

Pathways to Success: Peer Mentoring & Student Transition to University

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Aston University Centre
for Learning Innovation
& Professional Practice,
Learning & Teaching
Research Group



Workshop Format

- ▶ **Transition Trivia**
- ▶ **Overcoming the ‘trials of transition’ – 3 Case-Studies.**
- ▶ **Discussion – *If I were a first year...***
- ▶ **Research findings**
- ▶ **Concluding Remarks...**

What percentage of students who enrolled in 2006 did not complete their studies?

- a. 32%**
- b. 12%**
- c. 5%**
- d. 23%**
- e. 44%**

What percentage of students starting in 2007 were from the 'lower' socio-economic groups?

a. 13%

b. 25%

c. 30%

d. 42%

e. 6%

What is the predicted number of students who will be turned down for university places in 2010?

a. 100,000

b. 150,000

c. 300,000

d. 200,000

e. 50,000

What number of universities have over 50% of students from a BME background?

a. 12

b. 37

c. 1

d. 7

e. 18

**In 2009, what percentage of all Bachelors
Level degrees were awarded to
international (non EU) students?**

a. 11%

b. 24%

c. 36%

d. 20%

e. 8%



**So what
can we
do??**



Addressing the Trials of Transition : Peer Mentoring in Three UK Universities

Aston



Sheffield

Bangor



Part of *Pathways to Success Project*
funded by HEFCE / Paul Hamlyn

Features of 'Pastoral' Peer Mentoring

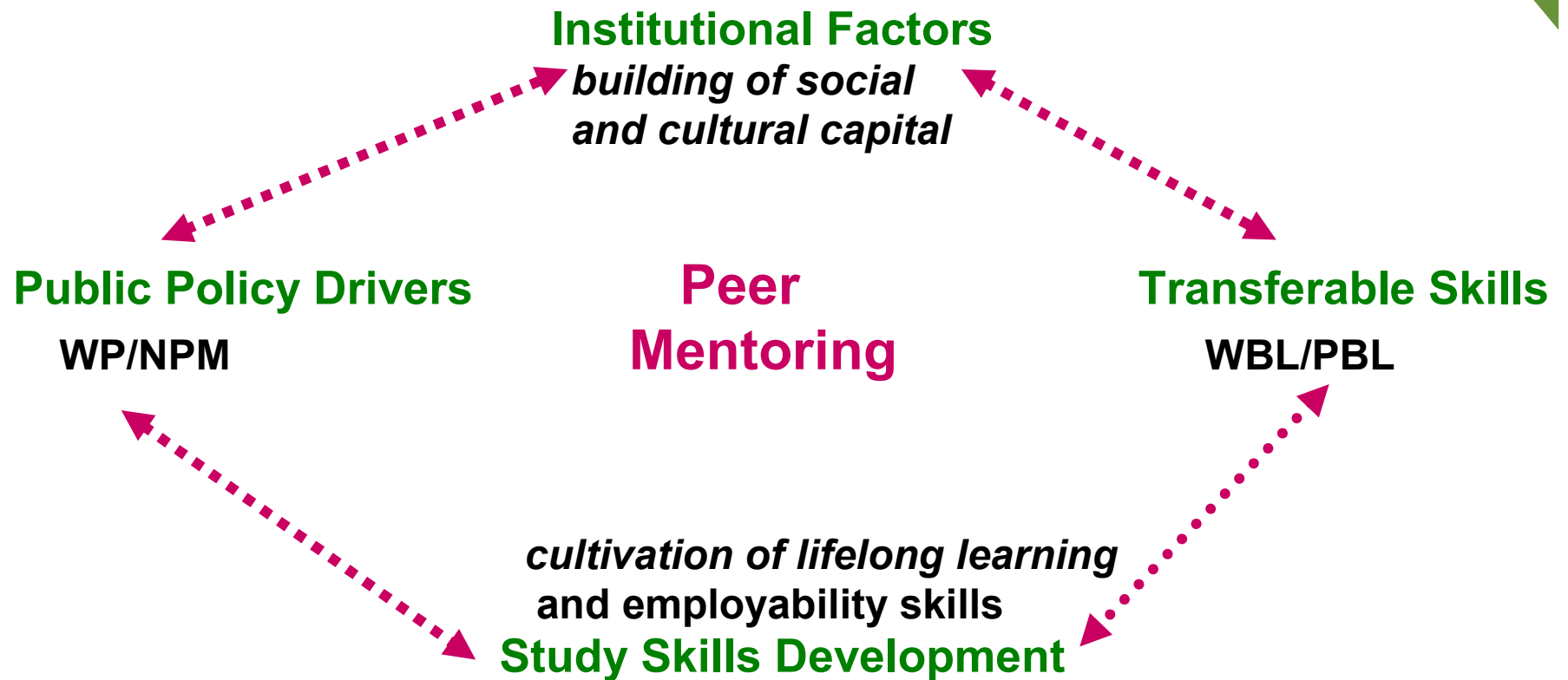
- ▶ **Aston:** Transition into University: Year long programme: Voluntary participation: University Wide: One-to-one relationship: Purposeful matching where possible.
- ▶ **Sheffield:** Transition into University. Mentoring relationship lasts between one term and a year: School based: One mentor to four or five first-year students: Limited matching: Discipline Specific: Separate 'targeted' mentoring .
- ▶ **Bangor:** Transition into University: Main focus on *Freshers Week*: School / Discipline focused: One mentor to between three and twenty first-year students: Initial focus on social activities: Matched by subject only.

Researching the value of Peer Mentoring in assisting transition into Higher Education

- ▶ **Multiple Case-Study Approach**
- ▶ **Seven Universities in total**
- ▶ **Mixed methodological tools**
- ▶ **Across the Institutions 16 different models of mentoring**



Multi-dimensional Approach to Conceptualising Peer Mentoring in Higher Education



Group Discussion



Put yourself in the shoes of a new first year student. Consider...

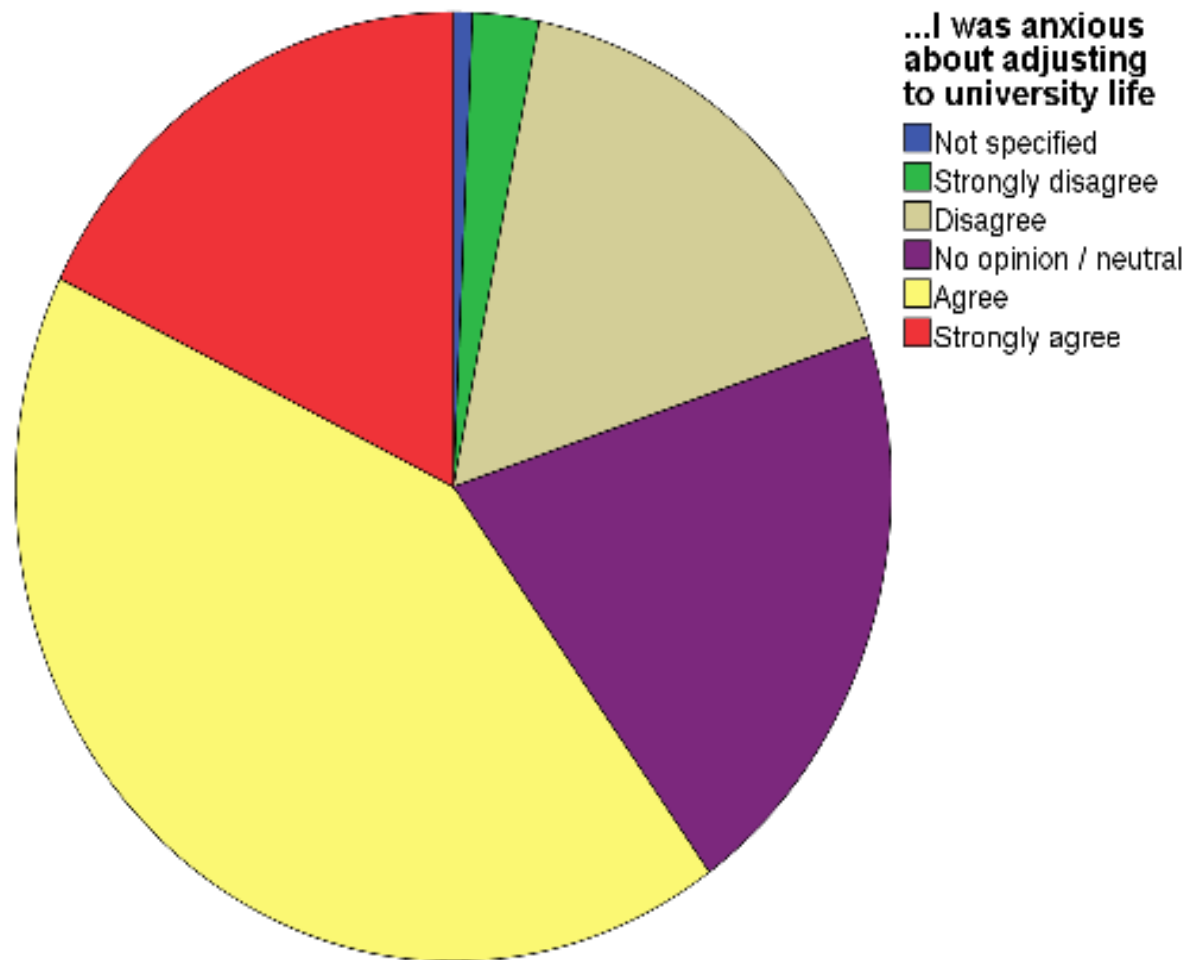
- ▶ **What are your main fears and concerns when first attending University?**
- ▶ **How might Peer Mentoring help you deal with this?**
- ▶ **If you were a second year student what would you expect to get out of being a Peer Mentor?**

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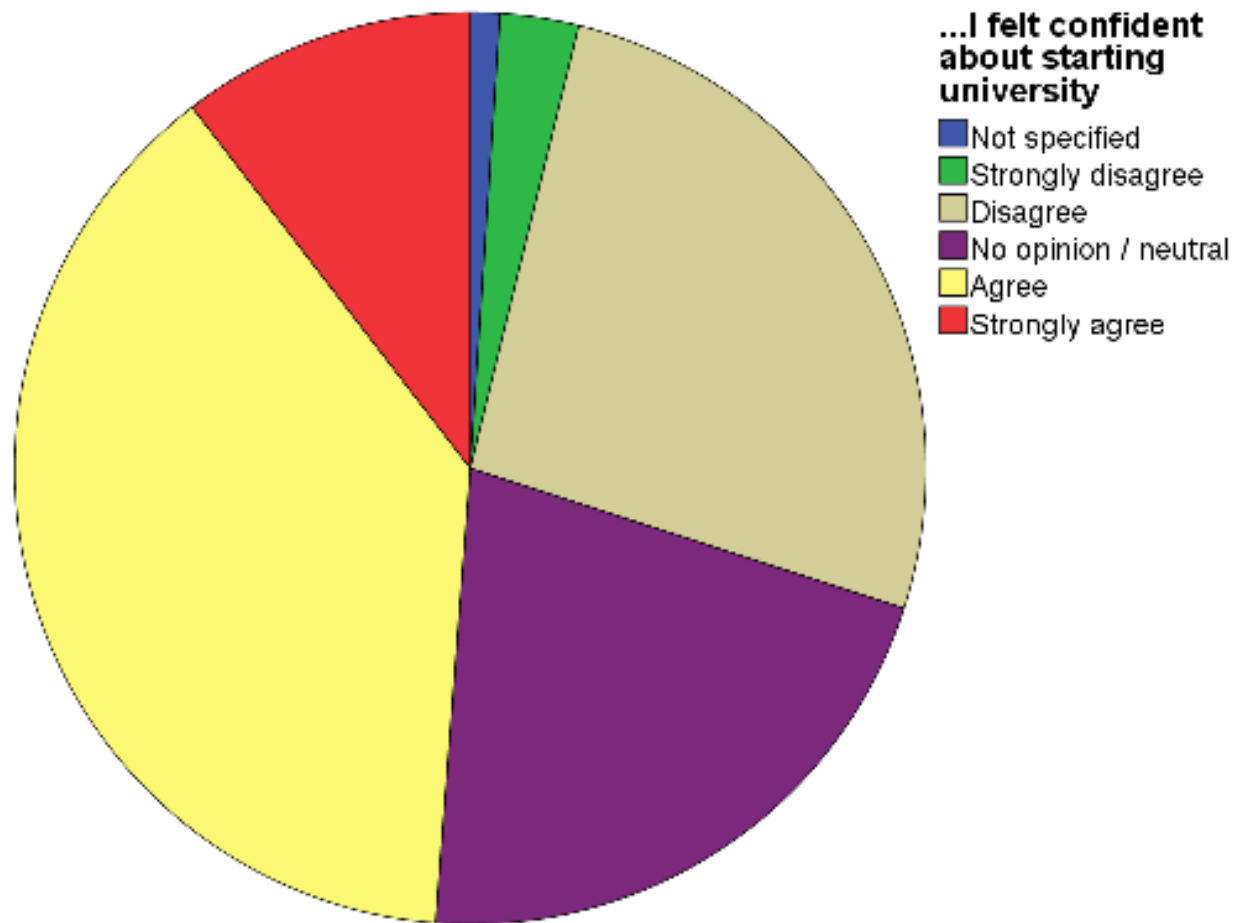
How might Peer Mentoring help you deal with this?

If you were a second year student what would you expect to get out of being a Peer Mentor?

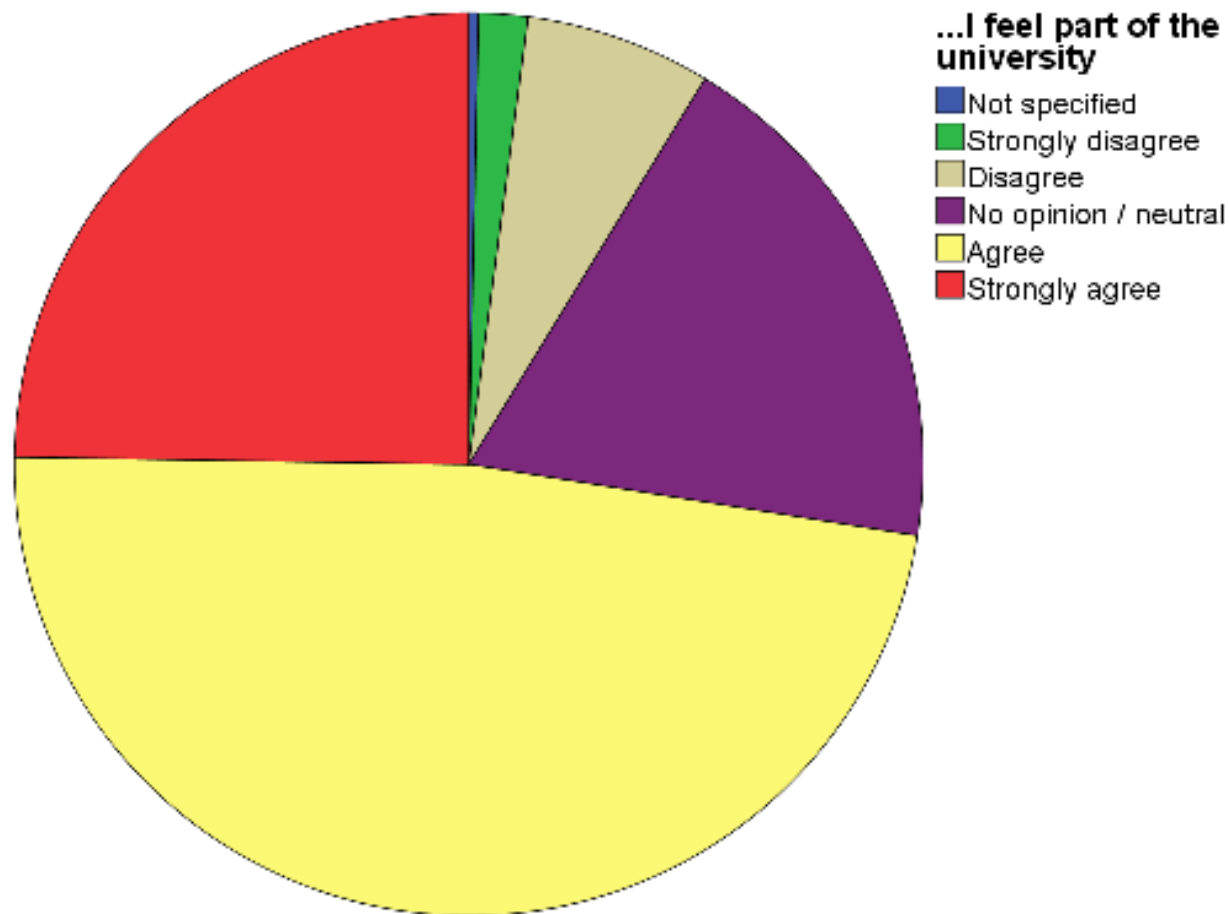
Before starting University....



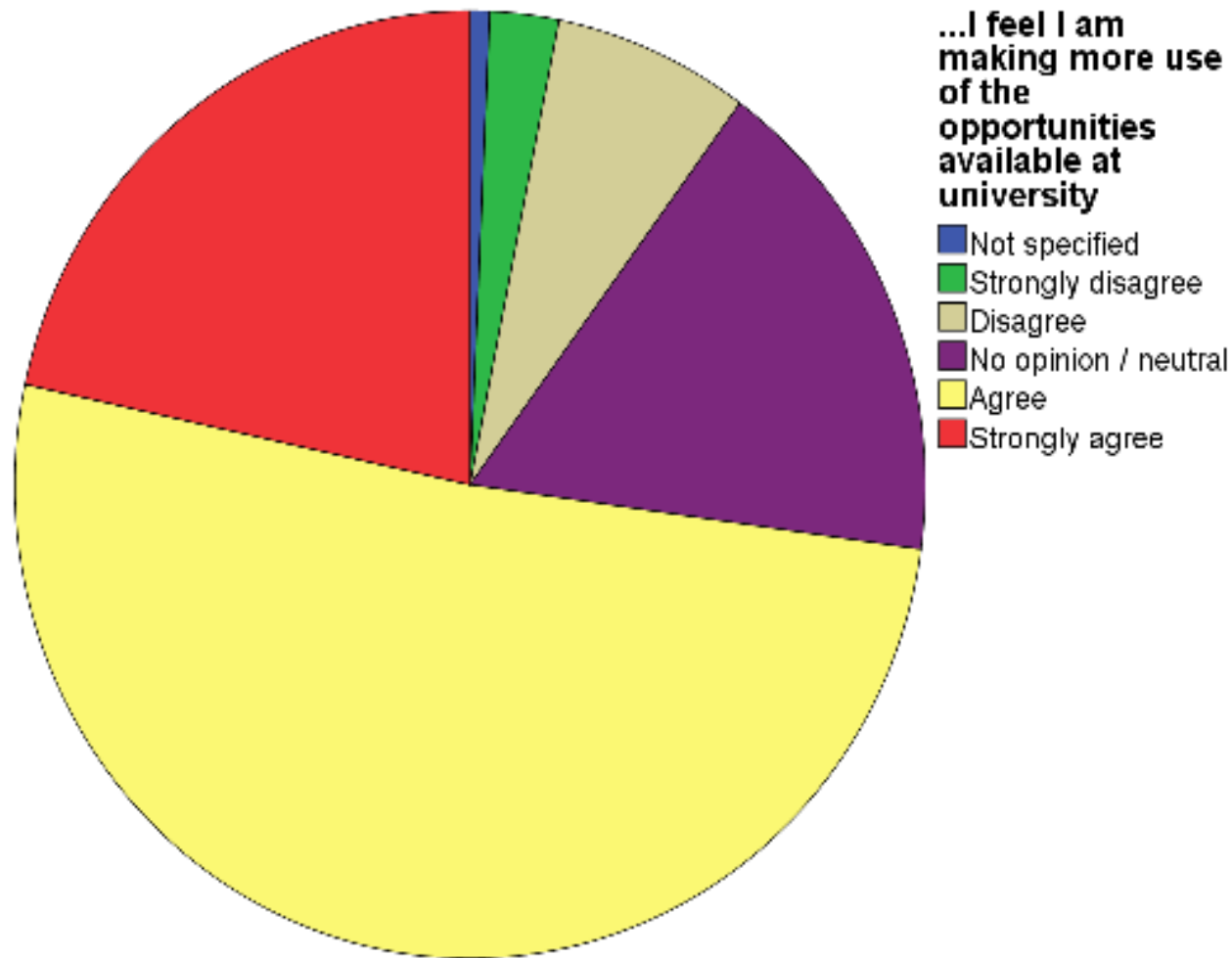
Before starting University....



As a result of participating in the Peer Mentoring Programme...



As a result of participating in the Peer Mentoring Programme...



In the students' own words...

► Mentors...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3UnE8mw2IM>

► Mentees...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQbdDeDsn0o>

What the students say... First years...

- ▶ *I am able to see university life in perspective, as part of my whole life*
- ▶ *I'm not as much of a university hermit as before. I feel integrated now, like I have something to offer outside of my performance in my subject area.*
- ▶ *I feel more connected to other students on my course, particularly... My mentor has helped me settle into university and shared her experiences so I don't feel like I'm the only person feeling worried or different.*
- ▶ *Asking a student was definitely less daunting than asking a lecturer or member of staff. Activities that were provided by peer guides were also great ways of meeting other freshers.*

What the students say... Mentors...

- ▶ *I think that the mentoring experience changes more than just my university experience, working so closely with people about issues that reflect their concerns and anxieties and the way they think and approach stressful situations is always very rewarding.*
- ▶ *It has helped me a lot in applying for a placement both my having a mentor and now being a mentor has broadened my CV and given me a wider range of things to discuss in interviews.*
- ▶ *When trying to motivate my mentee I actually was motivating myself. Hence both me and my mentee have confidence that we will pass our year of study, and are working harder than we did before*

Concluding Remarks... Summary of emergent findings

- 1. Before starting university students are more concerned about 'settling in' and 'making friends' than they are about coping with the academic demands of their course.**
- 2. 48% of all HEIs in Great Britain have some form of Peer Mentoring programme**
- 3. Peer mentoring in universities comes in many different 'guises' with programme ranging from 'Mommies and Daddies' to 'Study Buddies' and 'Peer Mentors'.**
- 4. Each of these schemes has a unique part to play in aiding transition**

And finally...

- 1. Mentees benefit from having a ‘friendly’ face at the University – someone who helps them get a ‘grip’ of the implicit ‘rules’ of the institution from a student perspective.**
- 2. Mentors benefit greatly in terms of enhanced employability and transferable skills.**

The most valuable asset we have as a Sector are our students. Students want to help other students. They can provide a unique pathway into the institution. A ‘Pathway to Success’ based upon their own experiences and insights.

Contact details

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