The peer mentor should lead the discussion, guided by the following questions:

1. **How closely do your initial expectations match your actual experience so far- which expectations have been met, even partially, and which have evolved?**

**Expectations that have been met**- Writing a good resume, meeting and engaging with industry professionals.

**Partially**- Writing good essays, Developing solutions to a problem. There’s still a lot more to come for these sessions.

**Evolved**- Developing solutions to a problem. I realized that when it comes to problem ideation, we always have to start from the specific problem that is to be addressed rather than trying to work back from a proposed solution.

* Writing good essays. I never knew the power that storytelling has on essay writing until now. Additionally, I thought essay writing was the only thing that I needed help with but other forms of communicating my ideas also needed help.

1. **Can you share a moment or achievement in the last four months that you feel proud of- what made it meaningful?** It has to be the most recent presentation we had on describing one thing we have learnt from KamiLimu. Idk, what sparked it, but the way I was able to seamlessly use storytelling in my presentation still baffles me up to now. It’s really an achievement because I felt so happy presenting and getting the feedback from the others about it. **What has been the toughest challenge or obstacle for you in the program so far, and what did you learn from it?**

Has to be maintaining concentration during sessions. It’s been very hard sometimes especially during stressful moments. I came to realize that sometimes your body and mind will never be at 100% but the fact that you showed up and stayed for that session is what really counts.

1. **Of your listed expectations, on which skill have you seen the greatest improvement (highest positive score gains in terms of initial and current score)?**

Write good essays- 2 > 3

Write good resume- 4 > 5

Developing a solution to a problem- 1 > 2

Meet and engage with industry professionals- 3 > 4

**What factors or experiences contributed most to that improvement (specific sessions, tasks or moments)?** It definitely has to be the storytelling sessions. The way we have been taught that storytelling can be used to communicate ideas still remains a lightbulb moment in my life.

1. **Also, which skill shows the lowest improvement since the beginning (i.e., comparatively less score gain)?**

Developing a solution to a problem- 1 > 2

**What might be holding it back, and what upcoming sessions or tasks do you think would help you make significant progress in this area?**

We are still yet to do significant practice on it so as a result, there’s not much improvement. Also, we have only looked at a small part of this which is drafting a problem statement.

1. **Going forward, what are two things you want to focus on or carry forward?**

Consistency and the Competitions

**What challenges might arise as you work on these, and how could you prepare?**

Consistency: Resuming school after a very short holiday may be mentally straining at some point. Staying motivated during sessions.

Competitions: Ensuring that I give 110% at every stage is a bit daunting. I struggle taking criticism sometimes. Dropping out of the competitions in early stages.

**How does focusing on these areas align with your longer-term goals?**

Consistency is crucial in covering as much as content as possible, whether it’s learning, working or adjusting to life’s circumstances.

Competitions are crucial in gauging how far I can stretch myself, learning where I can improve and building resilience when it comes to accepting criticism.

Month 4 learnings:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SESSION** | **WHAT I LEARNED** | **WHAT CHANGED AFTER GOING THROUGH THAT SESSION** | **A METAPHOR** |
| Scholarship Writing 1 | Getting Scholarship ready. Being in tune with yourself to figure out why you are applying for opportunities. How to make first impressions by following instructions and sending the right documents | I began to really understand the value of introspective views when making life decisions; the “why am I doing this?” the “what do I gain from this?” | **You as a person** – Individually, I think we are always exploring things we never knew we could do, stretching boundaries we could never reach. |
| Scholarship Writing 2 | Focus was on the actual writing of scholarship essays,  Common essay mistakes to avoid (one of them being focusing too much on hardship) and the power of micro-moments in essays to make them memorable. We also went through concrete examples of well written and poorly written essays to try and notice the differences. | I always thought that scholarship essays were restricted to being very strict and formal in the terms of language used. After the session, I realized that it’s possible to still have this but it can be done by incorporating aspects of storytelling. | **Dr. C herself-** I always thought that she would be very formal and strict in all interactions. With time I realized how open and fun she really tries to be to everyone. |
| Scholarship Writing 3 | Here we had more of a panel discussion with 3 ladies, each of them having secured scholarship opportunities for postgrad studies, an Erasmus Mundus scholar, Rhodes Scholar and a Mandela Rhodes Scholar. They each took us through their experiences applying for those scholarships and their current experiences after being accepted | Two things:   1. Africa needs its own people to change. We seem to be left behind in every tech advancement. Why can’t we rewrite history? Why can’t we be the ones leading instead of the ones playing catch up? 2. The impostor syndrome still exists even when people are succeeding. It never stops. What can change is how we deal with it; brushing it aside and taking the risk to apply for such “impossible” opportunities. | **Steelie**- challenge yourself to become one. In a more common children’s game “bano” a steelie was often the smallest marble made of pure steel. Yet it was the most effective when it came to eliminating opponents. Sometimes we may think we are the smallest, the least important but we can end up being the most effective if we just were to focus on our strengths. |
| Reflection Session/Compliment wall | We wrote what we are craving for in our lives from social, emotional, professional and personal needs. | I came to realize that we all somehow have the same issues. We fail to open up to others when they could be facing the same problems. | **Mirror** – sometimes the reflections of yourself appear on others even when you least expect it. |
| Group discussion and reflection on academic excellence | The topic was on discussing a specific area of excellence | Our group looked at the angle of failure and how to bounce back from it. We mentioned things like accepting that you’ve failed, find out why and where you went wrong, re-strategize and then go again. | **Chapter in a book**- the opportunity to deviate from the main session and discuss our own things. Think of the main session as the whole book and the chapter as a unique story |
| Responsible Computing I | We looked at the 5Whys technique when narrowing down a general problem to its specific one. We looked at the metrics that are used to define a solution (Does it intentionally harm, exclude or reinforce bias?) | What struck me is how many systems we use today often have challenges being considered “responsible innovations” | **Cactus leaf-** The spines represent the overall overlying problems but the flesh represents what we want, the specific problem. Then with that specific problem we can decide what solution to best come up with. Just like cooking a cactus pad. |
| Public Speaking Delivery Skills 1 | The session covered body language, posture, gestures. We also looked at auditory devices, how to project your voice. Pausing, how to enter and exit the stage. | A belief that I could be one of the best speakers because I naturally adopt practical things quite easily. | **Swiss knife** – it’s small but has so many important tools. Sometimes the most effective devices used in public speaking are the most effective: gestures, pauses, humor, |
| Public Speaking Competition Round 1 Speech Submission | How to develop a structure of a speech, how to tie storytelling to the message you are trying to communicate. Avoid using short form of words “It’s, can’t, I’m”.  Tying your conclusion to your intro by making sure that you end a speech based on what you introduced in the first paragraph. | I realized that I have written quite a number of speeches before but every time it’s a different challenge, things to work on, storylines to improve on, styles to choose from. It’s never been the same usual methodology and that’s what I have loved about writing speeches. | **Chess**- same pieces, same board, but different game. Every time. |