Does e-mentoring enhance the employability attributes of mentees?

An action research project within an International Professional Mentoring Scheme

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Background & Rationale

- Middlesex University alumni feedback in India
- Changes to international student visas – work experience needed
- Department and the University strategy to use mentoring to support its employability

International Professional Mentoring Scheme

Aims of the project

- Widen student engagement
- Create an opportunity to learn about international work practices
- Enhance employability

International Professional Mentoring Scheme

- Mentors - Human Resource practitioners in Indian multinationals
- Mentees - post graduate UK students at Middlesex University Business School
- Project team - Chandana Sanyal & Chris Rigby, Senior Lecturers, Leadership, Work & Organisations
- Other stakeholders - Dean of Business School, Head of Dept, module tutors, Director of Programmes, employers of mentors (only in some cases)

Mentees

Programme of Study

- MA in Human Resources Management - 17
- MA in International Human Resource Management - 2
- MBA - 4

The students were either International, European and UK based studying at MDX Business School

Mentors

Title (examples)

- Vice President, Human resources, Aviation
- Executive Vice President, Human Capital
- Management Consultant
- Chief of Human Resources
- HR Manager

Sectors - Aviation, Human Resource Consulting, Construction, Manufacturing, IT Consultancy Services, Engineering Telecommunications, Social media, Pharmaceutical

The Process

- Recruitment

✓ 23 mentors recruited (Sept 2011 –Jan 2013); 23 mentees recruited (Nov 2011 – Jan 2013)

✓ Criteria for Mentors – Commitment of support for up to 10 hours over 3 to 4 months by email, Skype, telephone, face-to-face (where possible)

✓ Criteria for mentees – Registered on a post-graduate programme, 2.1 or equivalent in first degree, demonstrate interest in international setting, commitment to relationship

The Process (continued)

- Training - E-Toolkit for mentors; development workshop for Mentees
- Matching - Personal preference of industry/sector or previous educational background, offer of two mentee profiles to mentors (where possible), one-to-one interviews with mentees, project team support as required
- Support - support workshops for mentees, on line support for mentors and annual face-to-face meetings

The Process (continued)

Evaluation

- interviews with mentors and mentees
- review of mentee progress updates
- summative questionnaire
- semi- structured interviews with project team, tutors and director of programmes and finally
- tracking student progression

Research Methodology of research paper

Research question – *Does e mentoring enhance the employability of a mentee?* (a practice based situation that requires analysis)

Research approach – empirical, pragmatic with an integrated approach which examines practice through observation, questioning and artefact (Plowright 2012)

Research method – Action research - a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of action (Lewis 1946)

Theoretical Frameworks informing our research

Pool & Sewell (2007) developed CareerEDGE plus review of earlier **employability** frameworks:

- Hillage & Pollard(1998)
- Bennett et al (1999)
- Yorke & Knight USEM (2004)
- Law & Watts DOTS (1977)

Academic research informing our paper on e-mentoring

- Bierema & Merriam (2002)
- Hamilton & Scandura (2003)
- Bierema and Hill (2005)
- Zay (2011)
- Clutterbuck (1998; 2002; 2011)

Key Findings:

1. E-communication

The methods of communication identified: telephone, Skype or email

The *main* method of communication used: email and telephone.

- 96%of the participants used email and telephone
- 77% used Skype
- 10% had face-to-face communication (as opportunities arose)

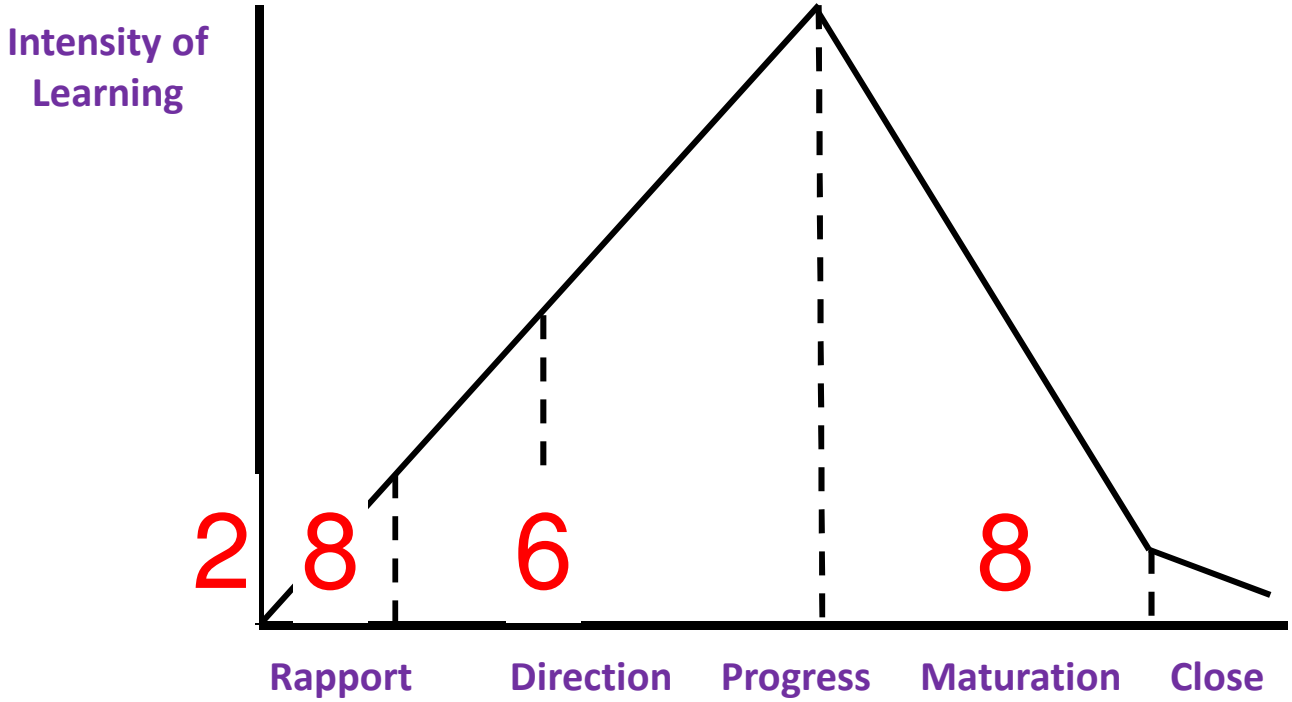
Key Findings:

2. E-mentoring

- E mentoring saves time? *Strongly agree 50%; Agree 50%*
- E mentoring saves resources other than time? *Strongly agree 58%; Agree 42%*
- Do you think e mentoring has provided a useful opportunity for learning? *36% strongly agreed; 50% agreed and 14% neither agree nor disagree*
- *83% of the participants agreed that e mentoring provided a useful opportunity for learning*

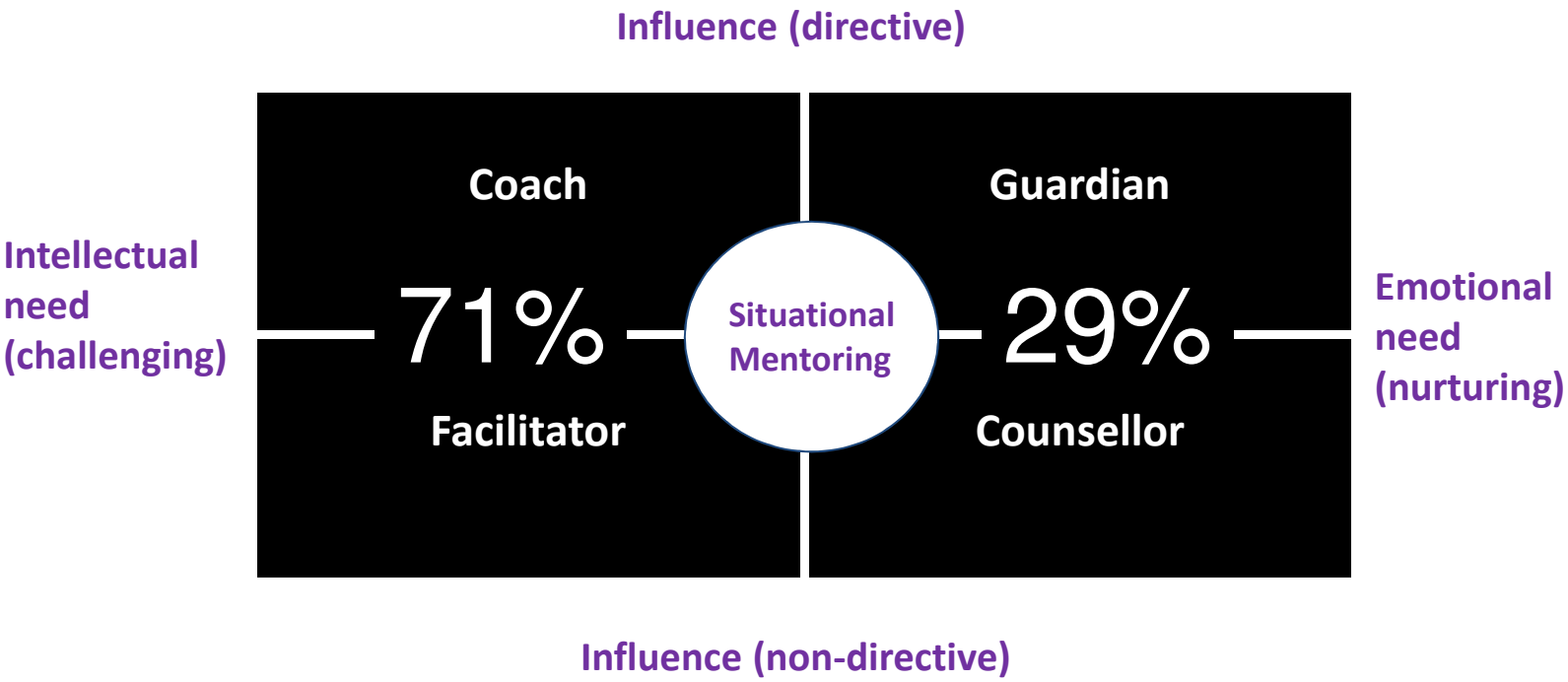
3. **E-mentoring relationship development**

The Evolution of the Mentoring Relationship



Clutterbuck (1998: 95)

The dimensions of mentoring



Adapted from: Clutterbuck (1998: 8)

Innovation and the student experience'
A discussion paper on Internationalisation

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High clarity of purpose

Open dialogue Shared expectations Openness to mutual benefit Sense of urgency	Task focused Debate rather than dialogue
Friendship; Lack of direction Opportunistic in dealing with issues; Short term perspective, but ... *may* be long-term relationship	"Going through the motions"

High rapport

Low rapport

Low clarity of purpose

4

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Clutterbuck (2001)

Key Learning From the Project

Voluntary nature of mentor; competing commitments of mentees; NOT in-house (common vision absent)

1. A rich and varied but complex project
2. Distance impacts relationships in a non-linear manner
3. Reliability of technology
4. Down time management
5. Demands on Project Team resource
6. Getting responses
7. Dependence on individuals rather than the organisation

Evidence-based Recommendations

1. Project Team needs to be appropriate to numbers of participants
2. One-to-one, face-to-face or actual placement would strengthen relationships
3. Regular focus groups with mentees (students)
4. Make the relationship *with the organisation* rather than just a single individual

Q & A

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