E-Mentoring: A study focusing on the profile and electronic communication of e-Mentoring users

Lina Anastasovitou, MSW

Student Support Liaison (Halls)
Kingston University London

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Outline

A. Literature Review.
B. Motivation of Research.
C. Pilot Study.
   - “Accommodation Transitions”.
   - Research design, instruments, analyses.
D. Emerging themes and Outlook.
E. Implications for research and practitioners.
F. Conclusions.
A1. Literature Review

- E-mentoring and importance on improving student experience.
- Evaluation, effectiveness, challenges.
- Comparison with face to face.
- Benefits of e-mentoring:
  - modern, convenient, cost effective tool
  - beyond temporal and spatial constraints
- Limitations of studies:
  - focus on use and support for academic issues.
  - often introduced by faculties.
A2. This study...

- Fills the gap.
- Use of e-mentoring in areas which affect students in a holistic way (academic, personal, social, community life).
- Academic and social profile of users.
- Flavor of communication.
- Frequency of use and effectiveness.
B1. Motivation of Research

- Is e-mentoring equally effective to address a variety of students’ concerns or its use gives preference in handling particular areas of problems? (topic bias)

- Is e-mentoring preferred by certain populations? (user bias)

- Does e-mentoring facilitate a particular discourse of problem solving? (discourse flavor)

- Does e-mentoring promote emotional intelligence?

- Does e-mentoring assist in community engagement or is it dry and impersonal?
B2. Interesting Questions

- Who are our users?  
  (Status, Gender, Origin, Ethnicity, Faculty/Course, Hall)

- Did certain groups use the scheme more than others?  
  (UG/PG, Female/Male, Ethnic groups)

- What were the factors of engagement with the scheme?  
  (Frequency of use, Lengthy conversations, Flavor of Communication, Scheme Modules)

- Did non-engaged mentees from certain faculties not need the scheme?  
  (Faculty adequacy)
C1. The e-Mentoring Scheme

- Transition to halls and university life.
- 15 pairs of Mentors and Mentees – sample.
- Peer mentors (preferred halls’ experience).
- Matching criteria (course, hobbies and interests, origin).
- Organized face to face meet up (first weeks).
- Online web portal: BrightsideUNIAID
  - Similar view/function to e-mail and social networking sites
  - Modules on university life issues
  - Monitored by Scheme Coordinator

http://www.brightsideuniaid.org
C2. Research Design

Instruments

- Pilot study, pre-tests instruments.
- Types of topics mentees are most active with.
- Frequency of e-mentoring use in relation to key areas.
- Influence of communications with mentors.
- Data collection instruments:
  - Self-check list (mentee application)
  - Recording of conversations
  - Phone interviews and e-mail
- Data management: Categorical data (group).
C3. Research Design

Analyses

How we measure the dimensions:

Qualitative and quantitative analyses
  o Descriptive analyses
  o Frequencies, cross tabulations
  o Content analysis (quantitative)
  o Discourse analysis (qualitative)
  o Correlations – relationships between variables
C4. Managing the Data

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V |
| 1 | Case | Name | Status | Origin | Ethnc | Country | Gender | Faculty | Course | Hall | Status | M | Ethnc | M | Gndr | M | Facy | M | Crse | M | Hall M | Num | Conv | LCT | LC1 | LC2 |
| 2 | 1 | Jos | 2 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 1 | Bans | 1 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 340 | 125 | 43 |
| 3 | 2 | Steph | 1 | 3 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 2 | Tom | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 294 | 62 | 78 |
| 4 | 3 | Agy | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 2 | Vin | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 23 | 891 | 61 | 76 |
| 5 | 4 | Sop | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Wil | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 1374 | 22 | 535 |
| 6 | 5 | Ste | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | La | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1027 | 72 | 271 |
| 7 | 6 | Bel | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | Nat | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 1165 | 84 | 78 |
| 8 | 7 | Dav | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | Saf | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 444 | 130 | 81 |
| 9 | 8 | Tam | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | Timi | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 296 | 89 | 145 |
| 10 | 9 | Cla | 1 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | Tas | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 1028 | 376 | 652 |
| 11 | 10 | Mis | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 1 | Ade | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 68 | 44 | 24 |
| 12 | 11 | Om | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Tas | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 190 | 46 | 101 |
| 13 | 12 | Ade | 2 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 2 | Vin | 1 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 24 | 10 | 14 |
| 14 | 13 | Mel | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 13 | 2 | Vla | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 271 | 103 | 168 |

Snapshot of data storage: cases vs. categories
C5. Profile of users

**Ethnicity**
- White British
- Other White
- Black or Black British
- Other Black
- Asian or Asian British
- Chinese
- Other Asian
- Mixed White & Asian
- Other Ethnic

**Origin**
- International: 8
- EU: 2
- UK: 5

**Faculty (Mentees)**
- FASS: 5
- B & L: 3
- Sci: 3
- FADA: 2
- CISM: 2
- Eng: 0
- H & Soc. Care: 0

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C6. Expected and Actual needs

Matching dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>No mention</th>
<th>No match</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Mention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Independently</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living w/others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic related</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. Resources</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. Supp. Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local resources</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topics mentioned the most: **Academic related** and **University resources**
C7. Faculty Match with mentors

Faculty match:
FASS
Business & Law
Science
## C8. Topics – Dominant, Secondary, Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant</th>
<th>Frq</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Frq</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Frq</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demanding acad. schedule</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Life in halls (-)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hobbies/interests</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find part-time job</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Internet connection problems in hall</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Life in halls (+)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad university experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Academic related info</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social life</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most frequently discussed topics:
Demanding academic schedule, Life in halls (-), Hobbies/interests
C9. Indicative Data Analysis

Communication tone, average by Gender

Communication tone (gender)

Averages per case

Full scale project will provide insight on the tone distributions for each gender.

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C10. Indicative Data Analysis

Type of words used by Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive emotion</th>
<th>Negative emotion</th>
<th>Frustration</th>
<th>Urgency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International mentees used more positive emotion words
EU mentees used less negative emotion words
UK mentees used more frustration words

Data from the full scale project will inform our discourse analysis.
### C11. Indicative Data Analysis

**Influence by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Dependency</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Influence of communications (gender)**

- **Female**: empowered or no change. Tendency to get empowered.
- **Male**: almost no influence, more detached.

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C12. Indicative Data Analysis

Engagement by Faculty

Engagement mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engagement mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different faculty</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same faculty</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do mentors and mentees from the same faculty engage more?
C13. Communication type

Communication used

- **10 mentees** (most of our sample) used **e-mentoring only**.

- **3** used e-mentoring & f2f

- **2** switched to f2f
D1. Emerging Themes

- Expected needs and actual needs of mentees were different.
- Mentees lived in our two largest halls.
- Topic areas discussed the most: academic related and university resources.
- E-mentoring not an appropriate tool to address individual issues (finance, depression, personal) – 4/15 were referred to support services.
- Mentees from the same faculty with their mentors engaged better with the scheme.
- Most mentees used e-mentoring only.
- Students seemed comfortable with the e-platform.
D2. Additional Analyses

- Length of conversations by used variables; descriptive (e.g. status), derivative (e.g. influence).

- Further combinations
  - Tone of communication by status, ethnicity, faculty.
  - Use of words (positive, negative, frustration, needy, excitement) by status, gender, origin, faculty.
  - Use of emoticons (positive, negative, no use).
  - Influence of communication by status, origin, faculty.
D3. Full Scale Project

- Robust study over a long period (years).
- Data from application forms, interviews, questionnaires and reflective journals.
- Review list of dimensions – add new categories (e.g. Mentees’ age, pre-arrival anxiety).
- Comparison with control group.
- Adequate/representative sample size.
- Follow mentees as they progress to check
  - community involvement.
  - willingness to become mentors.
E1. Addressing Existing Studies

➢ Contribution in mentoring research
  o Explore the users’ profile.
  o Holistic e-mentoring.
  o Tests frequency, use and influence of e-mentoring to its users.
  o Insights on community involvement of mentees (full scale project).
E2. Addressing Practitioners (1)

- Early start of mentoring (pre-arrival).
- Customized to students’ needs.
- Review and extend mentoring initiatives
  - Extension of PAL/PASS schemes.
  - Mentoring for internationals.
  - Mentors through transition stages.

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E3. Addressing Practitioners (2)

➤ Coordinator’s role and monitoring.
➤ Peer support schemes (e.g. peer educators) and effective recruitment – application of Research design.

➤ Implications on retention
  o Promising scheme - Positive study and living experience
➤ Favorable institutional reputation.
F. Conclusions

✓ Need for further full scale study – validate results.

✓ Understand the effect on solving specific problems
  o Where e-mentoring is doing effective problem solving.
  o Issues mentees don’t feel comfortable to discuss.
  o Inadequate to provide support for some areas of concern.

✓ Explore conditional application of e-mentoring in conjunction with other methods (e.g. face-to-face).

✓ Invest further on e-mentoring as a resource – extension to Second Life (virtual infrastructure).
Suggested Reading:


Lina Anastasovitou, MSW

Student Support Liaison Officer (Halls)
Kingston University London

lina@kingston.ac.uk
lina-UK@live.com
Appendix - Abbreviations

-Faculties:
FASS – Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FADA – Faculty of Art Design and Architecture
B & L – Business and Law
Eng. – Engineering
Sc – Science
CISM – Faculty of Computing, Information Systems and Mathematics
H & Soc. Care – Health and Social Care

-PAL/PASS: Peer Assisted Learning/Peer Assisted Study Support
Peer learning schemes
## Managing the data (C4)

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V |
| 1 | Case | Name | Status | Origin | Ethnc | Country | Gender | Faculty | Course | Hall | Status | Ms | OriginM | M | Ethnc | M | Gndr | M | Facyty | M | Crse | M | HallM | Conv | LCT | LC1 | LC2 |
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| 8 | 7 | Dav | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | Saf | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 444 | 130 | 81 |
| 9 | 8 | Tam | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1 | Tami | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 296 | 89 | 145 |
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| 14 | 13 | Mel | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 13 | 2 | Vla | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 271 | 103 | 168 |
Profile of users (C5)

Ethnicity

- White British
- Other White
- Black or Black Brit-African
- Other Black
- Asian or Asian Brit-Indian
- Chinese
- Other Asian
- Mixed White & Black Carib.
- Mixed White & Asian
- Other Ethnic