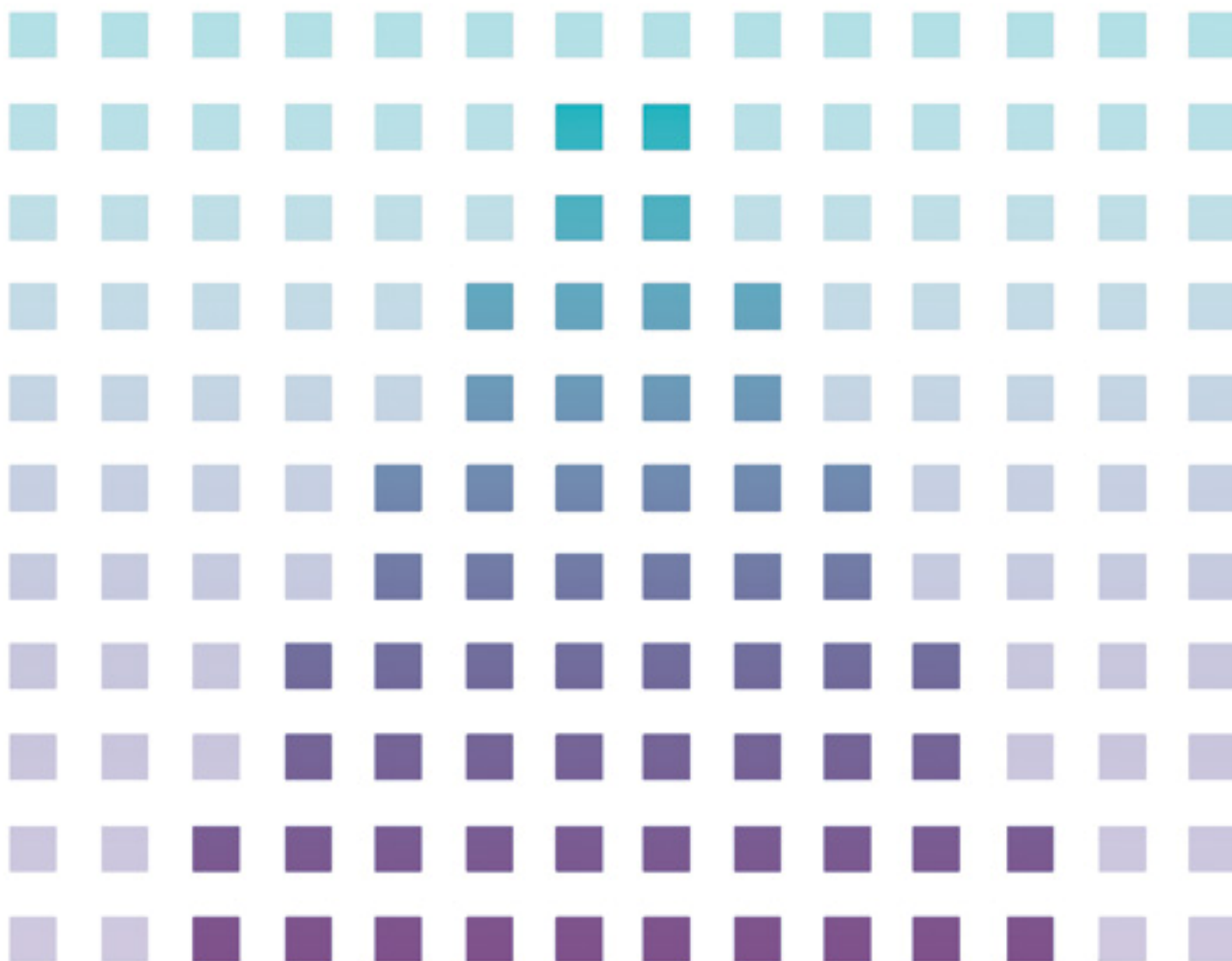


Evaluation of Aimhigher South Yorkshire Mentoring Programmes

Dr Diane Burns
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Biography for Dr Diane Burns

This evaluation has been undertaken by Dr Diane Burns Cpsychol AFBPsS. Diane is an independent research consultant and an occupational psychologist. She has over ten years experience of carrying out research into the policy and practices to widening participation and the evaluation of widening participation initiatives in community, school, further and higher education settings. Diane is currently undertaking research into the areas of HE in FE and Foundation Degrees at the University of Sheffield and is consulting on community action research projects to increase and widening the participation of young people in post-compulsory education at The Sheffield College.

Diane also offers services in organizational and project development and in the evaluation and development of partnerships, networks and collaborations.

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Glossary of Terms Used in this Report

Glossary of mentoring terms taken from Miller, A.D. (2002) *Mentoring Students and Young People* Kogan Page: London

Academic Mentoring is used to refer to a) mentoring where the prime goal is to improve the academic achievement of mentees; b) mentoring in a higher education context, where staff mentor students; and c) as an alternative phrase for academic tutoring where teachers support students.

Community Mentoring is used where mentors are drawn from the local community e.g. residents from the geographical areas, community groups.

Developmental Mentoring is used when the prime aim is the personal development of the mentees

External Mentoring is used to refer to circumstances where mentors are drawn from outside the education institution, e.g. from the community or from business.

Higher Education Student Mentoring is used to programmes where students at university or college mentor younger students.

Black and Minority Ethnic Mentoring is used when the programme is targeted at mentees and mentors from specific minority ethnic communities.

Paid Mentoring is the term used when mentors receive a sum of money in return for their time mentoring. This contrasts with **Volunteer Mentoring**, when no payment is received.

Student Mentoring is used as a generic phrase to cover all the forms of mentoring where young people in educational institutions are mentees.

Student-led Mentoring is used when a student-centred mentoring philosophy where mentees set the agenda for the mentoring meetings or sessions.

Tiered Mentoring is used when mentees within one programme act as mentors to other students.

Executive Summary

Mentoring: Supporting progression and access to HE

Mentoring programmes funded by Aimhigher South Yorkshire aim to deliver mentoring to young people in the region. From May 2007 to January 2008 an independent researcher was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the mentoring programmes in South Yorkshire, using an impact assessment approach.

The Mentoring Evaluation Aimed:

- To ascertain the forms of mentoring which have been used
- To assess the impact of mentoring through the student experiences
- To assess the impact of mentoring through the schools and colleges experience
- To assess the impact of mentoring through parents and carers experiences

The evaluation sought to collect both qualitative and quantitative data and information from programme staff, staff in schools and colleges, mentors, mentees. Qualitative data about the experiences of mentoring and its impacts were collected through interviews, workshops, questionnaires and group discussions with programme staff, and staff from participating colleges and schools, mentors and mentees. All mentees who participated in this study were asked if they would invite their parents/carers to take part in the research, but all declined.

KEY FINDINGS

Key findings of the evaluation are reported below in relation to five main headings: Types and Modes of Mentoring; Targeting & Accessing of Mentoring; Matching of Mentors with Mentees; and Benefits of Mentoring.

The Types and Modes of Mentoring

The types and approaches of mentoring varied across the programmes:

South City Mentoring Programme South Yorkshire

Developmental and Higher Education Mentoring for learners aged 16 -19 years old from specific black and minority ethnic backgrounds in South Yorkshire. The programme is delivered through face to face mentoring along with self development activities, workshops and events.

North City Mentoring

This programme provides HE Education mentoring for Y10s and Y11s who are predicted to achieve C/Ds in their GCSEs (among other criteria). The focus is on developing mentees study skills and understandings of HE and to make a contribution to the achievement of mentees' GCSE examinations. The mentoring is delivered through a series of short face to face mentoring sessions.

Central City Mentoring

Higher Education E-Mentoring delivered primarily via email with a focus on building mentees skills and understanding to support the transition from FE to HE. The programme is aimed at students in danger of not completing their level 3 course with no family history of HE and are from low socio-economic groups (among other criteria).

Outer City Mentoring

Community / External mentoring which aims to promote further and higher education to young people who live in Outer City and help increase young people's participation in post compulsory learning and training. The programme is aimed at young people with no family history of HE, are from low socio-economic groups and have the potential to succeed in HE (among other criteria).

Benefits of Mentoring

In-depth qualitative study of three of the above four programmes found the following key benefits to be associated with each project:

South City Mentoring in South Yorkshire

From the experiences of mentees and staff interviewed for this study, the mentoring was viewed to have helped develop and improve the self-confidence and self-esteem of mentees and their study skills, motivation to study and resolve to stay in education.

North City Mentoring

Overall mentees who participated in this study, identified that the mentoring helped them to increase their motivation, start to work hard and focus on their GCSEs. There were a range of different views among mentors, staff and mentees as to whether the mentoring has impacted on raising aspirations of mentees to study in higher education. On the one hand there was some suggestion that the mentoring has helped the mentees aspire to stay in education and go on to higher education, the mentees were of the view that they had already made this decision at an earlier point in time. The mentoring seemed to be helping the mentees in their decision-making about which courses to study at level 3 and where (6th form or an FE college setting). The findings also suggest that the programme was helping mentees to undertake their coursework and revision for their GCSE examinations.

Central City Mentoring

Mentees interviewed for this study, the Central City Mentoring programme of e-mentoring found that the mentoring gave them access to information about where to study and how to apply to study for higher education (for Y12s) and for further education (for Y10s). Mentees seemed to be unanimous in their view that the mentoring did not impact on their aspirations to go into HE as they had made their decision to 'stay-on' in education at an earlier point in time. The mentees also were of the view that the mentoring did not have an impact on their academic

achievement.

Mentors from across the programmes and staff reported that the mentors benefited from taking part in the programmes. Mentors commonly reported that helping younger people had given them personal satisfaction. They also reported that the mentoring had developed their communication and interpersonal skills and for some had helped them in decision-making about their future careers and to gain entry onto teacher training courses. These findings are similar to those of Huddleston (2001) who found that many HE students wanted to become mentors because of the added value it can bring to their careers.

Targeting of Mentoring

The findings suggest that during 2006-07, both the South City Mentoring and North City Mentoring were overall successfully targeting the provision to groups of young people it aimed to offer mentoring to. There was a more complicated picture of the targeting for the MTP into HE programme. This is because the students at the Newton College who responded to the invitation to take up the mentoring were overall the ones who were already motivated, already academically achieving and had already decided to go into Higher Education. The findings seem to suggest that the mentees on this programme did not meet the criteria of being in danger of not completing their level 3 courses. There is also a suggestion that not every level three student who met the criteria set out by the programme received an invitation from the college to take up the mentoring.

Accessing Mentoring

Mentees from each of the programmes were shown to have had some type of difficulty accessing the mentoring or programme activities. In the North City Mentoring Programme, mentees are providing with mentoring sessions that run during lesson time. All the mentees interviewed were of the view that to miss any lesson time during their GCSE was disadvantageous to them. Mentors also commented that some mentees

did not turn up because of such clashes or were simply refused permission to leave lessons by their subject teachers. The Central City Mentoring programme was a new programme being introduced in 2006-07 and there seems to have been some serious 'teething problems' to begin with. All the mentees and staff reported serious problems in gaining access to the website for the e-mentoring. This is because passwords didn't work and because the network at Newton College would 'go down'. This problem seems to have persisted over a number of months and many mentees became frustrated and disillusioned leading them to drop out of the programme. In the BME Programme some minor administrative errors resulted in 2 mentees missing one of the activities.

Matching of Mentees and Mentors

Mentees and mentors from across the programme commented on the importance of good matching to get the most out of the mentoring relationship. The research found many examples of the matching of mentors to mentees working very well and others when it worked less well. When it worked well it was generally because the mentor had direct experience of the subject area their mentee was interested in study in HE. In addition the mentees commented that they found the mentoring particularly valuable if the mentors have experiences of the same institution they are thinking about apply to (i.e. the University Central rather than Central City University and vice versa; College rather than 6th Form) and in similar circumstances (e.g. the mentor is studying in their own home town/city or have moved away to go to University).

In the BME Programme, it was possible for the mentees to raise issues about matching directly with the programme co-ordinator and for changes to be made to allocate new mentors to mentees. This programme was also unique in the way it gave opportunities for the mentees to have an input in to decision-making about whom they were matched with. Having this opportunity to voice their views and input was greatly appreciated by the mentees on the BME Programme. Mentees

from the other programmes made comments about how they would like to have more involvement in deciding who they were matched with.

The Evaluation

The evaluation of the impacts of mentoring has proved a challenging exercise. The intended collection of data to show the academic achievements of mentees proved difficult. Access to the parents or guardians of mentees also proved very difficult. Nevertheless the evaluation has generated some extremely interesting qualitative data. The key problem lay in identifying where data sets about students' predicted and actual grades are recorded and stored and the provision of this data by schools and colleges seems wholly voluntary. The voluntary nature is perhaps not unusual as the mentoring provided by the programmes was sometimes described as a 'bolt on' and its success as being 'dependent on whether there were key staff in schools or colleges who were personally keen to support the programme'. This is similar to a finding of the evaluation of the National Mentoring Pilot Project, which suggests that the key factor in the success of the programme was the effectiveness of school coordinators Huddleston *et al* (2004). In addition this evaluation found that schools and colleges vary in the emphasis they place on mentoring, the amount of remission that is provided to staff who are responsible for coordination; and whether there are any technical or other staff available to support the running of the mentoring programme. With regards to the collection of data, several requests were made for achievement data and although the researcher and programme coordinators worked together to try to identify and make such requests directly to schools and colleges, no data for 2006/07 was provided to the researcher by the time the evaluation was complete.

During earlier years of the programmes, coordinators reported having made similar requests for data and similar difficulties in accessing this information have been common. Following the completion of the evaluation it has proved possible to access data about the exam results where one programme coordinator (South City Mentoring Programme) has complied this directly from each school/college and from the mentees. For the other programmes, it seems

unclear if the contacts in schools have the time or the jurisdiction to access data of specific individual student's exam results. Whereas, in the case of contacts at Newton College, who do have access to the exam results of students, it was difficult for them to provide the data for the students who were mentees in 2006-07. This is because the information about which students were mentees was mislaid when staff left the employment of the college.

Recommendations

Generic Recommendations

Matching

- For all programmes to consider if and how mentees could have a greater say and involvement in the allocation of mentors to ensure matching is optimised.

Targeting of mentoring

- To continue to work to ensure the resources are appropriately targeted to the intended groups of young people who a) meet the defined criteria set by Aimhigher and that set by each mentoring programme and b) to include, when allocating funding, an assessment of the approaches and measures programmes will take to support the process of implementation of the criteria in the context of schools and colleges.

Evaluation and Monitoring

- For Aimhigher to continue to support the programmes to build and develop further their in-house systems for monitoring and evaluation. This may involve seeking ways to resource and further develop systems for the administration, reporting of data generation and collection across participating schools and colleges.
- To help programmes build on their current systems of formative and summative evaluation of mentoring and to consider ways to create a

joined up evaluation which would also include qualitative research to explore the views of staff, mentors and mentees in an on-going way.

- To monitor the 'spend' of funding for the management and coordination of programmes. There were indications that in one case the coordination and management of the mentoring programme appeared to have become 'one thing among many others to project manage'. This seems to increase the risks that staff may become over stretched and unable to respond full to any problems that may be experienced in other parts of the mentoring system. What may be considered in any assessment for the funding of mentoring programmes is the extent to which an organization can accommodate and support a designated person in a mentoring-focused post (whereby staff will have the resources and capacity to run the programme and also the opportunity to further develop their knowledge and understanding of mentoring).

Specific Recommendations

Central City Mentoring

It may prove useful to carry out a review to assess the extent to which the Central City Mentoring programme is meeting its aims and objectives following its second year of implementation. The findings seem to indicate that the problems with ITC and with targeting seriously limited the programmes effectiveness in its first year of running. Programme staff have since taken steps to improve on this situation and it would seem appropriate to monitor and evaluate the impacts of these changes.

In addition, the findings suggest that the mode of e-mentoring itself may be placing limits on the mentoring experience. It therefore may prove useful to review if the aims and objectives of this programme can be better met through a more finely targeted type of mentoring that combines, or even replaces e-mentoring with more face-to-face mentoring opportunities. Such a review may involve giving due consideration to the ways in which the targeting is conceptualised and implemented at the Newton College. The findings seem to suggest that

the aims of objectives of this programme may be better met if, along with any criteria set by Aimhigher, that the mentees are truly at risk of not completing their level 3 programmes. There is also an issue around the equity of access to this programme and it would be essential that Y12s studying on AS/A Level and vocational level three courses are given the opportunity to take up the mentoring. Finally the timing of the mentoring programme should also be reviewed as many of the mentees interviewed commented that currently it does not fit with key events or stages they consider to be important in their transition to HE.

North City Mentoring

The primary recommendation for the North City Mentoring programme is to reorganize the delivery of the programme to Y11s so the length of time of the face to face mentoring sessions are extended and so that all clashes with subject lessons are avoided.

South City Mentoring

The primary recommendation for the South City Mentoring programme is to review and improve upon the training that is provided to mentors. This should a) ensure that staff and mentors are trained in boundary management and b) that every mentor receives the proper training prior to undertaking mentoring sessions.

The Evaluation

The Research Objectives

For this evaluation the research objectives are:

- To articulate the types and approaches to mentoring taken within each programmes
- To identify if and how mentoring may have impacted on the academic achievements of mentees
- To identify the process and impacts of the mentoring programmes on mentees in terms of their knowledge, skills and understandings (of higher education; study skills, making an application to go into HE)
- To identify any personal changes mentees have experienced as a result of participating in a mentoring programme (motivation, aspiration, self-confidence)
- To identify the different relative strengths and weakness of the programmes as viewed by mentees, mentors and the schools and colleges.

The Evaluation Approach

The evaluation blends together aspects of impact and stakeholder evaluation. 'Impact' is viewed to mean the *effects* of mentoring for mentees and any resulting *outcomes* to arise as consequence of these effects. The evaluation aims to explore the impacts as *experienced* and *understood* at the time of undertaking the research (i.e. in the short-term) and from the standpoints of the different stakeholders identified by Aimhigher South Yorkshire. There appears to be an implicit assumption that the impacts of the mentoring programme as intended in the programme delivery plans, will commence during or immediately following participation in the programme. It is important to recognise however that the temporality of the onset of any impacts and their duration in most instances are not clear or known. In other words, this evaluation will explore the understandings of mentees within months of experiencing or completing a mentoring programme. This could be too soon to

know the full range of impacts that a young person may go on to experience at a later time.

Evaluation Methods and Activities

Through initial discussion with the Aimhigher, the commissioners of the research, three mentoring programmes were selected for a full evaluation. These were the South Yorkshire South City Mentoring Programme; North City Mentoring; and Mentoring for Preparation and Transition into Higher Education (MTP Into HE). Outer City Mentoring incorporates a smaller proportion of its activities to mentoring and the programme is integrated within a wider strategy and range of activities and services in the Outer City area. As the evaluation's aims are to assess the impact of mentoring it was decided to focus the evaluation on those programmes that are solely or predominantly concerned with delivering Higher Education mentoring.

The co-ordinators of the four programmes were consulted (and interviewed) about their programmes and the design of the research methods and samples. Wherever possible methods and data collection tools were used that would allow participants to express and explore their views about mentoring and the value of mentoring for them personally.

Interviews: face to face interviews, telephone and email interviews were undertaken. The interviews were largely semi-structured, organized around key topics and aimed at tapping into the thinking underpinning the design and approach of the mentoring programmes; selection of mentees and mentors, matching of mentees and mentors, training of mentees and mentors, mentees' needs and mentors' inputs, benefits and barriers of mentoring and its impacts for mentors and mentees. Each programme co-ordinator was interviewed and these were held at their place of work. All but one of the contact/liasing staff in schools and colleges were interviewed by telephone, the other being interviewed face to face. The interviews were transcribed, anonymised and available for analysis in text. Interview schedules can be found in Appendix One. In total 18 interviews were conducted.

Ten statements test: based on an adaptation from the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). As an aid to generate reflection and discussion, each mentees was asked to individually complete a ten-statement form about how mentoring was useful and less useful prior to taking part in the focus group discussion. The ten-statement form can be found in Appendix Two.

Focus Groups: were used to generate shared and social understandings of the aims of mentoring, the success and problems accounted during the mentoring programmes and views on how mentoring programmes could be further developed in the future. The responses given in the ten statements test formed the key areas of discussion in the focus group. Five focus groups were held with mentees. The discussions were audio recorded and transcribed.

Questionnaire: All of the mentees who attended a focus group interview were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Although questionnaires are not the appropriate tool for exploring in depth the experiences and thoughts of mentees, they were thought to be useful in collecting information about mentees progression through the formal education system including data about their achievements in gaining formal qualifications where appropriate. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix Three.

Survey: Mentors were surveyed about their views about the programmes and its impacts on themselves; and their understandings of the impacts of their mentoring for mentees. This data was obtained via electronically administered questionnaires sent to people who were active mentors during 2006-07. This questionnaire can be found in Appendix Four.

Monitoring data: The evaluation had access to monitoring data routinely collected by coordinating staff and reported to Aimhigher South Yorkshire. In addition co-ordinators provided supplementary information during interviews.

On-going and in-house evaluations: All of the programmes have some in-house; on-going evaluations in place and examples of feedback provided by mentees, mentors and contacts in schools/colleges were made available to the

researcher during interviews with programme coordinators and staff. Two programmes were also run as part of a national piloting of mentoring during 2004-06 and as such were independently evaluated in 2005-06. A copy of the evaluation report was made available to this evaluation. One of these programmes, North City Mentoring continued to run in 2006-08. One programme provided a copy of a report of their in-house formative evaluation in 2005-06.

The table below provides an overview of the research methods and data collection undertaken with each programme.

Table 1: An overview of evaluation data

	BME	CCU	U of S	Barnsley
Interview Co-ordinator	Y	Y	Y	Y
Interview Staff in school	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Focus Group mentees	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Workshop Mentees	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Questionnaire Mentees	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Survey of mentors	Y	Y	Y	N/A
Monitoring data	Y	Y	Y	Y
Summary reports of in house evaluation	N	Y	N	Y

Ethical Issues

The evaluation research was designed and undertaken in accordance with the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines (2000). In particular anonymity and privacy of participations were fully considered (pseudonyms are used in this report or people are referred to by their job title. Cooperation with and participation in evaluating the mentoring programmes was a condition placed on programmes receiving Aimhigher funding. Throughout the research process, however, the researchers sought to gain agreed verbal consent from all

participants; informed participants of their right to withdraw from the research process. All data has been stored securely.

Sample

The evaluation elicited the views of the key stakeholders in the mentoring programmes. Individual interviews (see table 2 below for a breakdown) were undertaken with Mentoring Programme Coordinators/Project Managers and staff in schools and colleges (i.e. this ranged from members of staff responsible for Aimhigher in schools to individual teachers who were involved in selecting mentees).

Table 2. The Sample Structure Interviews

Participants	No. of interviews
Programme Co-ordinators	6 Interviews
Contacts in School	7 Interviews
Contacts in College	4 Interviews
Contacts in the Local Authority	1 Interviews

Five focus groups were held with a total number of 29 mentees (recruited from colleges and secondary schools in South Yorkshire). See table 3 for further details.

Table 3. The Sample Structure of Focus Groups

Focus Group Mentees	No. of participants
South City Mentoring	7 participants 17-18 year olds
Central City Mentoring	7 participants 17-18 year olds
Central City Mentoring	2 participants 17-18 year olds
Central City Mentoring Tiered Mentoring	6 participants 14-15 year olds
North City Mentoring	7 participants 16-17 year olds

A survey was undertaken with Mentors (who had been recruited by the programmes from the undergraduate and in some cases postgraduate student bodies at CCU and the University Central and involved in mentoring during

2006-07). The response rate was small overall (see table 4 for further details) and probably was a reflection of the number of mentors who had since graduated from the respective universities and were no longer in contact with the mentoring programmes.

Table 4: Survey Sample of Mentors

Programme	No of mentors
South City Mentoring	3 (total of 7 mentors contacted)
Central City Mentoring	4 (total of 37 mentors contacted)
North City Mentoring	4 (total of 23 mentors contacted)

Analytical Framework

Effects and outcomes

1. Experiences and practices involved in selecting mentees; recruiting mentors and matching mentees and mentors.
2. Examples of any outcomes participants associate with the training and support received to undertake the mentoring.
3. Examples of the effects of mentoring.
4. Examples of any outcomes of mentoring for mentees and mentors

Coding Data

The data collected was coded using the areas outlined in 1-4 above. Any data identified as relating to one or more of the areas were coded accordingly. Coded data was then organized thematically. This involved analysis for themes that:

- Thread across the accounts provided by the various stakeholders - programme co-ordinators; contacts in schools and colleges; mentors and mentees, i.e. commonalities
- Offer insights into the variation in the perspectives, i.e. differences.

The themes were then compared and consider along side the aims and objectives of each programme and as set out in their delivery action plan. Prior

to undertaking this assessment, the researcher sought to consider any changes that had been introduced to the context or management of the programmes since the production of the delivery plan.

The analysis will aim to produce a range of multiple insights and perspectives about the strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring programmes from a range of stakeholder perspectives. These insights are intended to supplement and build on the findings to emerge from on-going and in-house evaluations that programmes themselves are undertaking and in the process of developing.

Findings

Selection, Matching and Rates of Participation in the Mentoring Programmes

In the section below are summaries of the descriptions given by programme coordinators and college/schools staff to outline the process they use to select mentees and mentors and the methods and/or criteria used for matching mentors with mentees. The numbers of mentees reported to have been recruited to each programme are also provided.

South City Mentoring

Records indicate that in 2006-07, forty-two Y12 and twenty-seven, Y13s started the programme and twenty-three, Y12 and twenty-seven, Y13 from across eleven schools/colleges completed the programme. The mentees are from Somali, Pakistani, African, African Caribbean, Yemeni, Eastern European and Dual Heritage ethnic minority groups. Mentors are recruited from the University Central and receive a payment for their work.

Staff at 6th Form and in colleges reported that they approach individual students who they think meet the selection criteria and ask them to think about joining the programme. If the student agrees, the Programme Coordinator interviews them and reaches a decision about whether the programme would suit their

needs. The school/college pay a fee for each mentee accepted on to the programme. Mentors are recruited from the University Central through a process of selection involving application forms, interviews and CRB checks and if successful, given training in mentoring by an external consultant. The mentors are paid for the mentoring they provide.

Matching mentees to mentors was reported to be carried out on a basis that considers a) *personality* (who the mentee seems to get along with and identify with during a launch event held to introduce and build relationships) and b) the *subject areas* mentees and mentors are taking. Hence, mentees have a say in who becomes their mentor. Mentees reported the process worked very well and that a match in culture and ethnicity proved also to be important.

Records provided to the evaluation indicate that mentees in Y12 on average successfully achieved their expected grades in their level examinations in 2007.

Engagement and Participation

Findings suggest that by February 2006:

- 35 mentees had withdrawn at the beginning of the programme, 19 mentees had not responded to any emails sent by their mentors; 35 mentees had responded at least once to emails sent by their mentor (N = 7 at Poplar Campus; N = 11 at Oak Campus; N = 16 at Lime Campus; and N = 1 at Beech Campus);
- 18 mentees had responded two or more times to emails sent by their mentors;
- Five mentees/mentor pairings made five or more reciprocal email exchanges.

North City Mentoring Programme

Reports indicate that 93 mentees from across three secondary schools (Campion High, N = 28; Rosehill Comprehensive, N = 38; and Primrose High, N = 38) were on the programme in 2006-07. Staff at the schools select students on the basis that they are C/D boarder line and from low participation neighbourhoods; lower socio-economic groups; families who have no experience in HE; minority ethnic groups under-represented in HE; disabled or a looked after child.

University Central students in Y2, who are from the South Yorkshire region are approached via email and invited to apply to become mentors. They are then short-listed and invited to attend an interview and CRB checks are carried out. The National Mentoring Programme at Cardiff University provides mentoring training to the successful recruits. The training was well regarded by staff and mentors. The training helps reinforce the recruitment process as a few students may sometimes decide that mentoring is not for them at this stage. Mentors are then given an induction to the schools, which involves a tour and an opportunity to meet their mentees. Mentees and mentors are matched through a paper based exercise based on academic need and interests, carried out by the Programme Co-ordinator. Mentors are recruited from the student body at the University Central and receive a payment for their work.

Engagement and Participation

Overall figures show 103 mentees engage. Not clear whether these figures are for the numbers of mentees recruited or numbers that completed the programme.

Central City Mentoring Programme

This is a new programme beginning in 2006. Its aims are to strengthen and sustain studies at level 3; raise aspirations into HE; support and enhance a) choices about which courses and where to study higher education and b) transition into HE; and enhance retention in HE. The programme was designed

to deliver primarily e-mentoring, plus three events (including induction and exit celebrations) to Y12 pupils in colleges in Central City. During 2006-07 Programme staff at CCU ran the programme at the Newton College (in Central City East), whereas staff at Central City West LEA coordinated the delivery of the programme across Central City West (in conjunction with the Programme Coordinator and staff at Central City University who provided the LEA with trained mentors). Mentors are recruited from the study body at Central City University and work voluntarily.

The Central City East Programme

Records indicate that 89 mentees were recruited across Castle College, Norton & Peaks College and Lime Campus. Staff in the colleges invited students from the Widening Participation Cohorts to take part in the programme. Take up was voluntary. The language in the letters and advertisements in the colleges seem to be focused on students that were already thinking about going to university. For example, it was reported that at Lime Campus letters were sent only to students taking AS/A level courses. Matching was undertaken by programme staff and staff at the college using criteria that included subject areas, i.e. where the mentees weaker subjects are matched with mentor strengths; interests and hobbies. Gender and ethnicity were reported to be a lower priority.

The Central City West Programme

At the time of writing, the number of mentees reported to receive mentoring through this programme in 2006-07 was 26. It is not known whether this is numbers of mentees recruited or numbers that completed the programme.

Due to a number of staff changes in Central City West LEA and in Programme staff at Central City University, it has proved difficult to obtain a clear picture, or access records, which could detail about which schools mentors provided by CCU were mentoring at and how many mentees were receiving the mentoring. Conflicting information was provided about the target groups of the programme (Y10, Y11 or Y12s) and which schools were involved. Confirmation that mentors were provided to Y12 pupils at Rose High Comprehensive, Spring Hill Comprehensive and Woodfield College was given after the evaluation had

been completed. This may be a reflection of the number of different mentoring programmes in operation via Central City West LEA and how mentors provided through different programmes have been ‘team and ladled’ across schools to meet the needs of mentees.

Based on records provided by programme staff and staff in schools and colleges the table below provides an overall picture of recruitment to each programme.

Table 5: Summary of attendance and participation across all programmes in 2006-07

Programme	Mentee Year Group	Numbers by school/college	Total Numbers of mentees in 2006-07
South City Mentoring	Y12	42 recruited from across schools and colleges in South Yorkshire	23 completed
	Y13	27 recruited as above	27 completed
North City Mentoring	Y11	Campion High: 28 Primrose High: 38 Rosehill Comprehensive: 38	104 total (<i>It is unclear if this figure reflects the total number of mentees recruited or to have completed the mentoring</i>)
Central City East	Y12	93 recruited at the Newton College	54 completed (<i>i.e. had at least one e-mail exchange with a mentor</i>).
Central City West	Y12	Not known	26 (<i>not known if recruited or completed</i>)

In the next section of the report findings from the qualitative interviews and focus groups with mentees, mentors and staff in schools and colleges are presented for each programme. The analysis seeks to identify how mentors and mentees experienced the mentoring and how they were supported. The analysis also seeks to identify any key indications of the benefits and outcomes

of the mentoring from the perspectives of the mentees, mentors and staff in the participating schools and colleges.

THE SOUTH CITY MENTORING PROGRAMME

Research with the South City Mentoring programme included a focus group with 7 Y12s (two male and five female); individual interviews with three staff from schools and colleges; and the survey responses from three mentors.

Findings from the focus group with mentees

As previously outlined, each participant was asked to complete the statements 'mentoring was useful to me because... and mentoring was not so useful to me because... '

In general when participants were asked to complete the statement typical responses were:

The mentoring was useful to me because...

- Got to know about uni life
- It was somebody to talk to about university and life in general
- It helped with course work
- I learned revision techniques
- I got information about financial aspects of university
- I found out about applying to university
- I had someone to talk to comfortably and without judgement
- It increased my motivation
- I gained confidence

The mentoring was not so helpful to me because...

- The time of workshops was too early
- There should be more workshops

- I was assigned to a mentor who had a degree in a subject I wasn't interested in.

The areas identified in the statement test were then discussed as a group. The following themes were identified from the focus group data collected.

Theme: Increasing motivation

All of the mentees interviewed reported feeling more motivated as a consequence of the programme. For example:

"I wanted to back out, and something was going through me saying 'I didn't want to back out of 6th Form' and she told me about things from her side and so I just kept going through, listening to her experience and all the happiness of getting the degree at the graduation. I am looking forward to it."

"At one point I was finding it hard to get out of bed for school. So my Aimhigher teacher at school rang the programme coordinator and he rang my mentor. I got a call at eight in the morning saying 'get out of bed.' My mentor rang for about a week and talked to my teachers about how I was getting on. That was good"

"It was motivating. You know my mentor is at the University Central and I am thinking about doing IT there. He told me about things like how many grades I need to get to get in on that course. He has motivated me to achieve those grades"

Theme: Growing confidence

Five the mentees have experienced changes to their self-perception. This was primarily expressed as feeling and behaving more confidently for example:

"I am used to not talking, just sitting and taking it in from my teacher all the time and not to questions. But now I am probably one of the top five people who do the talking. And this is down to my mentor. I kind of gained confidence and became more comfortable. Now I ask questions about the course work. I used to sit and do as I was told, now I ask for help."

"I did like having someone to talk to. I dreaded being asked questions in case I didn't know the answer and I would worry what people think of me She gave me the ability to ask questions rather than me being the one who was asked questions. I could ask someone else, say 'what do you think?'"

“There wasn’t anyone else, the teacher is busy and the form teacher and my mum. So she was someone who I could really talk to. Now I have the ability to think even if you get it wrong it doesn’t really matter as you learn from that mistake”

“I feel more confident now, I could ask really stupid questions like really random Qs about Uni and she wouldn’t think I was stupid”

Theme: Experiences of Matching

The mentees reported mixed experiences of being matched with their mentor, some positive and some more negative. For example, a match with subject area was viewed to be important to the mentees and particularly so for the subject they *intend* to study at university.

“Revising for psychology she did help in a way, but she didn’t really know about that subject so she couldn’t help. She was doing an English degree. But I did like that I had someone to talk to”

“My mentor is doing psychology and I am doing it at A level so she helped me with assignments but psychology is not the basis of what I want to do at university. What I want to study.”

Four of the mentees were of the view that a match in ethnicity and culture was important for successful mentoring. For example:

“I think even if they have a higher degree in the subject there is no way they can motivate you, if they are a middle class white woman. If a middle class white woman came up to me and said it is easy to get motivated I would say ‘no it isn’t’, but if it was a black guy, and from a similar background, African even, who is older than you by three years and you can share joking about what an African family is like. Yeah that it can be hard. You can think this person is on the same boat as me. You can find this motivating because if he has done it three years ago you think, why couldn’t I do it now. So being able to relate to a person like this, it helps a lot more”

“If they share similar background you don’t have to explain yourself all the time. You do get asked questions all the time, for examples, ‘how come you don’t drink [alcohol]?’”

This mentee went on to say:

“Yeah my mentor she kept asking me to meet on West Street in a pub. And I said I didn’t want to and she asked why. I don’t think I should have

to explain myself. I told the programme coordinator, I made a big deal out of it. So I got another one [mentor]. She was really good to me, but it was the questioning!"

Theme: Increasing knowledge

All the mentees reported being more knowledgeable about the process involved in applying to university and funding, etc. For example:

"I thought that like Uni it was just put your name in and then just be part of statistics like an insurance broker or something. It is not only your grades but your personality can help you as well. My mentor says the personal statement is important. If you got predicted grades and there are 1000 people applying for 200 places then it is the personal statement that makes the difference"

Theme: Involvement of schools/colleges

Mentees had very different experiences of the level and nature of support and involvement of staff at their respective schools and colleges. For examples

"Our Assistant Head asks us a lot about it and she is quite involved and she asks us all the time about how things are going. And she asks us to communicate with the programme coordinator and vice versa"

"The link teacher always ask about what's going on in the programme and how we are getting on"

"Only the Aimhigher teacher knows about stuff at our school"

"It is only the Aimhigher teacher know about it, because my form teacher doesn't"

One mentee reported being questioned by a subject teacher about the mentoring:

"My teacher was annoyed once because I was leaving her English Lit lesson to go to the mentoring. She said [the teacher] 'Does she help? Does she even have an English Degree?"

Other Comments: Missing out on workshops

Four of the mentees commented that the administration of the programme could be improved upon:

“Some of the letters about the workshops came too late. And I missed it”

“Yeah they had some problems with their administration”

“They sent out forms that said Y13 on it and we are Y12 so I didn’t know if it was for me. I phoned up and asked about it and it was for me but it was too late then for me to go”

SOUTH CITY MENTOR PERSPECTIVES

The areas that mentors reported covering during their sessions with their mentees are summarised in Table 6 below:

Table 6: To show the areas usually covered in mentoring

Areas common to all mentors	Areas covered by some mentors
Decisions to go to university Choice of where to apply Choice of HE course Revision Techniques Exam Techniques	Essay Writing (2) Subject Specific advice (2) UCAS application (2)

As the table shows all of the mentors who responded to the survey, indicated that they mentored mentees around ‘choosing and decision making’ about whether to go to university or not; where to apply to go and to which courses; and ‘revision and exam techniques’.

Impacts of the mentoring for mentees

The responses from mentors indicate that the programme had, in their view, impacted positively on mentees decision-making and goal setting and resolve to stay in education. For example mentors reported that:

“The mentoring helped my mentee to decide to go to university”

“Both my mentees set high academic targets for themselves. Only one of them met them though”

“My mentee decided to stay on at school to earn extra points needed for the degree they want to do”

“Both mentees had a stronger resolve to go to uni”

“My mentee sought out information about higher education”

The mentoring was also indicated as impacting on the beliefs, perceptions and motivations of the mentees. For example:

“Both my mentees realised that education was the way out of their poor background”

“They realised the benefits of acquiring higher education”

“Definitely seemed to be more positive and have more self belief after a few sessions”

“My mentee became less inclined to give up”

Impacts of mentoring programme on mentors

Although one mentor indicated that they did not receive any training in mentoring from the programme, mentors commonly reported gaining much personal reward from being mentors. For example:

“The experience has given me personal satisfaction by knowing that I have made an impact on the lives of both mentees. It has also further developed my communication skills”

“I would like to pick it up again if time permits. It was rewarding seeing a young person develop positively”

“It was a rewarding experience transferring life experience to a younger person”

And for one mentor, the experience was thought to be of value to their career...

“It gave me something very interesting to talk about at job interviews and I believe it helped me gain my current employment position”

PERSPECTIVES OF STAFF IN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES

Staff with a responsibility for the coordination of the mentoring programmes in two 6th forms and an FE College reported that:

“The feedback from pupils was that the mentoring was valuable. It gave them increased knowledge about university and what it is like. We have quite a strong support system at school for UCAS anyway so this complimented it.” (Central City East 6th Form)

“Feedback from students was very positive. Activities included several workshops throughout the year and visits to universities. Students commented that they became aware of things to do with university that they would not have found out otherwise. They seemed to get a lot out of it and that it was good to be with like-minded people” (College in North City)

“Most noticeable impact was the students’ growth in confidence – not just talking to different people but also travelling. Workshops were run all over South Yorkshire, as young people were involved from Barnsley, Doncaster, Central City East and Central City West. These students are not used to travelling and it took them very gradually and gently out of their comfort zones. The increase in confidence was very noticeable” (6th Form Central City West)

The mentoring raises confidence and self-esteem. Students feel important that they have been selected by the school – “I’m worth it” (6th Form Central City East)

However, staff views about the impact of mentoring on the academic achievement of mentees were more cautious. For example:

The benefits are qualitative rather than quantitative. I just couldn’t say whether it improved exam results, as we really don’t know what they would have done anyway.

In sum the findings suggest that the mentoring was:

- Successfully meeting its aims to increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of mentees. This was the view of staff in schools/colleges, programme staff, mentors and all seven mentees;
- Increases the mentee’s knowledge and understanding about higher education, life at university, finances and funding, and applying to UCAS (e.g. types of language to use and building up a personal statement);

- Motivating mentees to go into higher education;
- For some mentees, helping to increase their subject knowledge;
- For some mentees, increasing their know-how in preparing for exams/course work;

There appears to be clear evidence that the programme had led to the empowerment of at least three mentees, i.e. developing their self-efficacy as learners and building their resolve to stay in education.

At the time of the interviews, mentees were hesitant to say if the mentoring had had a positive impact on their achievement (they were all waiting for the results of the first year of their level 3 examinations). Since then, the programme coordinator has been able to provide these results. Overall they indicate that the mentees have met or exceeded their expected grades.

Areas for reflection and development:

- One mentor indicated that they did not receive any training in mentoring.
- Based on the records provided by the programme coordinator and information on the selection process it seems overall that the criteria used in selecting mentees was largely followed. However, one mentee reported that a parent had been to university (and was told that because this took place in another country 'it didn't count');
- Two mentees reported missing activities due to administrative delays and errors in communication.

Overall the programme offers an approach that is both holistic and mentee-led. There is clear evidence of a process of on-going mentee involvement in decision making processes about the programme. This, in conjunction with the workshop, activities and mentoring was highly valued by the mentees. Based on the data from a range of stakeholders, the programme has helped, to increase mentees' self-confidence and build their study skills, knowledge and understanding of university and the application process and finances. The programme was reported to have impacted on the motivation of mentees to

study, to stay in education and to raise their aspirations to go to university. On the whole the programme has successfully built good networks between mentees, mentors, staff in school and the programme coordinator and these have resulted in swift communication and resolution of problems. There were clear examples of a sensitive and proactive approach being taken to meet the needs of mentees. However, there appeared to be aspects of the mentoring that went beyond what is possibly expected to be involved with higher education mentoring. Although the mentee in question, found this level of input to be very helpful, the programme may need to think about how best to set and maintain boundaries around the mentoring relationship. Steps should also be taken to ensure that all mentors receive the required training prior to entering into a mentoring relationship with their mentees.

NORTH CITY MENTORING

Qualitative data was collected from interviews with the Programme Coordinator; staff from two schools and one focus group held with seven Y12 students who completed the mentoring programme when in Y11.

As previously outlined, each participant was asked to complete the statements 'mentoring was useful to me because... and mentoring was not so useful to me because... '

Typical responses were that mentoring had helped with performance and skills, subject knowledge, motivation and decision making. For example:

Mentoring has been useful to me because...

- It helped me deal with homework and coursework
- It helped me sort out time to study
- Helped me breakdown certain subjects and areas into small chunks
- Helped me keep up with homework set
- Helped me improve my course work

- Gave me a better knowledge of a subject
- They helped me understand a part of maths that I found difficult
- They printed off geography exam past papers for me
- Explain some sociology to me that I didn't understand
- It has helped me on specific problems I have had in subjects

- I felt more motivated
- The use of computers made it more interesting and motivated me to learn

- Helped me make decisions on what subjects to take at A level
- It helped me find out what careers I could go in for

Mentees also reported that having their mentor to talk, in addition to other people, was very helpful. For example:

- Personalised tutoring made it easier to talk about problems
- One to one tutoring meant that that focus was on work and distractions didn't occur
- I had someone else to talk to about school work who wasn't a teacher
- Had someone to talk about exam problems

When the mentees were asked to complete the statement '**Mentoring has been less useful to me because...** '

Typical responses were about the timing and the length of the sessions. For example:

- Length of session
- Only one short session a week – this meant not a lot of work could be covered
- Didn't get enough time with them per week
- There wasn't a lot of time in a session

- Missing lessons
- Missing lessons made me get behind in some work
- Put me off in lesson when having to leave midway through

Other responses were:

- Targets or objectives could have been set with me and my tutor to focus the learning time
- Mentor didn't do same subjects as me

All these responses were discussed further with the mentees during the focus group. The data was analysed and the following themes identified:

Theme: Tutoring

The mentees commonly likened the mentoring to a type of tutoring. For example:

'Sort of like extra tuition but sometimes just use computer to look at different jobs and stuff'.

"They would bring work to go over with the mentors, extra help with subjects"

This was thought to help students because:

"[The mentoring is] more personal than teaching in class, you can focus on one thing that you didn't understand, rather than asking in class. If you're stuck on one thing then you'd be keeping all the class behind if you start asking in class"

Theme: Achievement

There were mixed views about whether the mentoring had helped in their academic achievements. For example:

"I don't think it changed much like final grades and stuff but it helped like because of the time management for revision and stuff"

"Mentoring didn't improve my grades, not like major, but maybe a couple of marks or something"

"In some ways it helped. They covered stuff that you wouldn't necessarily have revised but then they go over stuff that you already know too. You'd tell them what's wrong but they'd just cover stuff that you already knew"

"Like in our maths, if you didn't get it you'd just move on 'cause the whole class needed to learn but I had the mentor and could say like I need help with this 'cause I didn't get it but we've moved on now. So they could help you and go over things that you didn't get"

"It made me revise more but I don't think it did make that much difference because we didn't have that much time. Maybe half an hour a week instead of 15 minutes in would have"

Theme: Missing lessons

All the students expressed concern at missing lessons to attend the sessions.

For example:

"It helped me focus on getting my course work done, but then you missed something like half a lesson and so you missed stuff in class so there's pro's and cons to it"

"Yeah and when you get taken out of lessons, because when I had science and I had to leave halfway through and I was doing coursework in science and I had to leave that and go to this to talk about other coursework and stuff"

"That KUDOS thing, it's shocking. Like because it will say do you want to work outdoors and if you say no, then it just gives you something like a cleaner job and if you say yes, then it says explorer or something. It's rubbish. It's a waste of a session"

"Yeah and we already do that in general studies last year anyway"

Theme: Raising aspirations to go into HE?

None of the students agreed that the mentoring had impacted on their decision to go to university or not. For example:

"Didn't impact on me to go to uni, not really"

"It's not added anything because it's something I've always wanted to do anyway"

"Like when they asked you 'are you planning to go to uni', I'd already made up my mind"

"I've always wanted to go to university anyway"

Theme: Motivation

All the mentees reported that the mentoring had helped them to feel more motivated to do their GCSEs. For example:

"I found it good at getting me to get me head down, revise and that, 'cause I didn't have much motivation"

"It probably helped with my coursework because I didn't really have anything planned on time with that"

"It put it in perspective for me really because at the beginning of the year, I didn't really have my head down but them coming in from university, they said to me 'you've got to get yourself sorted'. So it was like a role model in a way"

Theme: Significance of talking to peers

"There's something about... like even thought they're a bit older, they're still from your peer group... and like they're in university and that's where you want to get to and when they say like you need to do well in your exams otherwise you're not gonna get that far"

Theme: Matching

"In university like they only take one subject but at GCSE you take 10, so like they match you up for that subject. So like you might have problems with a subject and they might not have experience of others, so they might match you up with the wrong thing, because they didn't ask us what subjects we needed help with"

"I think they help in different ways because like my mentor, she was doing sociology so she helped me with sociology but I was struggling with my history coursework and I didn't know what to write and then she like gave me tons of information and talked it over with me and she ended up getting me an A"

Theme: Length and timing of the sessions

The length and timing of the sessions was a strong theme. For example:

"Just didn't get enough time"

"Just more time, cause like 15 minutes just isn't enough"

"Like maybe it would be better if in was in form time, where you do nothing or after school or something 'cause you miss lessons and you have to catch up"

"Yeah and 'cause its only 15 minutes you can't really get much done"

"Like if it was after school then you could have had more time as well but because it was in school time it was short"

"Yeah, 'cause like 15 minutes, by the time you've talked about last week and then this week's, that's more or less took your time up and then you talk about what your going to do next week. That's it."

"Do something a bit different than just sitting at a desk, like done something outside of school, like visited a university or something"

MENTOR PERSPECTIVES

Table 7: To show the areas usually covered in mentoring

Areas common to all mentors	Additional areas covered by some mentors
Life at Uni Revision Techniques Exam Techniques Subject Specific Advice	Choosing to go to Uni (2) Choosing a Uni to apply to (2) Choosing an HE course to study (3) Choosing A levels to study (1) UCAS Application (1) Funding & Fees (1) Essay writing (3)

BENEFITS

The mentors indicated that the mentoring had benefited the mentees in making improvements to their study skill and also to raise their motivation.

“Better time management”

“Better revision techniques”

“A better understanding of University life and further study after their GCSE’s”

“Revision/ exam techniques also general motivation to work hard for their exams and to achieve best results possible”

“They seemed to be more motivated once they realised a goal after school life. I think planning homework and coursework deadlines was very useful to them. Once they knew exactly what they had to do I think they found it easier to complete”.

“ I provided the pupils with an in-depth pack on essay writing in exams and coursework which should have been very useful so it was really up to the students if they used them or not. I also helped them redraft coursework essays so I imagine that must have impacted on their grades”

IMPACTS

What are shown below are quotes from mentors about the possible impacts of the mentoring on their mentees. These offer insights into the impressions that mentors have made about their mentees but also raise important points about the different forms and foci that the mentoring relationships took.

Impacts on Student's Academic Achievement:

"I think their academic achievement possibly improved over the course of the scheme, but they never specifically told me grades so I can only make assumptions"

"I do not know what GCSE's the students received but I expect at least 2 of the mentees will have achieved more"

"Raise motivation and help to develop skills which would help for exams etc."

"I hope so but they rarely shared their grades with me so I don't know for sure"

Impacts on Decision-making about studying in HE/going to university:

"Possibly a little bit about University, they definitely were interested in what it's like to actually be here at Central City East. Mainly though their priorities lay in what to do post-GCSE"

"One of my mentees was a lot more interested in hearing about university. I think giving a positive view of university but also pointing out other options did have an effect of the mentee being more inclined to go onto higher education. Talking about the cost of going to university was also talked about and I think the mentee thought it was more affordable afterwards"

"Gave them information about a level course necessary for certain degree courses"

"I don't know – some of them were not going on to college so discussions about university seemed a bit premature"

Impacts on mentee's beliefs and perceptions:

"Hopefully from talking to them and building up a relationship was able to convey to my mentees the idea that their success is largely in their own hands"

"Possibly for one of them, who felt that they were unable to go to University and would be no good at GCSE's or going to College. It took a bit of work to persuade her that you don't have to be an absolute genius to be at University, but that you need to be motivated and hard working"

BARRIERS

A number of barriers are indicated in the response provided by mentors. Similarly to the mentees, these include the pressures on mentees to spend their time not in mentoring but working on their studies. For example:

“Students wouldn’t turn up some weeks due to commitments with coursework, as their session was usually in the middle of a lesson, this could be frustrating and made it difficult the following week to catch up. Also, the fact that we only had twenty minutes or so with each mentee was quite difficult, I feel that half an hour would have been better. Further to this, each mentee was quite disorganised in knowing who was due at what time so this would often mean they would turn up all at once or late or in the middle of somebody else’s session”

“Some teachers not letting young people out of lessons and so therefore not getting to see them every week”

“Two of the mentees did not turn up on a regular basis and this did hinder the mentoring process”

And again similarly to one of the mentees, one mentor drew attention to a need for more structure and goal setting:

“A lack of overall direction – the mentees all studied different subjects so it was difficult to offer a unifying session each week. The mentors need a more comprehensive scheme of tasks and subject tutorials to follow so that the scheme has more of a structure. I know some of the other mentors rarely prepared anything for the students to do”

IMPACTS FOR MENTORS

There was strong commonality across the responses provided by mentors that participating in the programme had benefited them personally by increasing their interpersonal skills and also in career decision making and development.

For example:

“I know I keep mentioning the communication skills, but I really think my capacity to mentor was based upon my knowledge of how to communicate effectively”

“Yes, I found the experience very rewarding. Good experience and gained skills from doing it. Generally enjoyable as well”

“Yes, I think I have learnt a lot about how to listen and support someone without telling them what to do”

“I think so – it was good practice at developing relationships with young people”

“In a recent interview for a teaching programme, I had to demonstrate skills that I had learnt in mentoring and without the examples of experience that I have from the scheme, I might not have been successful in my application”

“Yes, as a result I have applied for PGCE”

“The experience I gained mentoring has allowed me to begin my PGCE year”

“I am due to start my teacher training in June and I think the skills gained from mentoring will transfer well into this career”

“I now hope to teach and this will obviously involve mentoring skills to a certain extent (even if not one to one)”

CONTINUING IN THE PROGRAMME

All the mentors expressed either continuing to be involved in the programme or as being unable to due to the demands of their current jobs or study. For example:

“Yes I am about to start the 2007-2008 Doncaster City mentoring project”

“Yes, have continued with the North City Mentoring programme”

“No, due to my lecture timetable I am unable to mentor this year”

“No- I teach now”

TRAINING

The mentors identified a number of useful aspects about the training they received. For example:

“The training was helpful, especially the sections on good questioning techniques”

“It gave ideas about how to structure the sessions and what to do in them. You were also given a reference book which was useful to refer to”

“The training definitely was important in developing communication skills”

“I felt that after my training, I was far better prepared for the role as mentor. I felt that my communication skills increased greatly, in that I learnt how to ask better questions, how to listen appropriately (and fills gaps in conversation too!) and also about good body language”

The mentors’ responses also offer important insights into their experiences of mentoring, which raise issues about their expectations and unmet expectations. For example:

“Yes and No. Many of the mentors expected to be working with really underachieving pupils, but many did not seem to require our help. There was no opportunity to liaise with staff at the school and so it was difficult to make the mentoring sessions really useful to the students”

“The role plays were a little idealistic. The mentees don’t always respond the way you hope or expect”

MATCHING

The responses from mentors indicated quite mixed experiences and views on their matching with mentees, including those who were felt to be well matched, and not so well matched, to those who couldn’t say because their mentoring they gave was at a very general level. For example:

“Two of us were definitely well matched and I felt that we made progress quite quickly. The third one took quite a while for me to ‘get through to’, I think mainly because of this mentee’s distaste at my lack of football knowledge! I do feel that after a while we made some progress and it became a lot easier to communicate effectively “

“Yes, I put my main interests as maths, art and product design and the mentees all seemed to have these interests too. I think because I appeared interested in them and their lives they were keen to talk personally with someone older than them once a week. I don’t know if they came to boost their academic chances”

“All the subjects they needed help with were also my weakest subjects and our hobbies were also different”

“It’s hard to say if we were well matched. We rarely talked about academic interests or any hobbies that they had – many of our conversations were quite generic, broad and general sort of advice I would give to anyone sitting exams”

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

Findings from the interviews with staff in schools report a perception that the mentoring programmes *may* have made a contribution, as part of a range of other factors, to the following:

Primrose High

Staff at Primrose High reported an increase in the percentage of students attaining 5 A*-C grades at GCSE from 48% in 2005-06 to the highest ever in the school at 62% in 2006-07. Of this increase the staff at schools said:

“The mentoring may have contributed to better grades but was not solely responsible for it because the mentoring is only part of a range of factors”.

Of the programme overall, staff said:

“The feedback from students is very positive – they seem to like it. The system worked smoothly once it was set up and there was good communication between myself and the programme coordinator at Central City East University. The school was keen to keep impact on lessons to a minimum so the pupils saw mentors on a rolling timetable. This means they don’t always miss part of the same lesson and so were better able to keep up with coursework and their class work.”

The only problems that he had were with 2 pupils who became less enthusiastic with the mentoring. He thinks because they didn’t like being set homework by the mentors and so didn’t always turn up for appointment. He keeps on top of this with a regular register and chases up those who don’t attend. Those not attending are replaced – its too valuable a resource to waste.

“The scheme does help to improve the aspirations of the kids. They realise that ‘they don’t have to be stuck in Doncaster for the rest of their lives’. And that ‘the more they learn, the more they earn’. A couple of the children here have had a very noticeable increase in their confidence.”

“ I think the mentoring is beneficial for the mentors as well as the mentees. Most of them he understands are wanting to work with people – perhaps on teaching degrees/social work etc. so it is good for them to build their communication skills.”

Campion High

Staff reported that the percentage of pupils attaining 5 A*-C GCSE reached a new record in 2006-07:

“The school achieved a new records for GCSE’s last year but impossible to say the extent of any benefit from mentoring. Benefits of the mentoring are not always measurable, in my view they are qualitative. There has been a knock on effect into other areas though. And this is most noticeable in the greater take up into 6th form, from kids that you wouldn’t have thought would have stayed on, they are staying on”

In summary the findings suggest that from multiple perspectives of staff, mentors and mentees that:

- Mentoring has helped mentees with organizing for revision, coursework and building their understanding of subject knowledge.
- Two mentees reported that their mentor’s advice about coursework had help to increases in their grades at GCSE; and at least one mentor also pointed out that they went over the course work and gave advice about how to make improvements; however staff in schools were more caution as they viewed mentoring to be only one of a raft of factors that supports students achievements.
- All mentees reported that the programme had helped build their motivation to start revising early, focus and try hard in their GCSEs. This is perhaps to greater extent to the ways in which mentoring is thought by mentors and staff to have impacted.
- Mentees reported that the programme had had no effect on their decisions about going to university as they were all thinking of this already (NB: these finding may be particular to this sample of mentees as other mentees who chose not to stay on in this 6th Form may have a different view).

There was also a clear example of how the programme is also adding value. One mentee has gone on to be a peer mentor for pupils in Y10. They said that ‘Being a mentee myself helped. My mentor gave me techniques on how to do stuff that I’ve now given to the person I am mentoring’. Furthermore at Campion High, one staff member was of the view that more young people, who they

wouldn't usually expect to stay on into the 6th form, were doing so and he credited this as being a possible impact of the mentoring programme.

Areas for reflection and development:

- Missing time from lessons was experienced as a drawback by all mentees interviewed; Mentors also reported that mentees had missed sessions because of not wanting to spend time away from lessons or not being given the permission to by their subject teachers;
- Mentors expect to be offering mentoring to young people who are 'under achieving' but the findings suggest this may not always be the case;
- Time spent looking at KUDOS was considered a waste of a session by three mentees;
- The sessions length of 15 minutes was considered to be too short to cover all the areas mentees wanted help with;
- 6 mentee reported that they did have someone in their family (either immediate or extended) with previous experience of higher education (NB. only one mentee referred to a parent who had been to university).
- The amount of remission given to staff in schools to administer and co-ordinate the mentoring programme varied across the schools. One teacher reported having their remission time removed in 2007-08 and expects this will have a knock on effect, as the time was vital for chasing pupils up if there were problems;

In conclusion the programme appears to be meeting its objectives to develop the study skills, time management and organization skills of mentees. The mentees reported feeling more motivated to study and that they found out more and useful things about higher education by talking to their mentors. There was some evidence to suggest that the interventions have had a positive impact on the attainment of at least two of the mentees interviewed, although the schools were cautious in ascribing increases in the mentees attainment to the mentoring alone. There does seem to be some problems concerning the timing of the sessions and all the mentees interviewed were of the view that being absent from any lesson was a disadvantage to them and their learning. They

suggested holding the sessions in 'form time' or 'after school'. They also requested that the length of the session be extended to 30 minutes and there was a direct request that the programme includes a trip to a university. The extent to which the programme had raised aspirations for progression is unclear as the sample consisted of mentees who were already aspiring to stay on in education prior to taking up the mentoring. There seems to be a possible gap between the expectations of some mentors to be mentoring young people who are 'underachieving' and the needs of the mentees they are matched with. This may reflect different understandings of what underachieving may mean. Miller (2002) also found HE students within one HE Mentoring Programme tended to want to mentor 'underachievers' and could be put off if more able students were placed with them.

CENTRAL CITY MENTORING

Central City Mentoring ran as two separate programmes: one in Central City East and one in Central City West. Research with the Central City East Programme involved two focus groups, individual interviews with three members of staff from the Newton College. The research with the Central City West Programme involved one focus group, and interviews with staff from two secondary schools in Central City West.

Findings from the focus groups with mentees in the Central City East Programme

Below are the findings from the two focus groups with Y13 learners (from Lime Campus and Oak Campus, Poplar Campus in Central City East) who received mentoring in Y12. Across the two focus groups there were three male and six female participants, all of which identified their ethnicity as white.

In general when participants were asked to complete the statement **Mentoring has been useful because...**

Typical responses were:

- It gives an insight into life at university
- It is simply to talk to someone who is there
- Know what to put on the UCAS form
- My mentor helped with revision.
- It have me practical help of how to revise.

When they were asked to think about and write down what was not so helpful,

Typical responses were:

- Logging on problems
- System kept going down and lost emails
- College website frequently went down.
- Didn't always know about meetings until last minute.

- Never got to meet mentor

The areas students identified as helpful and less helpful were discussed further in the discussion group. The data was analysed and a range of themes identified.

Theme: Information

There was common agreement that the mentors were helpful in getting information. For example:

“They were good at getting information for you. It is already out there but the problem is finding it. Information is already provided but different things are said in different places but being a student who has already gone through it, the information they provide is more useful”.

The information and advice was thought to be helpful in making decisions about where to go to university. For example:

“At first I was going to apply to Central City East, now I’m definitely not. I’ve applied to places that are too far away to come home. This was partly due to mentoring”

“I am still undecided about going to uni at home or away. I thought at first I would stay at home because it’s cheaper but now I understand loans more. So I am thinking about moving away. It’s not all about having to pay for everything there and then, there’s more structure, now more opportunity for me to go away”

“I didn’t want to stay in Central City East but now I want to stay. I don’t think this was to do with mentoring.”

“Mentoring has changed my view of where I might apply to”

It seems therefore that useful information and access to knowledge about applying and going to university was a key benefit to arise from the mentoring. Some mentees related to this as providing a ‘short cut’ to the information you need.

One mentee talked of changes to their feelings of confidence

“Mentoring made you feel more confident about going to Uni”

And other mentees seemed to be confident about going to university prior to the mentoring. For example:

“I would have gone regardless of what they said but it was still useful anyway”

Theme: Academic Achievement

All of the mentees reported that, they did not think that the programme had impacted on their achievement. This was stated with some amusement by some mentees, i.e. they appeared to laugh at the idea. During this part of the discussion one mentee clearly stated however...

“I would have struggled without my mentor during my exams”.

Theme: Problems logging on and e-mentoring

All mentors commonly reported problems with accessing the system and usability of the interface and also with the medium of email as a mode for mentoring.

“Someone who dropped out didn’t get to use system at all because they couldn’t get logged on properly”

“Logging on was better if using your own computer at home”

“The speed of it is not very instant”

“You can have a message waiting for days before you access it”

“ They have to be screened to make sure you are not providing personal contact details and this slows it up”

“When you close down the box and then try to log back in, it wouldn’t let us log back in. We are usually multi-tasking on line, so may have the web site open, look at it, then it close down and look at something else and then come back to it. It wouldn’t let you do this”

“Not incredibly simple to get your point across on email”

“It is too easy to be ambiguous in an email and this can get in the way”

Theme: Meeting mentors

Programme coordinators placed a lot of importance on the events for mentors and mentees to meet each and spend time talking together to build the mentoring relationships. This importance was borne out by mentees who did go to these events and meet their mentors. However the mentees found that their mentors often ‘didn’t turn up’. For example:

“My mentor didn’t turn up for social events; it would have been easier to talk [email] if I’d met him personally”

“When my mentor didn’t turn up for the social event, I had to talk to people who I not even had email correspondence with, so I didn’t know them at all. It was a bit awkward”

“Better for mentoring to meet your mentor personally”

Theme: Timing of the programme

There was also a common view shared by mentees about the timing of the programme. For example:

“Would have been better if it lasted through both years of AS and A levels as this could have helped more with exam pressure and UCAS application, the personal statement”

“The programme is run too soon in the college term. I wasn’t thinking about applying in October of AS year. The programme then ended before the end of the AS year. It would be better to have it when you are going through the application process – so right at the beginning of the 2nd year. This window of time would be the most useful then”

“It is supposed to be about transition isn’t it, so why does it end when the transition is still going on?”

Theme: Matching

Mentees commonly viewed that the matching would be better if it was in the subjects they were aspiring to study at degree level and not based on their current AS choice. For example:

“Would have been better if we were matched for courses we want to do at uni, not AS we are taking”

“Could find out more about the course and their experience”

“It is still valuable if not same course as you, but more useful if it is the same”

“Person I was matched with was not studying in the area I want to study at university. I was doing IT, Physics and Maths and then dropped IT to focus on Physics and Maths. But my mentor was doing a degree in IT, so once I dropped this I wanted to focus on Maths and Physics but he didn't know much about these areas.”

Theme: Funding

Some of the mentoring focused on mentees questions about funding. This can supplement and build on the information and support provided in a mentee's college or 6th form, as this quote exemplifies.

“We mainly talked [emailed] about funding and this was very useful. He told me about costs; got me looking into grants and bursaries which had not occurred to me before. Funding is mentioned here at Hillsborough but speaking to someone who has gone through was more helpful. When it came to filling out the finance forms it seemed easy”

For other mentees however, they remained confused by the application forms for funding...

“It didn't seem easy to me. I was confused by the form but we didn't talk about funding with my mentor”

Theme: Improvement

Mentees were vociferous about suggesting ways that the mentoring could be improved. These focused on matching with mentors, the timing of the programme, the e-mentoring interface and email as a medium for mentoring.

“Matching people to same courses”

“Matching could be done on more precise level- matched to someone who is taking the course in the area you are thinking of apply for [not your current AS]”

“When and who decides about the matching – at the first event the decision has already been made about who you are matched with. We could in put into this and the decision-making could be done at the first event with everyone there. At the moment it is pre-determined – there is no choice.”

“Have mentors from Central City East Uni rather than Hallam because the course I am interested in is not run at Hallam”

“Being able to talk to more than one person”

“It would have been nice to have had the opportunity to talk to both, to people who have stayed and moved away and got views of about both”

“Make it longer – over both AS and A level years”

“Interfacing of the site is clumsy. Log out annoying and it is not easy to navigate the hyper links – so change all of that”

“I used the text alert option. But you can have an email for 3 days sitting in your inbox before you get the text alert”

“If face to face then you would get more out of the mentoring in a shorter time – yes because it is real time. So you could get more things sorted more quickly”

“Use emails through hotmail or something rather than website to avoid crashes”

Key findings of the focus group with Y11s in Central City West

This group of all male mentees were mentored by Y12 students who were currently in 6th Forms in the Central City West area. The mentees reported their ethnicity as white British, Pakistani and African. The mentors who had provided mentoring to these mentees were not provided by CCU directly. However they were the mentees (or previous mentees) from the Central City Mentoring programme ran in Central City West 6th Forms and colleges. Hence this in itself provides clear evidence that the aims and objectives to create a system of Tiered Mentoring had been accomplished in Central City West and with the involvement of the Central City Mentoring programme.

In general when Y11 participants were asked to complete the statement

mentoring has been useful because...

Typical responses were:

- Insight into post 16 education
- What life was like in 6th form
- Talk to someone
- Meet new people
- Choices
- Grades I need to get to go on to the course I want
- Socialise
- How they got to where they are now
- People with similar interests
- Privacy

When they were asked to complete the statement **mentoring was less helpful because...**

Typical responses were:

- Low number of emails
- Forgotten my password
- Could only talk to one person
- Not much info received from mentors

These views were then formed the focus of the discussion group. The data collected was analysed. The key findings suggest that the mentees found the mentoring most useful in gaining an insight into post-16 education and information about the grades you need to stay on in education. The mentoring also was shown to help one mentee to understand and make choices about whether to go to 6th Form or to College. Four of the mentees said they received encouragement to work harder and do better but this seemed in the view of the mentees to be depend on the mentor they were given. None of the mentees reported an impact on their decision-making or motivation to stay on in education as they were already thinking about this and similarly none of the mentees felt that the mentoring was impacting on their academic achievements

(NB: all of these mentees reported to have been selected as they were 'Gifted & Talented'). Five of the six mentees reported having someone in their families who have prior experience of college or university.

All the mentees were of the view that the numbers of emails received by the mentees was thought to low and the laps in time between receiving them to be high. And one mentee also complained that it is a lengthy process to get your password reset if you should loose the one you have.

However there was some disagreement about this latter point, as other mentees said it was simple 'you just had to ask miss' the discussion continued that it was time it takes for their teacher to then get a replacement that was off putting for some mentees.

Mentees reported not meeting their mentors because the mentors did not come to any of the events. One mentees who did meet their mentor said that, "*I found out more information by face to face than through the emailing*". This mentee went on to say that "*I finally met my mentor at the end event. I spoke to them and another mentor and I found this more useful than all of the emailing that went on before*". All the mentees seemed to agree that face-to-face mentoring would be better. There was also a commonly shared view that it would be better to have access to more mentors and therefore a range of views. One suggestion was to do this through a chat room for mentees and mentors.

With regarding to matching, all of the mentees reported being matched with a mentor who was currently in 6th Form. The mentees were of the view, however that they would have found it more useful if they had been matched to mentors who were at college, as all of them want to go to college after secondary school.

They made a number of suggestions about how to improve the mentoring.

These were:

- Some form of instant messaging rather than email so we can get instant responses to questions

- More face to face meetings
- Give us mentors who are interested/motivated
- Being matched with someone at college if we want to go to college

STAFF PERSPECTIVES

- The impacts were limited to pupils who could get on the system and also those who got to meet their mentors face to face;
- Mentoring provides insider knowledge which builds confidence about the next stage of their education;
- Staying on at school rates at one School were showing a higher rate for the Aimhigher cohort than for those not in the cohort. (But as this is just 'one of many programmes that the cohort is engaged with so it is not possible to say how much this is related to e-mentoring').

Difficulties experienced

- Staff in schools reported problems getting on the system and that many mentees consequently dropped out. Staff also commented on staffing problems at the LEA due to sickness and how these were thought to have compounded on the problem as 'there wasn't the continuity of support there';
- Staff in schools reported spending a lot of time chasing up pupils and monitoring emails. For one schools there were 'technical people' on hand to help with logging in problems and this eased a lot of problems.

MENTOR PERSPECTIVES

The areas that mentors reported covering during their sessions with their mentees are summarised in table 8 below:

Table 8: To show the areas usually covered in mentoring

Areas common to mentors	Areas covered by some mentors
Life at University (3) Decisions to go to University (3) Revision Techniques (3)	Choice of study (2) Funding and fees (2) Exam Technique (2) Choosing which University to apply to (1) UCAS application (1) Essay writing (1)

TRAINING

On the whole the mentors reported that the training focused on e-mail software and on how to “talk” to your mentee, e.g. what questions to ask, how to respond to emails. For example:

Yes, the training did help, since it taught me how to be effective in e-mails and through this form of communication since it is much more restricted than for example, face-to-face mentoring.

I think it would have been good to have had a live demonstration of the e-mentoring programme would have helped but otherwise – little to fault.

One mentor commented that “most emails from the mentee’s require answers that drew on your own experiences which training can’t help you with”. And others commented that...

“Parts of the training were pretty pointless, such as the writing on a song to sing to the group. I didn’t see how this made me a better mentor”.

“The learning a song part, although it was part of the group work exercise it all seemed a bit pointless as I had had to take a whole day off Uni. I would have rather just learnt the relevant parts.”

And another mentor commented that although the raining was good it was pointless if you didn't get to have any mentees...

"Group work, how to communicate through email... it taught us to be more clear about what to write but if you don't have any interaction with the mentee it all seems a bit pointless"

MATCHING

The mentor's views on matching were mixed. For example:

"I do think that me and my mentee's were well matched, because they were studying what I studied at college, so I knew the teachers they had and what assignments they had to complete"

"No were weren't well matched he was older than me, already had a job, had never done any of the same courses as me and had no intention of going to university. And I later found out that there had not been enough mentees for mentors and they had pressured him into doing it. So in this instance I feel that we were not well matched at all"

"I was very poorly matched which made the experience very negative when I was hoping to make it work so I could use the skills in the future"

"Yes, I thought I was well matched to my mentee since we shard the same interest of computers and video editing on computers. I could relate and transfer my knowledge and experiences for my mentee"

IMPACTS FOR MENTEES

In the view of mentors the impacts of the mentoring for Student's Academic Achievement were as follows:

"My mentee said that my input helped in terms of achieving higher grades in his projects due to a better work plan and time management"

Impacts on Decision-making about studying in HE/going to university:

"One mentee completely changed their minds about HE and decided to apply, as before they weren't going to"

"I believe they did, one mentee went from wanting to leave college and get a job to wanting to apply to uni. The other mentee already had a good idea of what she wanted to do, but then changed her mind and I gave her my opinions on things, such as whether to apply in Central City East or to apply in another city"

Impacts on mentee's beliefs and perceptions:

"I explained about student funding and loans etc... as both didn't believe they could afford to study at HE"

"I also explained about funding and loans for uni as neither had much info on the area"

BARRIERS

Two mentors identified a number of barriers with the system of recruiting and matching of mentees...

"Mainly just the reliability of the mentee's reply emails. Although this cannot be directly addressed, more information at the start of the programme may be more beneficial to the mentee's. This is because I was told some of the mentee's didn't realise what they were filling the form in for, they basically got a form at college, filled it in and didn't know they were applying for a mentor. I assume this may be the reason for a lot of the students dropping out of the programme"

"I mentored my mentee for about half of the programme. They did not have an easily accessible email account. Also I felt we poorly matched as he was older than me, already had a large part to play in his family gardening business and had no intention of ever going to university"

BENEFITS FOR MENTORS

The mentors identified a number of benefits from feelings of satisfaction to career development...

"Not directly, but it did feel good knowing I've helped other people on some level"

Yes, I would since the skills I have learnt has improved my employability skills profile.

"I don't intend to continue mentoring as it is my final year of uni and am extremely busy therefore the mentee's may not get the full attention they deserve"

"Yes, since it has improved my personal development skills such as communication and motivation"

"I could relate these skills in my placement applications and interviews and this enabled me to get a placement job which I am undertaking at the moment"

Mentors also commented that :

“I think the programme was poorly organised as there were not enough mentees”

“Also as it was e-mentoring they should have checked if the mentees had an email address as mine didn’t”

“More (frequent) face to face/social events would have helped to improve my mentoring skills and to be more effective in delivering the mentoring support and guidance to my mentee”

Perspectives of staff at Newton College

Staff commented that:

“The programme was excellent when it worked. For the ones who could get on to the system, who could develop good relationships and communication” (Newton College)

“There is an example of a student at Norton who was really unhappy on his course because he was in a group that didn’t suit him. It was his mentor who fed this back and we met up and discussed it. He wanted to go to a 6th form to study for his A Levels but he may have left this too late. A member of staff suggested transferring to Peaks to get away from the group.” (Newton College)

“The programme gave a realistic perspective of what uni is like, taking the scary elements out of it. Some students said they seemed to ask niggling questions that wouldn’t ask on an open day” (Newton College)

“The main impact is building a realistic understanding of uni” Newton College

“One student talked about going to uni out of Central City East. This was as a result of mentor input about the value of moving away to go to uni. In Jenny’s view it is very rare for students at the college to talk about going somewhere else other than city central east” (Newton College)

There were two largely negative themes: (1) problems with technology and (2) the lack of communication between Programme staff at CCU and the contacts in colleges.

“From the beginning they were told that the programme wasn’t about adding to our work load but it ended up being like this. This was due to problems with technology” (Newton College)

*“There was not enough communication from CCU. We were not kept informed about who of the mentees were emailing and who were not.”
(Newton College)*

“There were problems with computer system which prevented the mentees from getting on it. This caused a number of headaches. The students got disillusioned with the programme when they repeatedly couldn’t get on to the system” (Newton College)

“The mentees could not get onto the system. CCU were responsible for the system. The Newton College students were invited to the launch event where they register on the system. CCU staff were to run a mop up session for the students who did not attend the launch event, but this didn’t happen. So we had to do it” (Newton College)

“It did not run well last year. The year before was very good. It was fine at beginning but some pupils couldn’t get on system and I never got on system as a coordinator. Consequently many mentees dropped out. The feedback received from the training day and the face to face meet up – one of these events went very well the other was not so good” (Central City West)

*“Further problem were created when two people went off on long term sick at the LEA. I don’t blame them but this compounded the problems with the mentoring as there was no consistency in the support given to schools”
(Central City West)*

“A couple of pupils got a lot out of it but these were the ones who could: a) get on the system, b) meet their mentor face-to- face” (Central City East)

“The face-to-face meetings were very important to build a relationship. Some pupils’ mentors didn’t turn up to meet them. Of those who had intermittent access to system, they found it frustrating and felt it was a waste of their time.

“It works much better when mentor/mentee are matched for similar interests or subject area, but we had one pupil who has strengths in English but was paired with a maths/science person – and this didn’t work so well” (Central City West)

Raising Aspirations

Staff were of the view that the students who volunteered to participate in the mentoring were more likely to be the ones who were already motivated and succeeding. For example:

“Did it impact on decisions to stay on: the mentees were voluntary and these students signing up were the ones more inclined to go to uni in the first place. So not raise aspirations as suspect already had them. Did more to ease the transition” Newton College

Who benefit more?

Staff at the college raised questions about who was benefiting more from the mentoring programme...

“The mentors get a lot from it – the training and they get to put it on their CV. The students who did get a lot from it are those that are the better communicators anyway and are more enthusiastic and perhaps these are the students who would have gone on to university anyway” (Newton College)

In summary the findings suggest that from the perspectives of the mentees, mentors and staff the programme:

- Access to information about applying and going to university was most commonly considered to be the main benefit of e-mentoring. This was the view of mentees and staff at the college. Mentees claimed the mentoring provided a ‘short cut’ to information (saving them time searching for, and sifting through available information);
- Staff reported that the programme was successfully helping to calm fears about the social and personal experiences of going to university; and this view was found to be congruent with the experiences of some mentees.
- Three mentees reported that the e-mentoring had had a useful impact on their decision making about whether to stay at home or move away to go to university.
- None of the mentees interviewed reported that the programme had had an impact on their motivation, or decisions to go to university as they had all decided to do this when taking their GCSEs or earlier. This finding is congruent with the view of staff in the college who reported that the more enthusiastic and proactive students were more likely to take up the invitation to join the programme; furthermore it was also reported by staff that the advertisements and invitations to participate in the programme

were couched in terms of being for 'those students who were interested in going to university'.

- None of the students interviewed reported that the programme had had an impact on their academic achievement. However, one mentee was clear that they would have struggled during their AS examinations without their mentor's support (this person had lower GCSE results and lower achievement at AS level than the rest of the sample).

The programme in at the Newton College seems to have added value when one of the mentors was instrumental in helping to solve a problem for their mentee. The staff member said "that a mentee was having problems on their course. They had told their mentor about this and she alerted the programme staff at one of the mentoring events. The programme staff then informed the link staff at the college, and we took action to address the issues". The member of staff reported that the mentees... "own tutors knew nothing about it and were shocked to find out the student was so unhappy and about to leave the course. They felt unable to voice the problem to their tutors in college but that they could do this with their peer".

Areas for reflection and development:

- During 2006-07 the uptake of mentoring by mentees was reported to be lower than anticipated. This was compounded by a high drop out rate of mentees and lower than expected exchange rate of email communications between mentors and mentees.
- Major problems were reported with accessing the CSV system for both mentees and college staff, leading to mentees feeling disillusioned with the programme and resulting in mentees dropping out;
- Mentors reported that there were not enough mentees for them to mentor. This meant that mentors who had completed the training did not have the opportunity to actively engage in the mentoring (mainly due to mentees not responding);

- Staff at CCU were responsible for the running of the programme across Newton College but appeared not to have had the necessary resources to respond effectively to ‘mop up’ students who were yet to be trained;
- Staff in colleges could not view how frequently email communications were taking place and they reported that they did not receive regular updates about how the e mentoring was going from the Programme staff as agreed. As a consequence the students who couldn’t log on to the system, or were in need of support, went unaided;
- The events were reported by staff and mentees to have made a real difference to developing relationships via email. However mentee and mentor turn out at events was low. This could be explained by some changes made to the dates of events and/or clashes with exams.

In addition mentees reported that:

- Problems with the computer system and emails being lost. Also the system at the college could go down and cause access problems.
- All of the mentees were of the view that it would have been easier to communicate via emails if they had met their mentor but unfortunately this did not happen for four of the mentees interviewed;
- The timing of the programme does not coincide with when it is needed the most. They suggest it should run across the two years so it can help more with exam pressure in Y12 and Y13 and the UCAS application at the beginning of Y13;
- All mentees commented that the programme only gives you access to one person’s view. The mentees commented that it would be an improvement if mentees could email more than one person to get a fuller picture;
- Difficulties were experienced with ‘time lapses’ between emailing
- Two mentees also reported that they did not find email to be an easy medium through which to express yourself or communicate. Exchanges were often ambiguous;

- Mentees expressed that they would prefer to have an input in the decision making about who they are matched with and suggested this could be done at the first event when everyone is there;
- The majority of mentees expressed they would prefer more face to face mentoring.

In conclusion the findings seem to suggest that the programme delivered to Y12s in 2006-07 was not fully meeting its proposed objectives. In part, this seems due to major technical and administrative problems during, what was the first year of implementing the new programme (e.g. logging on problems, networks going down, delays in replacing passwords), which were all found to be frustrating and demoralising for mentees. Only a proportion of mentees that persisted with the computer system were thought to have gone on to establish and build good mentor-mentee relationships (as defined by the number and frequency of email exchanges). For these people e-mentoring seemed to be most successful at offering information (but one mentee pointed out that this depends on which mentor you get). All mentees seemed to recognise that information about college, university and applications etc. is already available and accessible on the web. However, two mentees pointed out that there is a problem sometimes finding it and also different things are often said in different places. Therefore, having access to a mentor who can get information for you offers a 'good short cut'.

The other reason why the programme may not be fully meeting its aims and objectives is that it seems to be targeting and/or accessed by students, who in the main are already achieving academically (AS/A Level students), already motivated and already have strong goals to study in higher education. In addition, mentees viewed the length of the programme to be prematurely cut short during their AS year and consequently they seem to suggest that it was unable to support them through other periods of their transition in to higher education.

Considering these limitations, it is perhaps not so surprising why staff at the Newton College may be questioning if the mentors were getting more out of the programme than the mentees. The findings also seem to suggest that the students who may benefit in ways that are congruent with the objectives of the programme are not the ones who are encouraged and/or volunteer to take part. Indeed in the minority of instances when mentees were experiencing specific problems with their learning, they reported receiving many more benefits from the supports and inputs taken by their mentor.

Common to all mentees interviewed (at Y12 in Central City East and at Y11 in Central City West) was the findings that way in which mentees were questioning how far they can rely on the advice and views of one person when making choices and decisions about where to study and what courses to study. The timing of the programme was also thought not to coincide with the key points of transition (when students are making their applications to UCAS and for financial loans). Finally, questions were raised about e-mail as a mode of communication as not all mentees found it easy or straightforward. The evaluation found, similarly to a study involving e-mentoring in HE by Heaton-Shrestha *et al.*, (2003), that mentees felt a synchronous discussion (i.e. in real time) would be more helpful than an asynchronous one. What seemed to help email communications was if the mentees and mentors could meet face to face, and the events were provided by the programme to facilitate this. However, in 2006-07, over half of the mentees interviewed reported that their mentors did not turn up at the events.

Recommendations

Generic Recommendations

Matching

- For all programmes to consider if and how mentees could have a greater say and involvement in the allocation of mentors to ensure matching is optimised.

Targeting of mentoring

- To continue to work to ensure the resources are appropriately targeted to the intended groups of young people who a) meet the defined criteria set by Aimhigher and that set by each mentoring programme and b) to include, when allocating funding, an assessment of the approaches and measures programmes will take to support the process of implementation of the criteria in the context of schools and colleges.

Evaluation and Monitoring

- For Aimhigher to continue to support the programmes to build and develop further their in-house systems for monitoring and evaluation. This may involve seeking ways to resource and further develop systems for the administration, reporting of data generation and collection across participating schools and colleges.
- To help programmes build on their current systems of formative and summative evaluation of mentoring and to consider ways to create a joined up evaluation which would also include qualitative research to explore the views of staff, mentors and mentees in an on-going way.
- To monitor the 'spend' of funding for the management and coordination of programmes. There were indications that in one case the coordination and management of the mentoring programme appeared to have become 'one thing among many others to project manage'. This seems to increase the risks that staff may become over stretched and unable to respond full to any problems that may be experienced in other parts of the mentoring system. What may be considered in any assessment for

the funding of mentoring programmes is the extent to which an organization can accommodate and support a designated person in a mentoring-focused post (whereby staff will have the resources and capacity to run the programme and also the opportunity to further develop their knowledge and understanding of mentoring).

Specific Recommendations

Central City Mentoring

It may prove useful to carry out a review to assess the extent to which the Central City Mentoring programme is meeting its aims and objectives following its second year of implementation. The findings seem to indicate that the problems with ITC and with targeting seriously limited the programmes effectiveness in its first year of running. Programme staff have since taken steps to improve on this situation and it would seem appropriate to monitor and evaluate the impacts of these changes.

In addition, the findings suggest that the mode of e-mentoring itself may be placing limits on the mentoring experience. It therefore may prove useful to review if the aims and objectives of this programme can be better met through a more finely targeted type of mentoring that combines, or even replaces e-mentoring with more face-to-face mentoring opportunities. Such a review may involve giving due consideration to the ways in which the targeting is conceptualised and implemented at the Newton College. The findings seem to suggest that the aims of objectives of this programme may be better met if, along with any criteria set by Aimhigher, that the mentees are truly at risk of not completing their level 3 programmes. There is also an issue around the equity of access to this programme and it would be essential that Y12s studying on AS/A Level and vocational level three courses are given the opportunity to take up the mentoring. Finally the timing of the mentoring programme should also be reviewed as many of the mentees interviewed commented that currently it does not fit with key events or stages they consider to be important in their transition to HE.

North City Mentoring

The primary recommendation for the North City Mentoring programme is to reorganize the delivery of the programme to Y11s so the length of time of the face to face mentoring sessions are extended and so that all clashes with subject lessons are avoided.

South City Mentoring

The primary recommendation for the South City Mentoring programme is to review and improve upon the training that is provided to mentors. This should a) ensure that staff and mentors are trained in boundary management and b) that every mentor receives the proper training prior to undertaking mentoring sessions.

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Appendix One

Interview schedule: Coordinators/Managers of programmes 2006-08

1. What does the programme aim to achieve?
2. How does it aim to achieve this?
3. What approach to mentoring is taken in the programme?
4. Which schools/colleges are involved in the programme? How were these selected?
5. How have schools/colleges engaged with the programme?
6. How are mentors selected?
7. What training/induction are mentors given?
8. How are mentees selected?
9. What training/induction are mentees given?
10. How are mentors and mentees matched?
11. What in your view do mentees derive from the programme?
12. What in your view do mentors derive from the programme?
13. What has worked well?
14. What has worked less well?
15. What is the participation/retention rate in the programme like for mentors and mentees?
16. Could you describe the characteristics of a successful/good mentoring?
17. Has the mentoring programme had any impacts on your institution?
18. Has it had impacts for the participating institutions?
19. What monitoring processes have you put in place? Who is involved in this? How do you use this data?
20. What plans are in place for evaluation?
21. Has the programme in 2006-08 built on earlier mentoring programmes? (Developments; changes and continuities).

Appendix Two

Mentoring has been useful to me because...	Mentoring has been less useful to me because...
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Appendix Three

Evaluation of Mentoring Programmes

We would appreciate it if you could complete this brief questionnaire about your plans for Y13 and the next year. Your responses will be made anonymous but please could you complete the details at the end of the questionnaire as well as the questions below.

Information about your educational career

1. How old were you when you left school?
2. What qualifications did you achieve at the end of school?
3. What qualifications were you predicted to achieve?
4. What, if any, qualifications have you achieved since leaving secondary school?

Information about your current studies

5. Courses you were studying in 2006-07: _____

6. What do you intend to study in 2007-08: _____

7. Do you intend to apply for a higher education course?

Yes []

No []

Don't Know []

If no please go to question 11

8. If yes please list the courses you are thinking about apply for?

Course	Institution

9. Why are you thinking about applying to higher education? What factors have most influenced your decision to continue in your studies?

10. Who are the three people who have most influenced your decision to apply for higher education (e.g. mother, father, other family member, mentor, personal tutor, teacher or tutor, friend at 6th form or college, other friend)?

If you are not thinking about applying to higher education

11. What are you planning to do next?

15. Do you think you may still make an application to study HE in the future?

Yes [] No []

16. Are you planning to work and study part-time?

Yes [] No []

Background information about you

What is your Name:

What school / college do you go to:

What activities have you done during the programme?:

	Tick		Tick
Visits to Universities		Workshops	
Trips		Mentoring	
Other (please list)		Talks	

GENDER	Tick one
Male	
Female	

DATE OF BIRTH	
---------------	--

ETHNIC ORIGIN	Tick one
a) White - British	
b) White – Irish	
c) White - any other White background	
d) Black - Caribbean	
e) Black - African	
f) Black - any other Black background	
g) Asian - Indian	
h) Asian - Pakistani	
i) Asian - Bangladeshi	
j) Asian - any other Asian background	
k) Chinese	
l) Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	
m) Mixed - White and Black African	
n) Mixed - White and Asian	
o) Mixed - any other Mixed background	
p) Any other ethnic group	

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE A DISABLED PERSON?	Tick one
Yes	
No	

(Under the Disability Discrimination Act, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities).

If yes, please tick the box(es) alongside any of the statements below that you feel apply to you

a) I am a person with dyslexia	
b) I am a blind/visually impaired person	
c) I am a deaf/hearing impaired person	
d) I am a wheelchair user/have a mobility impairment	
e) I need personal assistance/support at work	
f) I am a mental health system user	
g) I have an unseen disability (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma)	
h) I am a person with learning difficulties	
i) I have a disability not listed above	

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix Four

A Survey about the impacts of mentoring: Aimhigher South Yorkshire Mentoring Programme

What is this survey?

This is a survey of mentors' experiences and views of mentoring during 2006-07. The information you provide will form part of a larger evaluation study that aims to explore the impacts of mentoring on young people thinking about higher education.

Who will see my answers?

The information you give is totally confidential. Findings from the survey will be made available to Aimhigher South Yorkshire and the mentoring programmes but in such a way that it is not possible for individuals to be identified. Other mentors, members of staff at the programmes and Aimhigher South Yorkshire will at no time have access to any of the questionnaires completed by mentors.

What is covered in this survey?

The questions are divided into four sections.

Section A: This section asks for background details about you and the mentoring programme you were involved in during 2006-07.

Section B: This section is concerned with the training you received.

Section C: This section is concerned with the benefits of mentoring for mentees.

Section D: This section is concerned with the benefits of mentoring for mentors.

What types of questions will I be asked?

The survey requires you to answer questions in one of two ways. The majority of questions require you to give yes or no responses and then to explain your answer. When explaining your answer please give as much detail as possible and provide examples where appropriate. The other type of questions require you to place an X in the box that best matches your mentoring experiences.

How should I respond?

Please answer all questions as openly and honestly as possible. This will allow me to collect and build data about the views, experiences and reflections of mentoring from the perspectives of mentors themselves.

SECTION A : ABOUT YOU

A1. Where were you studying during 2006-07?

A2. Which mentoring programme were you involved in during 2006-07?

A3. Was 2006-07 your 1st , 2nd or 3rd year of mentoring in this programme?

A3. How many mentees did you mentor in 2006-07?

A4. For each mentee, please provide details of the school or college they attended and the level of course they were studying during 2006-07 (e.g. GCSE; AS; A Level etc).

A5. For each mentee you identified in Q. A4 please state whether you mentored each person for the full duration of the programme?

A6. If any mentee was not mentored for the full duration of the programme, please provide the reasons why below:

SECTION B: BECOMING A MENTOR

B1. What motivated you to apply to be a mentor?

B2. What was involved in the training you received?

B3. Did the training help you to work as a mentor? ***Please explain your answer***

B4. Were there any aspects of the training that were less helpful? ***Please explain your answer***

B5. In your view were you and your mentee(s) well matched? ***Please explain your answer giving examples.***

SECTION C: IMPACTS OF MENTORING ON MENTEES

C1. Please put an **X** against all areas that you covered with mentees during 2006-07.

Area	X	Area	X	Area	X
Life at Uni		UCAS applications		Essay Writing	
Decisions about going to Uni		Funding and Fees		Subject Specific advice	
Choice - Uni to apply to		Revision Techniques		Other (<i>Please specify</i>)	
Choice – courses to study		Exam Techniques			

C2. In your view did your mentee(s) benefit from your input in the above areas?

C3. If yes, please list the ways in which your mentees benefited from your input below.

C4. If no, please explain in what areas mentees did not benefit in your view and why.

C5. In your view, did the benefits you listed in Q. C3 have an impact on the following:

Please give full details and provide examples the ways these benefits impacted and how.

a) Impacts on Student's Academic Achievement:

b) Impacts on decision-making about studying in HE/going to university:

c) Impacts on mentee's beliefs and perceptions:

d) Other impacts (please specify):

C6. In your view, what properties or characteristics seemed to help make the mentoring work well? ***Please explain your answer***

C7. In your view, where there any barriers that prevented the mentoring from working as well as you would have hoped? ***Please explain your answer***

SECTION D IMPACTS OF MENTORING – ON MENTORS

C6. Have you benefited from being a mentor? ***Please explain your answer***

C7. If so, have these benefits had any wider impact in your life? ***Please explain your answer.***

C8. Do you have any plans to continue mentoring in 2007-08? If so, what are they?

C9. Do you expect to use your experiences of mentoring in your future career? ***Please explain your answer.***

Please use the space below to provide any further comments about the mentoring programme you would like to make.

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