & Crooks, 2018). Group mentoring takes place in a small group context, with one or more mentors and a group of young people (Pryce et al., 2019). Mentors can be older adolescents or university students and/or adults who show an interest in helping newcomers (Pryce et al., 2019).

Group mentoring is a model focused on 'belonging', cultural identity, language development, and overall integration into a new school or community context (Thomason & Kuperminc, 2014; Pryce et al., 2019). Overall, the evidence suggests that these mentoring models can bring about positive changes in the skills of newcomers' mental well-being and social adaptation and form a potential mechanism through which peers can be mobilized to support the resilience of newcomers. So far, most research has focused on the benefits for those being mentored and has not evaluated the benefits or unexpected negative effects for mentors.

One of the working principles in peer coaching is 'group socialization theory'. Harris' (1995) group socialization theory suggests that when young people identify with a group of peers, they adapt their own behaviour to the behavioural norms of the group. In doing so, they develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help them navigate within the group. It could be argued that when the group is characterized as 'students', the young people can adopt the norms of that group and move more

effectively within the relevant academic context, So while the role of adult coaches may be based on authority, the shared identity of a coach and a young person may be based on social connection.

1.1.7 Significance for the studentcoaches

Yuliawati et al. (2023) discuss the impact of being a coach or mentor on students. The article focuses on the process or mechanism by which having intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation to be a peer mentor contributes to a sense of 'meaning making'. 'Meaning making' is operationalized as 'having a goal' and 'the search for meaning'. The study finds a positive correlation between extrinsic motivation in mentorship and positive outcomes of mentorship. Notably, mentors with low motivation but high goal orientation are more likely to experience positive outcomes. Additionally, those not motivated to be mentors but seeking a purpose can also benefit from mentorship.

Conditional Aspects: Although peers play a key role in interventions like mentoring approaches, professionals (teachers, counselors, advisors, or program directors) are crucial in supporting individual students and groups by establishing, developing, and monitoring programs. Effective peer mentorship interventions require clearly formulated procedures and flexibility. Close collaboration among students, teachers, and other relevant staff and stakeholders is essential for increasing engagement and ensuring the sustainability of peer coaching programs in the long term. Adults involved in programming need to be self-aware, have a good understanding of the target group and issues at play, and be familiar with relevant methodologies and psychosocial processes.

1.1.8 Peer-mentoring in an international context

The feeling of being seen and included is important for all students, but maybe even more for international students. These students, hailing globally and often separated from their loved ones, deeply value the feeling of belonging within their academic programs. This sense of connection is essential as they adjust to new and unfamiliar circumstances. The S4S program aims to enhance this feeling of engagement and foster mutual support among students throughout their educational journey (Ebert, Rosalina & Zweegman, 2022).

This makes the value of peer mentoring for international students multi-dimensional. It has the potential to significantly enhance their academic experience and social integration in a new cultural environment. Peer mentoring provides a support system that helps international students navigate academic challenges and cultural adjustments, reducing feelings of isolation. It also facilitates the development of meaningful relationships, contributing to a sense of belonging and community, which is crucial for their overall well-being and academic success in an unfamiliar environment. Outhred & Chester (2013) explore the effectiveness of embedded peer mentoring in universities, demonstrating its significant role in enhancing international students' cultural and academic experiences. Their research highlights the importance of peer mentoring in aiding cultural adjustment, academic integration, and overall student satisfaction, thus improving the international student experience. A mentor program with a social focus can also contribute significantly to the support of new or international students and help reduce feelings of loneliness or concerns they may have (Ebert, Rosaline & Zweegman, 2022). Seery et al. (2021) extend this understanding by examining the

reciprocal nature of peer mentoring relationships. Their study reveals that peer mentoring not only benefits mentees but also provides growth and development opportunities for mentors. Emphasizing the emotional and experiential aspects, illustrating how peer mentoring fosters a sense of partnership and community among students, enhancing the overall learning environment.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE BUSINESS INNOVATION PROGRAM

Under this paragraph we provide a description of the Business Innovation program, with an emphasis on the international aspect of the program. This approach aims to provide an overview of the project as a whole.

The Business Innovation program is committed to develop a new generation of innovators, capable of tackling complex challenges (e.g. climate change, societal issues, etc.), helping businesses adapt and change, and building new models suitable for our reality (www.inholland.nl) The program is internationally oriented and English-only, welcoming students from all over the world. The learning environment within Business Innovation deviates from more traditional programs because it applies experience-based learning where students brainstorm, develop and test ideas and develop the skill- and mindset to become an innovator. A large part of the program is dedicated to personal and professional development. Students reflect on their learning journey throughout the whole program and work on broadening their mindset.

A lot of the time the students have to get used to this way of working that is quite different from the educational systems and cultures they come from. *"In the first semester, I think we didn't really know what this course was about"* (coachee 9).

One of the cornerstones of the Business Innovation program is Celebrate Diversity (BI Educational Profile, 2021). There is much effort put into creating an inclusive learning environment where everyone, regardless of origin, social background, gender, religion, former education or other dimension of diversity, is seen, heard and stimulated to reach their highest potential (BI Inclusivity Plan, 2021). These efforts are also reflected in the interviews with the coachees: *"Lecturers are so friendly, and they really care about us also in my idea. So that's also give me some motivation to go to school"* (coachee 5). *"I find it is a very friendly community. You can talk to everyone"* (coachee 3). This means that outside of the S4S program lecturers and mentors also fulfill a big role in the ecological system of the students by being a place where the student can come with personal issues. This is also elaborated on in the interviews but will not be displayed underneath the second chapter as it falls out of the scope of this research. *"Teachers are also really kind, to be honest. You know, almost everyone is really, really open to talking and having a conversation with you and helping you with what you have to do. So, I feel like we're also connected, like how a student and the teacher should be"* (coachee 7).

Business Innovation students are very active and involved with different activities that strengthen the learning community. Coachee 3: *"I do a lot of extra activities such as Club BI, which mainly like open days, open evenings, we share information with potential new students and talk about it if they have questions, answer the questions. Mainly it's about events. On the other hand, I also do social media platform, so mainly sharing information or posts on what is going on right now on social media so that people can get updated. So all in all I would say I'm pretty much*

active". But students also meet up outside of school to go to the gym or play a monthly drinking game together. *"I'm just doing gym right now with some friends from the study"* (coachee 7). *"Well, I think fellow students around me, especially my friends, just make it more fun for me to go to school"* (coachee 10).

Overall it is quite clear that the need for community is quite strong when you are an international student and you do not have an established network in the country you study in.

1.3 METHODS

Nine studentcoaches and one project leader (coordinators) were asked in various ways about what they think the impact of the program has been for them as studentcoaches or project management, and what impact they experienced when they themselves participated as coachees in the program. Additionally, they were asked about their observations on the impact of S4S for first-year students, the experiences they had themselves, and what they observe in the students they coach. Furthermore, all studentcoaches maintained a logbook throughout the project where they documented their coaching sessions. This included details about the specific sessions they conducted, their goals for these sessions, and the feedback on how these sessions were experienced by both the coaches themselves and their coachees. Finally, the studentcoaches recorded their individual sessions with coachees. These sessions utilized a discussion sheet to help studentcoaches and their coachees identify the coachees' resilience resources. The discussion sheet came with a facilitator's guide containing example questions for studentcoaches to ask, aiding them in understanding their coachees' ecological resilience. Audio recordings from these sessions have been incorporated into the results section of this report.

The results in this report are thus derived from various sources; logbooks of studentcoaches which they kept track of during the project, an interview with the project leader of the S4S program, coaching sessions between the studentcoaches and their coachees using the resilience tool, interviews with studentcoaches on their experience with the S4S project, an evaluation survey among the coachees and journals of the researchers on the progress of the S4S program. This data was collected over a period of one academic year.

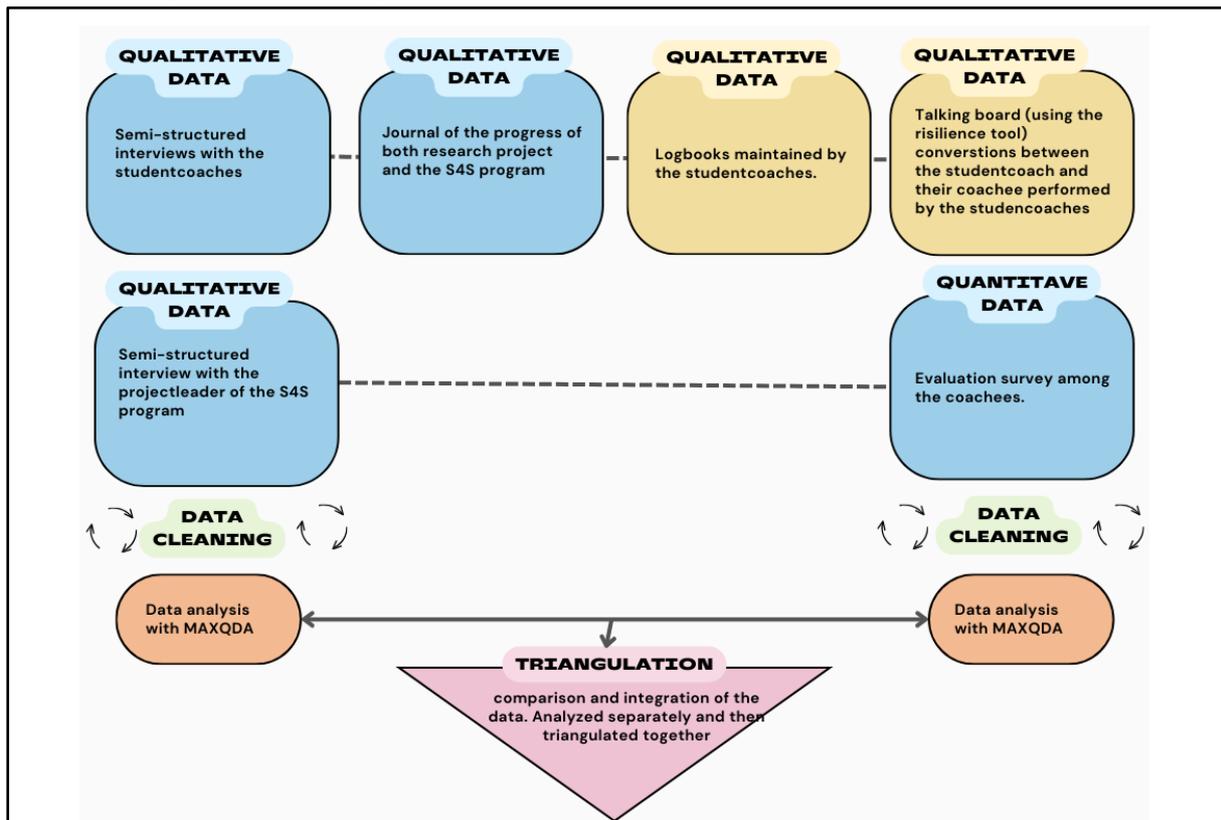
1.3.1 Data triangulation

Given the multitude of the data sources a data triangulation figure was made, to display in what way the data was processed. Figure 1.1 illustrates the data triangulation process used in this report. It shows that data was drawn from various sources to compile this document. The blue data sources were collected by the researchers, while the yellow ones were gathered by the studentcoaches. Data sources aligned at the same level and connected by a grey dotted line were collected simultaneously. The gathered data was cleaned by modifying some quotes for linguistic accuracy. Efforts were made to preserve the structure and essence of the quotes as close to the original as possible.

1.3.2 Data analysis

The data is analysed on their impact across three domains: contextual, relational, and individual sources of resilience, employing Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model as a framework. This analytical approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how the S4S program influences students' ability to cope and thrive within various layers of their environment. It also enables the identification of specific factors within these domains that contribute most significantly to building and enhancing student resilience, offering valuable insights for program improvement and targeted support strategies.

1.1 Data triangulation of the multiple data sources



Contextual sources in this research

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, contextual sources of resilience refer to the environmental and societal factors that influence an individual's development. This concept is rooted in the understanding that a person's environment plays a critical role in shaping their behaviour, attitudes, and resilience. In the scope of this research, the context is defined by the broader educational environment of Inholland, the specific Business Innovation study program, and the S4S program itself.

Relational sources in this research

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, relational sources of resilience refer to the interpersonal relationships and social interactions. In the setting of this research, relational resilience can be seen in the supportive bonds between students and their teachers, the bonds they have with their peers, and the mentorship provided by their studentcoaches. These relationships create a supportive network that help students navigate the challenges of their academic and personal lives.

Individual sources in this research

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model, individual sources of resilience pertain to the personal characteristics, skills, and attributes that an individual develops, contributing to their ability to adapt and thrive in the face of challenges. Individual sources of resilience include a wide range of factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation. These traits and skills are developed through interactions with the environment but are inherently personal. Within the context of this research a student's resilience can be influenced by their personal determination, ability to manage stress, and confidence in their skills. These individual attributes help the student navigate academic challenges, social pressures, and other stressors encountered in the school environment.

1.3.3 Participants

An overview of the participants is provided based on which the data has been analysed to ensure that this chapter remains comprehensible. In total 9 studentcoaches participated in the program. Two studentcoaches did not provide their logbook. Table 1.2 provides some demographic data of the participating studentcoaches, the first 7 studentcoaches provided their logbooks and they were analyzed.

In this research, the names of the studentcoaches are fictionalized to protect and respect their privacy, while maintaining the personal and warm essence of the project. This approach avoids reducing participants to mere numbers. Several students selected their own pseudonyms, while others were assigned names by us, ensuring these names are common in their countries of origin. For coachees, we opted for numerical identifiers to avoid confusion due to the larger number of names. However, all real names of participating students are acknowledged in the preface, honoring their deserving contribution to this study.

1.2 Demographic data of the studentcoaches

Participant	Gender	Age	Country of origin
Zohra	Female	21	Morocco
Fabian	Male	24	Germany
Sani	Male	22	Nigeria
Laura	Female	19	Dutch
William	Male	20	Germany
Ariel	Female	26	St. Martin
Filip	Male	21	Poland
Alejandra	Female	26	Venezuela
Timur	Male	22	Moldova

In total 70-90 (the number of first year declined during the year due to drop-outs) coachees participated in the S4S program distributed among the 9 studentcoaches. 11 of these coachees received a coaching session with their studentcoach using the resilience tool. The demographic of these coachees can be found in table 1.3 We have fewer demographic data from the coachees, as they are mainly in contact with their studentcoach and less so with the researchers or the project coordinator. We also did not have direct contact with this group during the research. The data was obtained through the studentcoach and additionally, data

was collected from an evaluative quantitative questionnaire. Students could fill this in anonymously, and therefore no demographic data was requested.

1.3 Demographic data of the coachees

Participant	Gender
Coachee 1	Female
Coachee 2	Male
Coachee 3	Male
Coachee 4	Female
Coachee 5	Male
Coachee 6	Male
Coachee 7	Male
Coachee 8	Female
Coachee 9	Female
Coachee 10	Female
Coachee 11	Male

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Now that we have explained the context of the research in Chapter 1, we will describe the results in the following chapters. We highlight the value of the student peer coaching program S4S for students. To avoid confusion between 'coachees' and 'coaches', we use the term 'studentcoaches' for 'coaches' and 'coachees' for the students they coach.

The report begins with a chapter on the value and purpose as experienced by the studentcoaches, their coachees, and the project leader of S4S in general (Chapter 2).

Then, the results will be organized based on Bronfenbrenner resilience model. The S4S program, offered by Inholland, is itself a contextual resource, but contributes at various levels to the resilience of students, both coachees and studentcoaches. Thus, S4S contributes in various ways to the contextual resilience of students (Chapter 3). S4S helps students find resources within the organization - such as teachers or deans (academic advisors) - and utilize them. The studentcoach is also an institutional resource.

S4S also contributes to the relational resilience of students (Chapter 4). The S4S peer group can be a source of information and support, and sometimes even function as a group of friends. Also, the relationship of a coachee with the studentcoach can sometimes become so familiar that the studentcoach forms a close, relational resilience source. The group of studentcoaches also forms a community for the studentcoaches and thus a relational resource.

Finally, S4S can also increase individual resilience by contributing to skills and attitudes, such as planning and self-confidence, which help students in their studies and other processes (Chapter 5). Especially the experiences gained by the studentcoaches are particularly valuable for their personal development, and also for the development of professional skills.

We have two remarks. Firstly, this division is somewhat artificial, as the three levels are intertwined. For example, relational and contextual resilience resources strengthen one's own capacities, i.e., one's individual resilience. And the distinction between contextual and relational is sometimes somewhat artificial. For example, we have chosen to discuss the studentcoach as a resilience resource among the both the contextual and relational resources.

Secondly, we want to emphasize that, although the added value of S4S can be enormous for participating students, the program does not always have a large impact in all cases. Of course, the need for peer coaching and its usefulness varies between individuals, but as the results show - in support of literature on (peer) coaching - there are many conditions that influence the course of the program and thus also the impact. Some lie in the hands of the studentcoaches and coachees, others in those of the program coordinators, and still others in the sphere of influence of the program.

Based on the summaries of the chapters, we present an overall summary in the concluding chapter (Chapter 6), supplemented with a reflection. And based on this, we formulate recommendations for peer coaching programs, and for S4S in particular.



2 UTILITY OF THE PROGRAM

This chapter outlines the utility of the S4S program at Inholland, focusing on elements such as academic and social integration (2.1), cultivating resilience (2.2), and providing feedback for coachees (2.3). It includes insights from studentcoaches, coachees, and the project leader. The program is highlighted for aiding newcomers, creating a supportive environment, facilitating academic adaptation, and building a learning community. The reciprocal benefits of the program for both studentcoaches and coachees are emphasized, including personal development, resilience building, and practical guidance in academic matters.

2.1 ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The project leader primarily emphasized S4S critical role in facilitating a supportive and reassuring environment for newcomers to Inholland. The project leader begins by stating the essential nature of the program for first-year students: *"I think students for students is essential for first-year students who just arrived... who don't know their way"*. Emphasizing on the foundational support that more experienced peers can offer to those just beginning their academic journey. The importance of peer support is also highlighted by the studentcoaches. As Laura states: *"I think it's a program that can be described as: guidance by a student who already knows the program so they can help out in a way that a teacher or another lecturer or anyone from within the study can't help, because it's more personal. The studentcoaches know the process that the students are going through and that is different than what a lecturer can tell you of course."* This feeling is shared by the coachees, they too describe the additional value of the studentcoach: *"I think it's easier to come to student than lecturer anyway. It's easier to plan and to communicate. It feels more like going to a friend than going to an authority."* (coachee 6). Coachees highlight the valuable role their studentcoaches play in supporting their academic journey. This includes assistance in creating study plans and regularly following up on their progress. Studentcoaches also provide practical guidance, such as directing coachees to the appropriate classrooms and clarifying their schedules.

In examining the value of the program for different student demographics, the project leader acknowledges the diverse needs within the international student community and advocates for the creation of a learning community. She argues that such a community is *"relevant for all students"* as it promotes collaboration, peer support, and collective growth. Further, the project leader highlights the program's role in fostering a sense of home and inclusivity, which is deemed paramount for the academic and personal growth of students. She states: *"If you feel at home, if you feel like sort of confident... that is when the learning starts"*. Stressing that a student's comfort and sense of belonging are preconditions for effective learning and academic engagement.

Coachees emphasize the contrast between the school system at Inholland and those in their countries of origin, as detailed in paragraph 1.1. They underscore this difference as one of their most significant challenges to adapt to. *"More like it's a different system and I had to adjust to that and that's where I found the most struggle. But luckily, my studentcoaches were pretty helpful with that."* (coachee 2). Many felt that the educational focus was predominantly on project submissions, but they acknowledge how the program significantly aided in their integration into this new academic environment, as reflected by one of the coachees: *"I feel like the*

study that I've been doing back in Greece and the studies that I am do here is a little bit different. Like the way that they teach, and the study material that you must master." (coachee 7).

2.2 CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

The project leader touches on the concept of resilience, which is positioned as a longer-term goal of the program. The project leader describes resilience as not just about understanding one's capabilities but also knowing *"where the resources are for help"*, thereby underscoring the program's role in empowering students to be proactive and resourceful in the face of challenges. The project leader considers studentcoaches to be pivotal in this ecosystem, benefiting from their role by *"learning twice"* as they reinforce their knowledge and skills while aiding others. This mutual benefit points to a dependable relationship where the act of mentoring enhances the mentor's own sense of competence and belonging. This reciprocal relationship is further explained under the heading of individual sources.

2.3 PROVIDING FEEDBACK FOR COACHEES

Several coachees discuss the constructive feedback they received from their studentcoaches on projects and assignments. They express the initial difficulty they faced in understanding and meeting Inholland's academic standards, being new to the school's approach to assignments, as outlined in paragraph 1.1. This approach emphasizes assignments over traditional exams. Despite having access to assignment rubrics, coachees particularly valued the guidance from their studentcoaches, who could indicate whether their work was on track before submission. The approachability of studentcoaches, in contrast to lecturers, meant that coachees frequently sought their advice. The reliability of this advice was strengthened by the studentcoaches' recent completion of the same learning units, lending credibility and relevance to their insights. *"Well, it's something like I've got an older sister, she already went through it so I can ask her for feedback"* (coachee 3).

3 THE IMPACT OF S4S ON THE CONTEXTUAL SOURCES OF RESILIENCE

This chapter explores the impact of the S4S program at Inholland on the contextual sources of resilience, aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. It discusses academic navigation and the sense of belonging fostered by the program (3.1), evaluates the importance of well-trained studentcoaches (3.2.1), and looks into facilitating academic transition through information (3.2.2). Additionally, it considers the need for organizational and strategic planning (3.2.3) and examines the dynamics of engagement and attendance in sessions (3.2.4). This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how S4S influences the educational environment and student experiences at Inholland.

3.1 DEFINITION OF CONTEXTUAL SOURCES

3.1.1 Academic navigation

The studentcoaches discussed the importance of the S4S program in creating a supportive and interactive learning environment. A studentcoach mentioned the program's ability to help international students acclimate and receive academic guidance, stating: *"I think with especially for international students who come here. It may be tough for them, and we already went through it. So, we can help them with our experience."* (Timur). This highlights the program's role in providing a contextual framework for student support and development especially among those who are from a different country. When asked to describe the program he answers: *"I would describe it as a friend from a second year who has been through what you are going through and can help you and guide you."* (Timur). Being guided by a fellow student has a big advantage, the studentcoaches say, as studentcoaches are able to give them information based on their own wants and needs when they were first year students themselves. This is often described as the 'added value' S4S has in regard to a teacher. *"The teachers are not really approachable, so they prefer to approach their fellow students, then approaching the teacher."* (Sani). A studentcoach further explains this issue, noting that students often struggle to understand what is expected of them in a subject. They might read the assessment criteria but connecting it to what they actually need to demonstrate can be challenging. As a studentcoach, she says, she understands what the assessment entails and is able to provide them with clearer guidance. If a studentcoach is not able to give a clear answer they are able to help their coachees to interact with their teachers. *"By asking us about the teachers, they were able to navigate which teacher to ask which question or specific field what they were looking for."* (Laura).

3.1.2 Feeling at home at school

Another prominently emerging contextual source is the sense of belonging that is evoked by the S4S program. The S4S enables students from different classes to connect with each other. *"That way they also started to like seek help from like students from our year and try and like network, I guess. That also created like relationships outside of the class."* (Ariel). Knowing more people within the context of school and study creates a sense of belonging among the students. This sense of belonging is especially important within the international context of the study. A studentcoach states: *"Students to develop a sense of home within the study (...)"*

Maybe somehow, we need it, because when you're international, you come to this country, and you have no one. It feels nice to have someone who is friendly to you." (Timur).

On the moment when this 'sense of belonging' occurs, studentcoaches have differing opinions. One says that the bond starts to form early on by being together in a coaching group, while another explains that this feeling only develops later in the program. *"I think that's something that will happen more towards the end of the program. The beginning is more academic. They are more focused on the assessment criteria and knowing all those things inside out. After that there is more like bonding time and just nice activities."* (Laura).

3.2 CONDITIONS OF CONTEXTUAL SOURCES

3.2.1 Importance of well-trained studentcoaches

The project leader states the importance of their preparation: *"Studentcoaches need to be well trained and really know what they're doing...to guide the first-year students."* She does however also state: *"What we should realize, and I think we already do, but it's quite difficult...We ask a lot of these studentcoaches."* The project leader acknowledges the demanding nature of the coaching roles, highlighting the multifaceted competencies required, ranging from academic support to personal and organizational problem-solving. She notes: *"You're asking all these kinds of different, you know, academic and social and organizational and motivational competencies of them."* This tension between the demands of the role and the compensation suggests an imbalance that may impact on the coaches' motivation and performance. The project leader also identifies the crux of the training issue: *"There's not a lot of time for that. Yeah. To really train them on what does a coach do?"* She suggests that more thorough, perhaps even ongoing, training could better equip the coaches, resulting in enhanced confidence and effectiveness.

3.2.2 Facilitating academic transition through information

It became evident that equipping first-year students with essential information on their studies, particularly regarding the modules and upcoming deadlines, had a positive influence on their initial academic experience at Inholland Business Innovation. Three of the studentcoaches made a presentation to help students navigate their first year effectively. One studentcoach highlighted the importance of these presentations, explaining how the shared knowledge served as a survival guide, particularly for new students, emphasizing: *"The presentation consisted of useful tips and tricks for everyone to have a successful firsthand-in by following the guidelines and the basic standards of work in Inholland"* (Fabian). Notably, these information sessions weren't just to consume information but acted as interactive platforms. As one studentcoach shared: *"It was nice to have a general info session for everyone so that students can benefit from the questions that are asked by other students for instance"* (Zohra). The comprehensive presentations, which were affectionately titled "Surviving B.I" and "Surviving BI 2.0 & Hand in," were held during the first school weeks. Typically, a stressful period for first-year students. Both presentations were aimed at aiding students to navigate through these first weeks.

In the other sessions throughout the year the importance of informing students with information about their study also came forward. The sessions were more than just a Q&A platform; they were designed to promote open dialogue among students. As one studentcoach observed, *"Then those who feel comfortable asking in larger or the smaller group context can ask in either scenario,"* (Ariel) indicating the inclusive nature of the sessions. Another student remarked, *"However, those who came asked some good questions and really liked the whole idea of introducing some helpful tips."* (Filip). This underscores the enthusiasm and eagerness of the students to engage in meaningful discussions and learning from both the studentcoach and each other. Collectively, these sessions became a podium for students to voice their questions, get guidance, and strengthen their academic pursuits with the presence of their peers.

The importance for first year students to have someone to ask questions to be also endorsed by the project leader. She states that the program's initial benefits as offering *"Someone to ask their questions in the beginning" and as someone "to sort of reassure them that it's going to be OK"*, framing it as a soft landing within their academic program. The transitional guidance offered by the program is not merely procedural but also emotional, instilling confidence and a sense of belonging in students who may otherwise feel overwhelmed and disoriented. She expresses the inadequacy of basic orientation programs in truly assisting students to integrate and flourish within the academic system: *"It's not enough to really put you in the right position to learn something and to, you know, to flourish."*

3.2.3 The need for organizational and strategic planning

A reoccurring theme was the lack of clear communication and organization of the sessions during the entire duration of the project. This lack in proper coordination and alignment between the studentcoaches seemed to be a key detractor in the effectiveness of the sessions. As noted by Fabian: *"As I think everyone said we could have been more organized in the structure of the session, and this happened because of miscommunication between coachees."* Other students further emphasized that the structure, organization, and communication did not go well.

The vitality of having a strategic approach for the project's effectiveness is also underscored by the project leader. She insists on the need for a clear mission and careful planning for the program to succeed: *"It takes a lot of organization to make sure that the studentcoaches feel prepared... You really have to think, OK, how will we organize this?"*. A critical part of the project leader's concern revolves around scheduling and integration within existing academic frameworks. The observation that *"if it's extra, then it doesn't work"* captures the challenge of adding the coaching program on top of an already full student schedule. The project leader's experiences shows that unless coaching sessions are embedded within the curriculum and count towards academic credit, they are likely to be deprioritized by students. The importance of a supportive educational environment is also highlighted by the studentcoaches. Laura states: *"I think if it's just incorporated a little within every study unit, then you would have high participation rate all year. As they would feel like they need to show up and contribute to the program."*

Another aspect of the organizational part of the project is its duration. Noting the observed decline of engagement in the second semester: *"They already have found their way."* This reflection has led the project leader to the conclusion that it might be better to intensify the program's focus on the first semester only and no

longer offering the program in the second semester. This point is reinforced by the experiences of the coachees, who found the first semester to be most beneficial.

3.2.4 Engagement and attendance dynamics in the sessions

Attendance, or the lack thereof, was another critical issue. Zohra observed: *"The number of the students participating wasn't really what we hoped for, but it was okay."* This concern about attendance was persistent as Zohra stated that: *"Attendance remains an issue throughout most of the sessions."* Sani provided insight into the possible reasons behind this, suggesting a more proactive approach by stating: *"The tip I would give them is for them to be able to show up for all meetings we were going to be having because we can help each other out and also give each other feedback where necessary."* This sentiment was echoed with concern for absentees and the lack of communication as Sani mentioned: *"The majority of my coachees didn't show up...The only tip I would give him is to be able to communicate with people, so we know if they would come or not."*

Laura summed up the issue by stating: *"Participation, engagement, and attendance did not go well."* Other participants also expressed their challenges with attendance, like William who noted: *"Unfortunately, my whole group was absent for this meeting except one student. It was not great, as I was unable to establish a team spirit."* Ariel emphasized the importance of proactive engagement, sharing that they *"should have checked in on those who didn't join the group session... Some students described their challenges in the group chat or contacted me personally."* (Ariel). She also noted that assertive reminders led to better engagement, stating: *"Asserting some dominance made them more attentive and actually got the group talking. I have one student who doesn't respond anymore, I have not contacted her in a while so I should check on her because I don't know if she just doesn't need my help or if it's because she doesn't know who/how to reach out."* (Ariel).

According to the project leader the lack of attendance has a big influence on the motivation of the studentcoaches. She discusses the difficulty in maintaining the enthusiasm of studentcoaches: *"What is really like a risk factor is that the studentcoaches tend to start really enthusiastic, but after two to three months, the motivation drops."*

3.2.5 Autonomy in educational engagement for studentcoaches

Another interesting theme that emerged from the data is the important role of autonomy in the design and content of the sessions. Studentcoaches reported a pronounced sense of agency, which positively impacted their experience as a studentcoach. As they were able to tailor their session in a way that seamlessly matched the needs of the students. One of the studentcoaches described this liberty, noting *"We believed that the group session was the best idea. This presentation was needed for all of them and thanks to the questions of some students, everyone could benefit from it."* (Filip). The project leader firmly believes in empowering the studentcoaches, suggesting that they should have the authority to shape the program according to the needs they perceive: *"So they also feel in the position, oh, I'm really a studentcoach now."*

The project leader emphasizes the importance of giving students room to innovate and be creative: *"let them feed you with ideas and then be open to it."* She also appreciates the benefits of this approach, such as gaining *"an extra set of eyes and ears"* through student feedback and insights.

3.3 INTERIM CONCLUSION ON CONTEXTUAL SOURCES

The S4S program has been instrumental in impacting the contextual sources of resilience within the educational environment. This program, designed to support students through their academic journey, particularly emphasizes personal growth, academic skill development, and creating a supportive community. The experiences of studentcoaches reveal how the S4S initiative shapes a learning atmosphere that goes beyond traditional academic instruction, offering a more relatable and personal form of guidance and mentorship. This approach has been central in helping students, especially international ones, acclimate and thrive in a new educational setting.



4. THE IMPACT OF S4S ON THE RELATIONAL SOURCES OF RESILIENCE

This chapter examines the impact of the S4S program on relational sources of resilience at Inholland (4), focusing on the development of community feelings (4.1.1) and the conditions enhancing these relational connections (4.2). It delves into the importance of creating meaningful student connections, the impact of studentcoach relationships, and the role of personal connections and trust in one-on-one coaching. The chapter explores how the program fosters a sense of belonging and enhances student interactions, significantly influencing their educational journey and personal growth.

4.1 DEFINITION OF RELATIONAL SOURCES

4.1.1 Feeling of community

One of the benefits of the S4S program is the expansion of the relationships you have within the school. The coaching sessions foster personal connections and social interactions outside the classroom. *"It's nice to have a connection beyond your own class" and "it's really nice that if I go outside my classroom and I walk through the halls and the first years are like: How are you? I do have that connection"* (Laura). The importance of these personal contacts is emphasized by multiple studentcoaches. Some refer to a friendly and sometimes even familial feeling in the coaching settings. *"I saw some really nice people and we basically became friends."* (Timur). *"it's just like you helping your brother or helping your sister... the teachers are not really approachable, so they prefer to approach their fellow students."* (Sani). *"But with this opportunity, it actually like made others recognize me as the person who's there to help them and be with them and be there like an older sister or friend or whatever."* (Zohra). Not only the studentcoaches stress this, but this familial feeling is shared by the coachees as they too describe their studentcoach as an older brother or sister to them. Describing how the program facilitates a supportive environment where students can reach out to each other rather than always relying on teachers. Even unlikely friendships emerged, just by putting students from different classes and backgrounds together. *"I think some friendships might have also been made because people who at first glance won't really think they would be a good fit for a friendship were grouped together and then they did bond."* (Laura). A studentcoach states that, creating a network of friends and a support system at school can enhance the appeal of attending classes and actively participating in school life: *"When you know that there are people that you might consider as friends or anything from the inside, you're comfortable and you're even more excited to go to school and to do things because you know that people there care about you and they're willing to help you."* (Sani). This is also shared among coachees, they describe how being part of a community makes them feel more comfortable and at home at school. *"And that definitely helps you be part of community here and bring something as an individual to the group. And it's very easy to get to know somebody here and to get support from anybody. So yeah, that's definitely makes my life easier here. And that's the reason why I feel comfortable here."* (coachee 6).

This community feeling also emerged within the group of the studentcoaches. Multiple studentcoaches emphasized the fact that they as studentcoaches also felt part of a group. One of the studentcoaches states that the sense of fulfilment he gained from the program made him a more resilient student. He described the friendship bond between him and the other studentcoaches as a pillar for feeling

more resilient. About his experience of being a part of the studentcoaching team he says: *"It just helped us bond even more over the same problems. (...) We're spending quite a lot of time together, brainstorming together, trying to create something. So, I think this was the part that I liked most and gave me the most."* (Timur).

4.2 CONDITIONS OF RELATIONAL SOURCES

4.2.1 Choosing your studentcoach based on similarities

The project leader discusses the issue where the program did not foster adequate connections between studentcoaches and first year students due to random group assignments in the beginning of the S4S program: *"They didn't choose their studentcoaches themselves."* The coaching groups were made based on their mentors (BI lecturers). Which led to a lack of connection between the studentcoaches and their coachees. Halfway through the academic year a key reform initiated by the project leader was the introduction of 'speed dating,' an innovative approach designed to foster a stronger connection between studentcoaches and their coachees: *"You chose your own studentcoach based on, you know, this introduction session we had."* This contributes to her understanding that for innovation and learning to occur, there must be a genuine, affective connection between the studentcoaches and their coachees.

The need for this connection was also highlighted by the studentcoaches. They described the new division of the groups in response to the lack of active participation that some studentcoaches experienced. The studentcoaches organized an event where they actively engaged in creating their "profiles". As one studentcoach detailed: *"During this event students created their 'profiles' where they filled in their hobbies, interests, wants, and needs in their next studentcoach etc. Studentcoaches also filled in a profile so that students could also learn more about them."* (Ariel). The program also fostered a mutual sense of empowerment between students and studentcoaches. The dynamic allowed students to have a say in choosing their preferred studentcoaches, leading to better-formed groups and presumably more participation: *"Studentcoaches and students felt that they had enough freedom to create better formed groups by having students choose their preferred coaches."* (Ariel). The intention behind the changes is to facilitate a sense of belonging and mutual respect, as the project leader believes that *"if somebody has a good idea, you talk about it more and then you improve it."*

4.2.2 Encouragement of shared experiences

Interaction and open communication emerged as another predominant theme in the S4S project. Many students reported heightened levels of interaction, as noted by a student, who remarked on the unexpected level of engagement: *"Surprisingly, my students were really interactive, and they kept asking questions regarding the study module"* (Zohra). Laura highlighted the importance of fostering a supportive environment, emphasizing the mutual benefits of engagement: *"To encourage my students to sit together and engage with each other more because they can help and support each other well"* (Laura). This is shared by the coachees as multiple coachees narrate about how shared experiences bonds them together: *"Also for giving feedback or helping each other out when we both have the same issues and struggles. They're just being there for each other."* (coachee 3).

The sense of vulnerability and openness became more visible when students got to know the personal experiences of their peers. As Ariel revealed, there was a noticeable difference in the level of engagement when students were given insights into their student coach' personal and professional background: *"I saw that students were more involved and communicated their wants and needs but were also more open with me, including students I had never spoken to before. I saw that after I gave them more of an idea of my professional and personal background, they were more willing to share about themselves"* (Ariel). This transparency not only fostered better communication but also built a sense of belonging and empathy. Ariel further added that sharing personal challenges, such as academic setbacks, humanized the experience and allowed students to find connectedness in shared struggles: *"I think that they could find comfort that others also shared some similar challenges, so it made them feel less alone. I shared with them I had my first reset which humanized me, and they gained empathy for me"* (Ariel). The feeling of being part of a group can help the student to support and motivate each other when upcoming deadlines occur. And this feeling can even blossom into friendship states one of the studentcoaches: *"They all enjoyed the fact that the group they are into is not the usual group they have been in the class. They get to meet new people and also make new friends."* (Sani).

One of the studentcoaches describes how he utilized the international aspect, the fact that many students come from other countries, as a means to connect by sharing stories with each other. *"One of the meetings we had that everyone just had to share, like a little bit about their culture and everyone got to know more about other people's culture."* (Sani).

4.2.3 Enhancing personal connections and trust through one-on-one coaching

The one-on-one meetings emerged as a significant aspect of the S4S project. These personalized interactions allowed for a deeper understanding of the students' journey in the program. One student coach highlighted the initiative taken to arrange private chats to monitor the progress of the coachees: *"I have arranged one to one meeting with some of my students to have a more private chat and to see their progress and how they're using the resilience tool so far and whether they want any sort of help that I can offer"* (Zohra). The feedback from these sessions was highly positive. As expressed by the same student coach: *"They truly enjoyed the one-to-one sessions"* (Zohra). The intimacy of these sessions fostered a greater sense of trust and commitment.

Another studentcoach pointed out a shift towards a more individualized approach in future sessions. The intent is to strengthen the personal connection while also maintaining the collective spirit of group interactions: *"For future sessions I will focus slightly more on checking on everyone individually. I try to engage with my students more on a one-on-one basis but also involve others in the group chat and for those who don't feel comfortable sharing in the group chat I message personally."*(Ariel).

4.3 INTERIM CONCLUSION ON RELATIONAL SOURCES

The impact of the S4S program on relational sources of resilience is significant and multifaceted. By fostering a sense of belonging and establishing a network of peer support, the program has redefined the student experience, ensuring that students do not solely rely on teachers for support. Studentcoaches have emphasized the

importance of these connections, noting that the personal bonds formed through the program often go beyond typical school interactions, evolving into friendships and, in some cases, resembling familial relationships. These relationships are not confined to coaching sessions; they extend into various aspects of school life, enhancing the overall student experience.



5. THE IMPACT OF S4S ON THE INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF RESILIENCE

This chapter delves into the impact of the S4S program on individual sources of resilience at Inholland, focusing on the development of academic skills (5.1.1), the reciprocal relationship between studentcoach and coachee (5.1.2), leadership qualities in studentcoaches (5.1.3), motivation for coachees (5.1.4), and the maturity of coachees (5.1.5). It discusses how S4S equips students with academic skills, enhances their mutual growth, leadership development, and motivation, and fosters maturity, especially among international students. The chapter also examines the deep personal bonds between studentcoaches and coachees and their effect on individual resilience (5.2.1).

5.1 DEFINITION OF INDIVIDUAL SOURCES

5.1.1 Generate academic skills

One of the main objectives of the S4S project is to facilitate a smooth transition into the first year of school by equipping first-year students with academic skills. This focus on academic skill development was a prominent theme in the data. When asked about the impact of the S4S program on coachees, all studentcoaches mentioned their efforts in teaching their coachees' academic skills. *"Well, I give them the instruments. How to be successful with assessments, how to organize it, how to structure it, how to read an assessment criterion, how to read in between lines and how to follow the courses."* (Sani).

The extent to which there was an actual observable improvement in academic skills, according to the studentcoaches, largely depended on the effort that the coachees themselves put into their coaching journey. Several coaches noted that during the project, they felt like they were investing more energy in some coachees than they were receiving in return. *"But well, yeah, not everyone was giving the same energy. Like you put the energy in, and I did not get the same out."* (Timur). Also, according to some studentcoaches, setting clear goals for academic development is crucial for achieving a significant improvement in their coachees' academic skills: *"But they do need to make it clear to us, and because, for example, I do not have experience with the students that had like a really specific goal which they asked me to help with. It would be nice if they had, as I then could help them work towards this goal."* (Laura).

5.1.2 The reciprocal relationship between student coach and coachee

The S4S program notably fosters a mutualistic relationship between studentcoaches and their coachees. This dynamic not only supports the resilience of the coachees through the program but also benefits the studentcoaches, creating a reciprocal exchange of positive outcomes. The studentcoaches, just like the coachees, speak about their own growth and confidence gained through the coaching role. One of the studentcoaches expressed: *"I think for me it gave me a bit more confidence in because when I joined the BI program I was 17. So, I was the youngest in my year and I'm still the youngest, but also for the first-year students I'm probably younger than most of them."* (Laura). Other studentcoaches also

mentioned that the S4S program gave them more self-confidence by assisting first year students through their academic year: *"I would say it's really made me a self-confident in myself and uh, improve like my self-esteem and everything. (...) It went really well because it really made me more of an outspoken person. Now I can talk to so many people without any hesitation."* (Sani).

This reciprocal relationship also has a downside as it also enhances negative feelings. One of the studentcoaches describes the impact of the studentcoaching on her: *"I think overall, yeah, it gave me a sense of fulfilment, but it also was defeating in some ways because sometimes the students don't react, or you're left out. That's kind of defeating and you feel like, what am I doing wrong?"* (Ariel). She explained that she learned throughout the program to deal with these negative thoughts. *"(...) you don't have to take attendance or people's behaviour too personal. That's also a big thing. I think I learned that you do that because it's human to take these things quite personal, but you learn to acknowledge that we all have lives, that helped me see it more from a macro perspective."* (Ariel).

5.1.3 Develop leadership qualities for studentcoaches

Studentcoaches share how S4S helped them to experience and develop their leadership qualities. They describe it as something that they developed alongside their peers, the other studentcoaches, by helping first year students. *"I feel like it's given me the opportunity to learn how to lead a group, and it's also taught me that I have a lot to develop. It was such a learning experience, it taught me that I could be a better version of the student coach that I wanted."* (Ariel). Additionally, it inspired some of them to consider a future career in tutoring or mentoring, as they felt motivated to continue helping students. *"Maybe tutoring is something I'm interested in, you know, or like, just helping students."* (Zohra).

5.1.4 Motivation for coachees

Several coachees also discuss the role of their studentcoaches in maintaining their motivation to study. The studentcoaches actively encourage the coachees, helping them to stay academically engaged and to push through periods of low motivation. They achieve this by regularly checking in on the coachees and providing tailored support to address their specific needs and overcome any dip in motivation. *"Just simply support me mentally when I struggle. I had one situation at the beginning of the year where everybody was quitting because they decided to do something else. And that was kind of a breaking point for me. Then I discussed it with [Timur] and that helped me. So yeah, that's the value that he brings."* (coachee 6). Connected to this the studentcoaches also help their coachees juggle their work-school balance. Feeling overwhelmed by too many tasks can have an impact on their motivation. One coachee states: *"Because some of us have work, some responsibilities at home and that can be very overwhelming where you have to juggle everything."* (coachee 8).

5.1.5 Maturity of the coachees

Most of the coachees are international students, which means they have to independently solve their own problems, a trait that becomes more to the surface in the absence of a local support network here in the Netherlands. This is highlighted by coachee 5: *"Like, since I'm 13-years-old, I don't live with my family, and I live alone. So, I have to challenge myself like I have to struggle with all my programs, and I have to solve all my problems on my own."* Which not only reflects

cultural influences but also speaks to the inherent resilience of these students. They often find themselves relying on internal motivation to navigate challenges. The very act of studying abroad contributes to their maturity. These students manage their affairs without a local support network in the Netherlands, an experience that demands self-reliance and resourcefulness. Additional perspectives, such as narrated by coachee 7 further illustrates this: *"Maybe we could talk with especially as you know, for mental health. Because I feel like sometimes, we all struggle with, you know, like everyone who lives in a different country with no friends, no family has to start all over again and do this work and study."*

However, while this independent approach fosters a sense of connection among international students: *"Because we all have the same goal and the same challenges every day. Like living alone away from family, friends and stuff. I think we all are a little bit connected and that means we can speak to each other."* (coachee 7). It is not without its challenges. As pointed out by coachee 10: *"I really had to get used to the environment we're in, because a lot of international students come from different cultures, and they work in a different way. Different from where they come from. Yeah. I really had to adapt to that."* Working with diverse cultures, while enriching, can sometimes be burdensome due to varying expectations and communication styles. This complexity adds another layer to the international students' experience, balancing the need for self-sufficiency with the richness of a multicultural environment.

5.2 CONDITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL SOURCES

5.2.1 Cultivating a strong personal bond between coach and coachee

Several studentcoaches emphasize their efforts to cultivate a deep personal bond with their coachees by doing so, they believe they can nurture a reciprocal relationship with their coachees. They view it as their duty to regularly check in on their coachees, not only during coaching sessions but also outside of them. *"I remember one of my coachees in the beginning of the year. She was constantly in the hospital and as a coach I obviously felt the need to keep asking about her and everything, and it really made her feel good."* (Zohra). They all describe their role as not solely academic. Another student coach describes how she too had a coachee which she had frequent contact with during a hard period in her life. *"She texted me almost every day and I think for her it was really nice to have that connection with me. Not only about academic stuff but also about how she was feeling, how she was dealing with some personal things in life."* (Ariel).

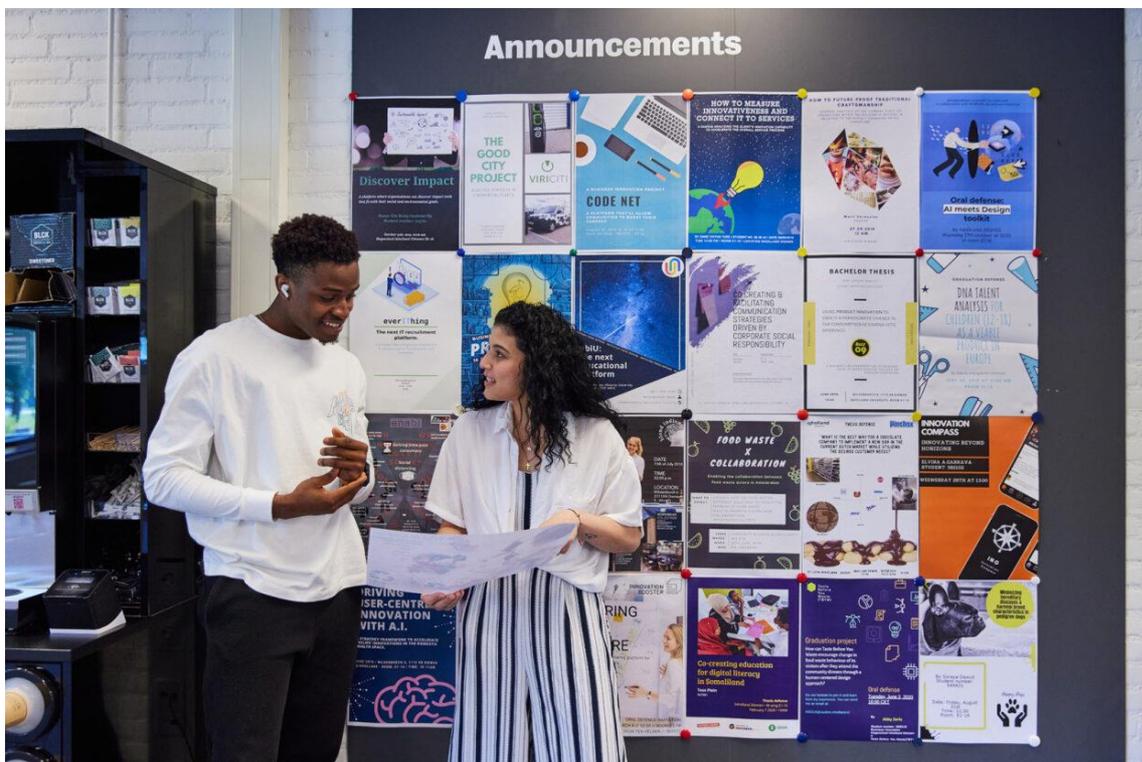
Understanding what is happening in their coachees' lives enables them to identify the specific individual support their coachees require. One student coach elaborates on this: *"I really gave them some tips based on their social and personal life."* (Sani). Knowing the students' needs also referred to helping them feel included: *"So they're not really feeling lonely or zoned out and, you know, abandoned and stuff."* (Zohra).

5.3 INTERIM CONCLUSION ON INDIVIDUAL SOURCES

The S4S program has a profound impact on individual sources of resilience, fostering personal growth and self-development among both the studentcoaches as the coachees. Through their participation in S4S, studentcoaches have reported considerable growth in various personal competencies such as leadership,

empathy, communication, and problem-solving skills. The experience of mentoring and guiding their peers not only builds their confidence but also deepens their understanding and compassion towards others. This personal development is critical, especially in a diverse educational environment where adaptability and emotional intelligence are key to success.

For the coachees, the program offers an opportunity to develop resilience through the acquisition of academic skills, improved self-esteem, and the ability to navigate academic and personal challenges with greater ease. The one-on-one attention and tailored support they receive from their coaches play a crucial role in this process. This individualized approach ensures that each student's unique needs are addressed, thereby enhancing their capability to cope with and overcome obstacles.



6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The S4S project at Inholland Business Innovation is an initiative aimed at enhancing student resilience through peer coaching. This project, including group coaching and one-on-one sessions, has shown significant impact on students' academic, social, and personal development for both the studentcoach as the coachee. The working elements of the S4S program can be categorized under the domains of academic and social integration, cultivation of resilience, development of individual competencies, and enthusiasm and participation.

6.1 ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

A key element of the S4S program is the facilitation of a supportive environment for newcomers. The project leader and studentcoaches emphasize the importance of peer support, particularly for first-year students who are navigating a new academic and social landscape. Most of them for the first time in a new country (The Netherlands) as most of the BI students are international students. This peer-to-peer support system, characterized by its personal nature, is important in bridging the gap between academic guidance and social integration. This approach aligns with Tinto's (1975) and Baumeister and Leary's (1995) theories, emphasizing the significance of social and academic integration in aiding a sense of belonging among students.

Studentcoaches experienced similar challenges in their first year, making them able to offer a unique insights and practical advice, fostering a sense of belonging and community among their coachees. This aspect is crucial in creating a comfortable and inclusive atmosphere to induce effective learning and student engagement.

6.2 CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

The S4S program positions resilience as a long-term goal, emphasizing the understanding of the students' capabilities and awareness of available resources. Studentcoaches play an important role in this ecosystem, benefiting from their mentoring role by reinforcing their knowledge and skills. This mutual benefit underscores a dependable relationship between the studentcoaches and the coachees. This reciprocal growth, where studentcoaches [and mentors in general] also benefit, offers a new dimension to existing research, underscoring the multifaceted nature of resilience. Where mentoring enhances the mentor's own sense of competence and belonging while giving the coachee the same benefits. Furthermore, the program empowers students to be proactive and resourceful in addressing challenges, thereby building their resilience.

6.3 INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF RESILIENCE

The program significantly impacts individual resilience, facilitating personal growth and self-development. Studentcoaches report growth in competencies such as leadership, empathy, communication, and problem-solving. The personal growth reported by studentcoaches in areas like leadership and empathy aligns with the findings of Yuliawati et al. (2023), highlighting the benefits of mentorship roles. The mentoring experience for the studentcoaches not only builds their confidence but also deepens their understanding and compassion towards others (both their coachees as their fellow studentcoaches).

For coachees, the program offers an opportunity to develop resilience through improved academic skills, self-esteem, and the ability to navigate challenges.

These developmental opportunities and its benefits are also outlined in peer-mentoring literature (Karcher, 2013; Sanchez et al., 2008). The support and attention from the studentcoaches are crucial in this developmental process.

6.4 ENTHUSIASM AND PARTICIPATION

The enthusiasm and participation level of all parties significantly influence the success of the project. Studentcoaches reported a decline in motivation when coachees lacked effort, enthusiasm or attendance. The introduction of the speed dating event aimed to enhance engagement by allowing coachees to choose coaches based on personal preferences, hoping to cultivate greater enthusiasm, motivation, and involvement. Coachees seek motivated studentcoaches as it helps them better navigate their studies. The motivation of studentcoaches critically influences the quality and extent of their guidance.

6.5 LIMITATIONS

Like all research, this study encountered some limitations. The first limitation of the S4S program was the introduction of the discussion sheet, which affected the organic flow of the program and the sessions between studentcoaches and their coachees. Many studentcoaches struggled with utilizing the discussion sheet effectively. They found it too extensive and felt it hindered natural conversation between them and their coachee, impacting the program's dynamic. Consequently, the evaluation of the S4S program in this report may not fully represent the program as it is generally known or how it might be executed in the future, especially since the discussion sheet is not a permanent component. However, it should be stated that the S4S program always has some kind of intended (choice of content and trainers of the workshops) or unintended (coronavirus) intervention that shapes the way the program is executed.

Another limitation concerns the quality of data. As the S4S program is executed by the studentcoaches, most of the data used in this study is also collected by these same studentcoaches. This led to less researcher involvement in data gathering and process management, resulting in inconsistencies. Issues included non-adherence to conversation guides, overly directive content, and poor sound quality in recorded sessions. Additionally, not all individual coaching sessions were recorded [two of them were missing], leading to a small lack of comprehensive representation of all perspectives in this report.

6.6 OVERALL CONCLUSION

The findings from the S4S program confirm the literature's emphasis on the importance of peer support and mentorship in academic settings. However, the unique aspect of the S4S program within Inholland lies in its focus on mutual growth for studentcoaches and coachees and its tailored approach to cultural diversity. The international context of the Business Innovation study puts an emphasis on the cultural integration and has the potential to bond these students even more than Dutch students as they do not have a local network coming to the Netherlands from a foreign country.

In conclusion, the S4S program at Inholland Business Innovation displays a model for enhancing student resilience, effectively integrating academic and social support systems and cultivating individual competencies, especially in an

international context. The program's success lies in its ability to adapt to diverse student needs, promoting a supportive and enriching educational experience.

6.7 REFLECTION OF THE RESEARCHERS

Reflecting on the S4S project, it's clear that it really helps students, especially those from other countries, become more resilient. The program's strong points are how it uses student-to-student support and focuses on helping students grow personally. But there are challenges too, like using the discussion sheet, which shows that adding new tools to peer coaching can be tricky. The way the data was collected, mostly by studentcoaches, gave us real insights but also had some issues with being consistent and complete. These experiences teach us a lot about how to make the program even better in the future. It's really important to keep changing and checking how well educational programs like this are working.

The S4S program tested and influenced our own resilience too. The success of the program mostly lied on the shoulders of the studentcoaches, but as researchers we too felt a responsibility in enthusing the studentcoaches in using the discussion sheet, filling in their logbooks and in conducting and recording individual coaching conversations. Their dips and lacks in motivation appealed to our own resilience. In the way that we had to be the ones with an unwavering sense of enthusiasm when it came to completing tasks that generated data for the project. While we also sometimes experienced a lack of motivation when we had to explain again how the discussion sheet should be used and that as part of the research project it was necessary that they actually used the discussion sheet during their individual conversations.

But we whole heartedly believe in these kinds of projects. Sharing stories and experiences within coaching communities offers students a deeper understanding of their own journeys and those of their peers. First-year students benefit greatly from interactions with senior peers, who offer guidance from a position of relatability and equality, proving more effective than lecturers other school employees sometimes can. This peer-led approach not only enhances learning but also contributes to a sense of achievement and belonging among students.

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