

A Sense of their Future

**Evaluation of the Hanover Foundations pilot programme,
October 2009-March 2010**

Level 2 Mentoring Award for Young Learners

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Executive summary

Introduction

- 1.1 In 2008 Hanover Foundations, together with Walking with Leaders, developed an ILM Level 2 Award in Mentoring for Young Learners. The award was designed to foster key advanced speaking, questioning and listening skills and increase employability. The award would also give recognition to the development outcomes achieved and have the potential to become an integral part of education and apprenticeship schemes.
- 1.2 Hanover carried out a pilot programme in Barking College and Uxbridge College in 2009 and 2010 with an initial enrolment of 32 students. The Hanover Foundations designed programme was delivered over 20 weeks, and built a coaching programme around and on top of the award's core learning hours. Twenty-three students received the Level 2 award in May 2010. All the students retained in the programme achieved their qualification.
- 1.3 Charities Evaluation Services (CES) is an independent charity which has provided evaluation support to voluntary and community organisations and their funders for 20 years. CES carried out an evaluation of the pilot programme between February and June 2010, focusing on key learning and development outcomes, but also on the added value of the coaching component of the programme.
- 1.4 Although the sample size was limited by the total number of participants completing the programme, a number of factors give greater weight to the evidence of positive outcomes, and the likelihood of a similar programme with the same quality of delivery achieving similar results. The sample comprised a diverse group, both in profile and competency levels, and there was 100 per cent response rate to the core parts of the evaluation, including the interviews. Evidence gained from a mix of data sources, including knowledge tests, tutor and mentee feedback, coach case studies, mentoring diaries and self-reports all pointed to positive change in key outcome areas in all students participating.

Outcomes for young people

- 2.1 Participants valued the Level 2 mentoring qualification in itself. However, their main attention was on immediate personal challenges, and on managing their home/life balance, becoming more confident, better organised and more effective.
- 2.2 While improved communication (including effective questioning and listening) did not feature in what students wanted to achieve at the start, this contrasted strongly with the value that they placed on achieving these core intended outcomes at the end of the programme. In both self-assessments and interviews, improved communication was reported as the greatest gain from the programme. The evaluation found a new respect for effective listening, using questioning techniques and hearing another perspective without interjecting.

- 2.3 Students tracked their developing skills in mentoring diaries. That evidence, combined with participant and tutor feedback, all pointed to the development of other interpersonal skills, including time management, self-confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem and self-belief, decision making, problem solving and ability to plan for the future. The data suggested that improved communication skills led to greater self-confidence and there was an evident interaction in the development of different skills areas.
- 2.4 All 23 students said that they had learnt new skills. The quantitative data supplied through participants' self-assessment scores showed positive change in all the outcome areas, although the self-assessment data had limitations in terms of demonstrating the actual level of change. Scoring at the top of the scale initially also prevented a record of any further development. A tendency to rate skills levels at the top end of the scale at the start by some higher achieving students resulted in an adjustment once they had developed an understanding, for example, of the elements of good communication. The highest gains were seen for those who rated themselves lowest at the start of the course. This corresponds to the substantial improvement suggested by the qualitative data for those students who struggled at the beginning.
- 2.5 Twenty mentees provided feedback on the development of their student mentors. They registered improvements in their mentors' ability to listen, ask questions, reflect back and respond positively. Mentees reported being helped to understand themselves and their work better. Seven reported setting goals and targets, planning better and becoming more organised, and they described becoming more serious and more focused on their college work.

Developing professional behaviour

- 3.1 The practical commitment to the course – meeting time schedules, getting agreements and making arrangements with tutors and mentees – in itself contributed to development outcomes; this point was made strongly by one of the college tutors. For example, some had been initially concerned about taking on the programme as an additional commitment, but had found that instead it had helped them to prioritise and structure their activities and give appropriate time to both college and home life.
- 3.2 One-to-one coaching sessions also focused on goal setting, self-organisation and time management. Other personal skills were important; participants noted in their mentoring diaries having more patience and objectivity, being better able to work with, and empower others, better able to get a positive outcome and empower others to succeed.

Applying the new skills

- 4.1 The data showed that new skills were being internalised and brought into day-to-day lives. Participants reported:
- opening up their personal conversations
 - prioritising and structuring their activities
 - contributing more in class and using questioning skills

- setting targets for course work and getting assignments in on time.
- 4.2 In interviews, several students illustrated how their strengthened confidence was improving their social relations, affecting their personal lives, helping them with university interviews and, more generally, changing their personal perspectives on the future.
- 4.3 Responses to a questionnaire¹ two months after the final Level 2 assessment indicated that students were using and retaining their new skills; participants reported a range of sustained gains and demonstrated how their new skills had affected their college achievements and helped them in their jobs.

The added value of the Hanover Level 2 award programme

- 5.1 The evaluation found good evidence of how the component parts of the programme contributed to the key learning and personal development outcomes. The workshops, the coaching and supervision, the mentoring sessions and reflection on practice through mentoring diaries, all helped to build and reinforce the development of skills.
- 5.2 In interviews, all students were positive about what the course had achieved and found all elements of the programme helpful. The post-course self-assessments and interviews illustrated participants' particular enthusiasm for the coaching and supervision elements.
- 5.3 The coaching element in the programme had a major impact in retaining the students and in skill development:
- The three coaching sessions at the start provided a foundation for the programme, addressing any personal barriers and stretching the students' motivation and aspirations.
 - There was a strong sense of partnership between the coach and student mentor. Twenty-two participants rated the coaching as 'excellent', and one as 'good'.
 - Case histories, mentoring diaries – discussed in coaching sessions – and other data demonstrated how coaching provided a targeted approach to individual participants.
 - Mentoring diaries showed how coaching encouraged the development of self-awareness and skills through reflection back on mentoring practice.
 - Coaches used the performance management element to deal with different skills levels and to minimise difficulties, spending more time with individual mentors as needed.
- 5.4 Nearly all students were enthusiastic about the workshops in delivering and reinforcing the knowledge element of the programme and increasing their understanding of mentoring techniques. A small number found either the first or the second workshop overloaded or overlong.

¹ Fourteen of the 23 students responded to this questionnaire.

- 5.5 Mentoring practice sessions were vital for the development of communication skills. Students also built persistence and commitment to their mentees' goals and own solutions. Mentoring held up a mirror to students' own issues, and a growing self-awareness and new respect for themselves was reflected in the mentoring diaries.

Project management

- 6.1 Students in both colleges were taken from across curriculum areas, including some from technical and practical disciplines; they had varying competences and differences in starting point. The programme worked at all these levels – from business studies students aiming at university, to those that were already in the workplace, to those who were struggling or who were challenged by written English. Hanover coaches responded flexibly, for example with additional coaching time, to achieve positive outcomes for all the students.
- 6.2 Nine participants dropped out across the two colleges, a result of a timetable clash and pressure of college work rather than student competency or compatibility with the programme. Difficulty in retaining mentees was a greater logistical issue, resulting in multiple mentees in some instances, and some co-mentoring relationships. This issue was more problematic in Uxbridge College which had no previous mentoring programme.
- 6.3 Logistical difficulties during the pilot emphasised the importance of Hanover's project management experience and approach. All students and agency staff in both colleges were high in their praise for the good contact that was maintained by the coaches and their flexibility in rearranging times if necessary and responding to other problems. This flexibility, matched with the calibre of the Hanover coaches and high commitment to outcomes for the students was central to the success of the programme at its different levels.

Conclusion and recommendations

- 7.1 Hanover's pilot programme placed peer mentoring within a college context on a more professional level. More than that, the evidence of short- to medium-term outcomes indicates that the Hanover Level 2 Award in Mentoring programme is well-designed to develop key communication skills and is well aligned to the functional skills agenda. The programme does not focus on communication skills in isolation. Rather, it delivers a mentoring qualification that has its own value and utility, and which at the same time places communication skills at the heart of personal development, allowing those skills to develop the individual more holistically.
- 7.2 The programme could benefit from some minor adjustment in implementation in order to reinforce and maximise benefits. Improved understanding of the programme by college tutors, and shared commitment to it, are key areas to strengthen wherever possible.
- 7.3 Hanover Foundations might also consider:

- how the drop out rate can be minimised, for example by tightening participant selection processes or criteria
- applying more targeted selection in relation to curriculum area where there is no pre-existing mentoring programme or appropriate support structure within the host agency
- developing mentor/mentee pairings more customised to individual agency circumstances.

1. Introduction

The educational and employment context

'Weak functional skills are associated with higher unemployment, lower earnings, poorer chances of career progression and social exclusion.'

(Working on the Three Rs, CBI, August 2006)

- 1.1 The Leitch report, published in December 2006, put skills for employability – literacy, numeracy, teamworking and communication – firmly on the agenda. Yet official figures released in February 2010² showed that the number of school-leavers not in education, work or training (NEETS) reached a record year-on-year high at the end of 2009, with almost 15 per cent of 16 to 24 year-olds in England 'NEETS'. Among 18 to 24-year-olds, the proportion of NEETS was also at a record high.

At the 23 November 2009 CBI conference, concern was expressed that the British education sector was failing to train school leavers and graduates to be ready for employment, and they were lacking basic communication and other skills. Sir Stuart Rose, the executive chairman of Marks & Spencer expressed concern about the huge gap between the best and worst-qualified school-leavers, saying that young people were 'not fit for work when they come out of college'.³ One of the key areas identified by employers was the lack of the interpersonal skills appropriate to function in the workplace.

Hanover Foundations

- 1.2 Hanover Foundations has been developing interpersonal skills with young people aged between 14 and 24 since 1996, bringing principles of executive coaching to young people in schools and colleges, working with highly qualified professional coaches and building on work done with executives of large companies.

Hanover has worked with some 15,000 young people, developing its experience and approaches through a number of programmes. It first attracted government interest in the context of the three-year Excellence in Cities programme, launched in 1999, during which time it crafted a learning mentor model. From 2003, Hanover was funded by London Challenge⁴ to work extensively with 14 to 19 year olds in underperforming schools across a number of London boroughs; in 2006 to 2008 it worked on a ground-breaking collaborative project (the Re-Arch Project) under the government's 14-19 agenda, involving up to 540 young people and 120 Adult Professional

² The Guardian, 25 February 2010.

³ The Times, 24 November 2010.

⁴ London Challenge was launched in 2003 (with funding extended to 2011), and was delivered in partnership with schools, the 33 Greater London local authorities, and all those working in education in the city. It aimed to achieve a sharp improvement in underperforming schools, particularly focusing on English and Maths, narrower attainment gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers, and a higher proportion of young Londoners going on to higher education.

'Champions'. Hanover has experience of working with a variety of agencies, including schools, further education colleges and Young Apprenticeship Schemes, Youth Offending Service, Looked After Children and re-engagers in Education.

- 1.3 Hanover's work directly addressed the government's functional skills agenda; its challenge was to evidence the effectiveness of its provision of enhanced speaking and listening skills in a way that could be valued and recognised. The response was Hanover's involvement in 2008, together with Walking with Leaders (an ILM centre of excellence) in the development of an ILM Level 2 Award in Mentoring for Young Learners. The award was designed to foster key advanced speaking, questioning and listening skills, having the potential to be built into an integral part of education and apprenticeship schemes. The award was certified in February 2009 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).⁵
- 1.4 The core part of the Level 2 award is 22 hours of guided learning – including five hours for induction and tutorial support. The assessment consists of two mandatory units. The first – developing effective listening and questioning skills – is assessed through a knowledge test. The second – undertaking effective mentoring – is assessed through a mentoring diary.

Hanover Foundations pilot Level 2 Award programme

- 1.5 Deutsche Bank sponsored Hanover Foundations to run two pilot programmes, with the workshop input delivered by Walking with Leaders, the awarding body. The programme is targeted at 16 to 19 year-old young people at further education colleges. As well as delivering a qualification, the programme aims to increase employability by improving listening and speaking skills, and to develop self-esteem and aspirations. The programme is structured to develop real skills and move away from scripted learning, providing a model that could be integrated into mainstream education.
- 1.6 The Hanover Foundations designed programme is delivered over 20 weeks, and has built the coaching programme around and on top of the award's core learning hours, delivering an additional 3.5 hours to the 22 hours required by the accreditation, including three initial performance coaching sessions. One coach described the difference of the Hanover programme being the 'wrap around element' provided by the pre-programme and post-programme input. Hanover Foundations sees both this and the 'hugely high standard' to which it delivers as adding a real difference.

⁵ The award aims to provide an accredited course which would equip young learners with the skills and knowledge to undertake effective supervised mentoring and to assist their own personal development, and to enable them to move into supervisory and management roles. Progression is through the ILM Level 3 Award in Workplace Coaching for Team Leaders and First Line Managers or the ILM Level 2 or 3 qualifications in management or leadership.

The pilot programme

- 1.7 The pilot programme was delivered in Barking College and Uxbridge College, with an initial enrolment of 32 students. Twenty-three students received the Level 2 award in May 2010. All the students retained in the programme achieved their qualification. Nine students dropped out from the programme. The reasons for this are discussed on page 41 below. Each college brought to the programme distinct learning contexts, expectations and motivation.
- 1.8 Barking College had had a learning mentor programme running for two years, expanding the programme in 2009-2010 and rolling it out across the student population. The programme took mentor recruits through an interview and checks process, and an induction which included safety guidelines and how to write up the mentees' progress. The college felt that there was a good fit between the Hanover Foundations offer and their existing programme. Although their own primary focus remained on improving the mentees' attendance, retention and achievement, the programme offered accreditation and added value in the element of personal development for the mentors. About half the Barking College Level 2 participants were already mentors in the college programme.
- 1.9 Uxbridge College had already worked with Hanover in partnership with Youth at Risk in 2006-2007, which had resulted in substantially improved grades for those students that stayed the course, and again in the following year, targeting students who were seen 'at risk' in two business classes. Hanover performance coaching had achieved excellent results, including 100 per cent retention and 100 per cent merit or distinction grades.⁶ Uxbridge College were impressed by Hanover's flexibility as well as results.⁷

The offer for the Level 2 Award presented a good opportunity to launch some peer mentoring in the college – which had previously been tried unsuccessfully. The students chosen for the course were ones that were expected to do well, but it was hoped that this would push them to a higher level.

- 1.10 The component parts of the Hanover programme were:
- performance management coaching
 - group workshops in mentoring skills
 - six peer mentoring sessions with coach debriefing
 - completion of mentoring diaries.

Chapter 4 discusses the importance of these components, in particular the quality of the Hanover coaching, in delivering the key skills.

⁶ Letter from Uxbridge College to Neil Grimston, Hanover Foundations, 20 October 2008. These results were in contrast to the achievement of students who were not involved in the programme and the national average in Introductory and First Diploma in Business courses.

⁷ For example, 75 per cent retention in the control group of business students who did not receive the coaching.

The Evaluation

1.11 The evaluation was commissioned to focus on the learning and development outcomes for the student mentors, particularly around the key communication skills of questioning and listening, but also around other personal development outcomes. The evaluation would assess:

- how the different elements of the programme contributed to the achievement of outcomes for young people
- the added value of the coaching component of the programme
- any learning gained from the implementation and project management of the pilots.

1.12 Charities Evaluation Services carried out the evaluation between February and June 2010. Charities Evaluation Services (CES) is an independent charity which has provided evaluation support to voluntary and community organisations and their funders for 20 years. The evaluation methodology included:

- Initial interviews with Hanover Foundations' chief executive and coaches
- Analysis of pre- and post-programme self-assessment forms
- Observation of the second workshops at Barking College and Uxbridge College
- Telephone interviews with all 23 participants following their final assessment
- Telephone interview with one participant that had left the programme
- Short questionnaire to student mentees (20 responses)
- Short post-course questionnaire to participants two months after course completion (14 responses)
- Analysis of student mentor diaries
- Analysis of knowledge-based assessment test scores
- Development of case study material by each of the coaches
- Telephone or face-to-face interviews with the Barking and Uxbridge College staff
- Telephone or face-to-face interviews with all four coaches
- Questionnaire to course tutors (responses received from Barking College only).

The approach was to collect and report on data from a number of different sources in order to build good evidence of outcomes and to assess the value of the Hanover approaches. The report uses direct quotations from the range of participants, gathered at different points in the programme, to provide a direct illustration of its perceived benefits.

1.13 Chapter 2 reports participants' satisfaction with the programme. Chapter 3 assesses the participants' learning and personal development outcomes and Chapter 4 analyses the importance of the component parts of the programme and the quality of the delivery in achieving those outcomes. Chapter 5 explores some learning from the pilots and implementation of the programme. Chapter 6 draws some conclusions about its effectiveness and relevance to educational attainment, readiness for work, and the functional skills agenda.

2 Participant satisfaction

'Thank you for a great course. It was just fantastic and keep up the good work. I really enjoyed it and got loads out of it.'

(Participant)

This chapter considers the participants' expressed responses to the organisation of the Hanover Level 2 Mentoring programme, and how they rated its different elements.

Expectations

- 2.1 Asked in interview whether the course met their expectations, most participants felt that it had, and were positive about what the course had achieved. Some had been surprised about the depth of their training:

'I thought we would just start with the mentoring straightaway, but obviously you needed to do the training first of all with the supervisor. But I am glad that we didn't do it the other way.' (U15)

- 2.2 The students provided positive feedback overall on the organisation of the course – the only difficulties raised relating to arranging mentoring sessions, retaining the mentees and timetable pressures. One Uxbridge student felt that reliance on the college to organise the mentoring sessions had not worked, and that she had made progress with mentoring only in the fourth week when she was able to make contact and arrangements herself. Another Uxbridge College student found the course well organised despite problems with finding a mentee. She had enjoyed the co-mentoring that was put in place but felt that she and her co-mentor had both lost out as neither had substantial problems to work with.

- 2.3 One Uxbridge student reflected timetable difficulties and concerns about his absence in class to attend sessions. He had understood on enrolment that the programme would take place outside study hours. Another reported similarly, his experience being that the college had not briefed tutors to accept absences to attend sessions.

Difficulties with mentee retention and other logistical issues are discussed further in Chapter 5.

- 2.4 Despite these difficulties, all students in both colleges were high in their praise for the good contact that was maintained by the coaches and their flexibility in rearranging times if necessary.

'We knew where we needed to be at a given time. They texted us to let us know if anything was changed.' (B10)

'Everything fell in place with me, so in terms of organisation it was perfect for me.' (U4)

'The course was well organised. I couldn't fault it to be honest.' (B6)

- 2.5 There were some suggestions. Some said that they would be happy to have followed the programme outside of study hours. One felt that an early test or mock exam might have ensured that everyone read the course workbook before starting mentoring sessions; this could have helped the theoretical side to inform and support the practical side.

The programme

- 2.6 In interviews, all participants found all the elements of the course helpful, although some had experienced difficulties with retaining mentees. In one or two cases participants had found it difficult to make good progress with their mentee, which they had found disappointing. In their self-assessment forms, all 23 students said that they would recommend the programme to others.

'I enjoyed every minute of the programme. The one-to-one sessions were extremely helpful for my own needs outside mentoring and workshops were very informative.' (B6)

- 2.7 Participant rating of the different elements of the programme is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Participant rating of elements of the programme

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No answer
How would you rate the programme overall?	18	5	0	0	0
How would you rate the workshops?	10	10	2	0	1
How would you rate the coaching support?	22	1	0	0	1
How would you rate your debriefing and supervision?	20	3	0	0	0

There was no significant difference in rating between students from the two colleges.

Coaching and supervision

- 2.8 The post-course self-assessments illustrated participants' particular enthusiasm for the coaching and supervision elements, because of the one-to-one support, the opportunity for reflection and reassurance, and the ability to focus on particular issues and skills that needed improving. This was echoed in participant interviews:

'You could talk to him like you were talking to your mate so I found it really comfortable. The questions he asked me just made you think and he listened. The coaching was the best thing about the course.' (B13)

'After every session when I left I felt really good about myself. And that made me want to work more and work harder.' (B14)

Workshops

2.9 The workshop sessions were also valued for their 'practical and clear information', the provision of tips and helpful techniques and the opportunity to liaise with other mentors. One 'really understood everything after the second workshop when it all fell into place'. Some participants ranked the workshops as the most useful part of the programme and they elicited some enthusiastic responses:

'The workshops were brilliant and especially the one before the exam which was really helpful.' (U13)

'Excellent. Just made it all better and clearer.' (B8)

While overall the response was positive (10 rating the workshops excellent, 10 as good), two rated the workshops as 'fair' and there was one non-response. A slightly greater diversity of view was expressed both in the self-assessments and in the interviews. Some found the first workshop most helpful, for example:

'I found the introductory workshop most useful as this gave me an insight as to how this programme could be so effective.' (B14)

On the other hand, another participant felt that the first workshop was too theoretical at a point when they could not relate it to a practical understanding of mentoring practice. Others found the second workshop more helpful, bringing their learning together and providing immediate revision before the exam. For example:

'The second workshop as it was much more relevant after doing the first few mentoring sessions.' (U6)

A small number found either the first or the second workshop overloaded or overlong. One explained:

'Because I am on a more practical course I don't usually sit and listen all day. It was like being back in school. That was just a personal view and it doesn't mean that the workshops were bad, but they just dragged on.' (B6)

Mentoring

2.10 One participant found the mentoring itself most useful, 'because it helped me to learn a lot about myself and also I have learnt how to challenge others without being directive and judging their views'.

The importance of the coaching and mentoring elements are discussed further in Chapter 4.

3 Learning and personal skills outcomes

'The training it gave me was very, very good. It was high quality training and gave me knowledge that I didn't have before. I wanted to be a teacher and it gave me skills I need to become a qualified mentor after I leave college.'

(Participant)

Chapter 3 uses the varied sources of evidence (post-course self-assessments, evaluation interviews, mentoring diaries and coach, mentee and tutor feedback) to assess the outcomes for students.

Achieving the qualification

- 3.1 All participants who stayed with the programme achieved the Level 2 Award in Mentoring for Young Learners.

The knowledge elements of the assessment divided into three parts:

1. The effective mentor's role, responsibilities, characteristics and behaviours
2. The importance of agreeing outcomes and recognising and overcoming barriers
3. The importance of effective listening and questioning skills.

- 3.2 When students had been asked at the start of the course about their greatest challenge, answers most often related to successful completion of their college course, achieving excellent grades or their future application to university. However, although coaches picked up on the 'sense of achievement in having done the programme' and 'the opportunity to try something outside their experience and being successful at that', only four participants had mentioned the benefit of getting the qualification, or a better qualification as such, as what they most wanted to achieve from the programme.

Despite this, the students' efforts to complete the different elements of the programme and to pass the test suggest that the qualification in itself was important to them. However, their focus at both the beginning and the end of the programme was to a greater extent on the benefits of the *process* they were engaging in, and the real life changes it brought.

- 3.3 Nine of the students cited the achievement of the mentoring itself (as distinct from the qualification), or helping and encouraging others, as what they would most like to achieve or do differently:

'How to become an inspiration for others.'

'Being a person that anyone can come to if they need help or advice.'

'To see someone succeed and feel good about themselves.'

Asked to rate their ability to mentor other people at the beginning and end of the programme on a scale of 1 to 5, the mean score increased by 26.7 per cent.

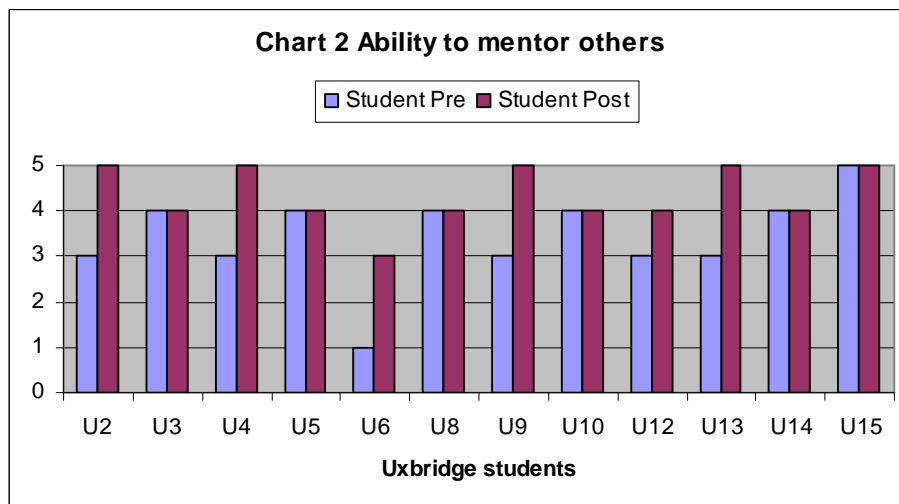
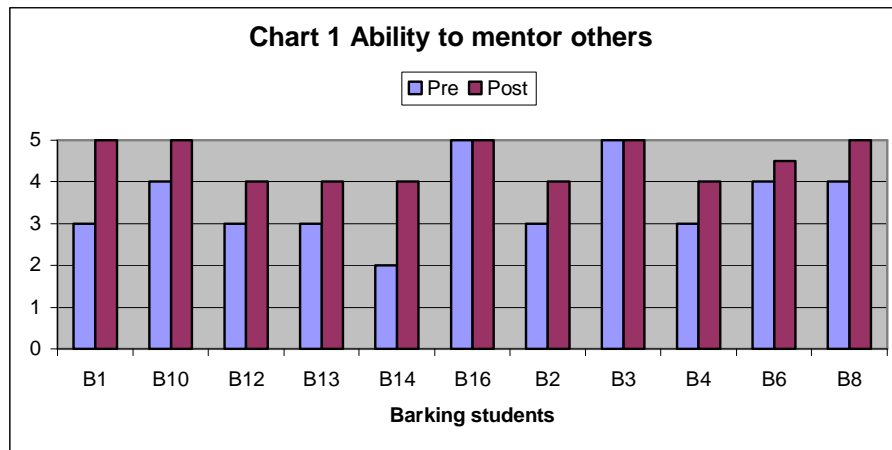
Ability to mentor other people

Before	After
3.48	4.41

This average masks the difference in starting points between students; the seven students who rated themselves as a 4 or 5 at the beginning of the programme showed little or no change. On the other hand, the seven students who rated themselves as a 3 or below at the start of the programme showed an average shift of two points, or 63 per cent.

It should be noted that some students may either under-rate or over-rate themselves initially, and after exposure to the programme readjust their assessment of their skills. Indeed there is a small number of instances where an individual rating shows a decrease. This may in itself reflect a greater self-awareness or understanding of what comprises, for example, good communication. This will affect the extent to which such a scale will measure their real level of skill development.

Individual scores are shown in the charts below for each college.



Personal development

- 3.4 A common theme recorded by students as a challenge at the start of the programme was balancing home and college or work life, for example, 'working full time and coming to college in the evenings and trying to give enough time to both'. Others cited more personal issues, such as 'getting more confidence', 'understanding myself' or 'keeping organised and completing tasks.'

It was the development of personal skills related to those challenges that participants most wanted to achieve from the programme. More confidence was the most dominant theme, but better time management and personal organisation also featured, while others wanted to understand themselves better, to have more self-belief, or simply to be more effective.

Outcomes

- 3.5 Improving communication did not feature in students' descriptions of what they wanted to achieve at the beginning of the programme. This contrasted strongly with the value that students placed at the end of the programme on the core intended learning outcomes related to questioning and listening skills – reflecting a new and greater understanding of the importance of inter-personal communication and the benefits of their new skills.

- 3.6 This chapter focuses not only on evidence of the development of communication skills and conversational ability, but on evidence of improvement in other personal and inter-personal skills – indicated by participants at the beginning of the programme as areas of concern.

The evaluation therefore assesses student outcomes from the programme in the following areas:

- communication skills
- organisational and planning habits
- self-confidence
- self-awareness
- self-esteem and self-belief
- ability to act as professionals
- ability to develop future plans.

Communication skills

- 3.7 In post-programme self-assessments, all 23 students said that they had learned new skills. All included communication among the skills gained, with eight specifically describing more effective questioning and nine mentioning effective listening. Also reported as skills gained were:
- using eye contact
 - being non-directive

- using the GROW model⁸ to structure conversation.

3.8 Reinforcing this, when asked about their greatest gains, improved communication was most often mentioned, with 12 students raising this in one form or another, including:

- being more aware of people’s needs
- not imposing their own answers
- being able to understand other people more.

Several reported the benefits of ‘effective listening’, one talking about the ‘power of silence’, and another said: ‘I feel I have gained many skills but the greatest skill would be effective listening.’

Reporting what they had learned about themselves, some focused again on what they had learnt about communication:

‘I can listen to people without interrupting.’

‘You can have empathy for someone without having to join in with their problems.’

‘I now listen more and work at not being directive.’

Asking questions

3.9 Comparison of the students’ self-assessment scoring of their ability to ask questions (on a 1 to 5 scale) showed an improvement of 27 per cent in the average score.

Asking questions which encourage others to talk

Before	After
3.48	4.43

This was a skills area where the most common initial rating was a 4, with only one student rating themselves at 5. Eight students gave themselves a rating of 5 at the end of the programme. Eleven scored initially at 3 or below, and those students showed most improvement, with an average 43 per cent change. Scores are illustrated in the charts below.

⁸ The **GROW Model**

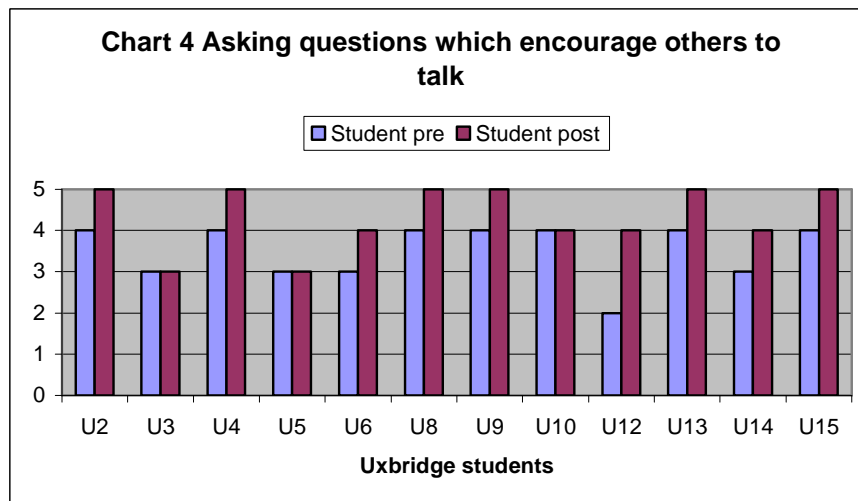
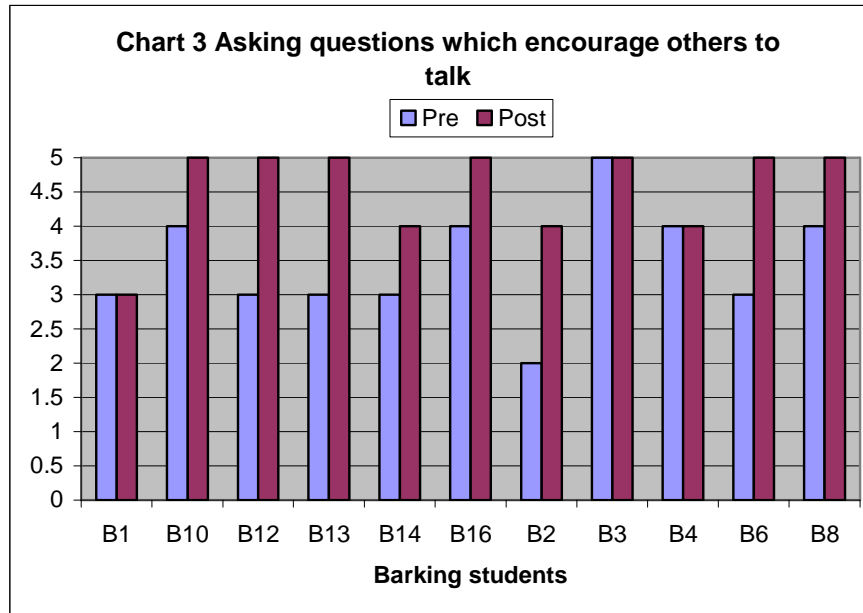
Topic: What the mentee wants to think through for this session

Goal: What the mentee wants to achieve in this session

Reality: Honestly checking to explore what is really going on

Options: What the mentee could do to improve matters

Wrap: What is to be done, When, by Whom, and the Will to do it.



3.10 Mentoring diaries tracking progress showed that, by the third session, most students found their use of open questions improving. Some were also more aware of their body language and use of eye contact. One participant recorded that, by session three:

'I was really listening to what she was saying, and asking questions to get the mentee talking, not interrupting or saying what I would do or think she should do – repeating back what she was saying and summarising to show I am listening and understand.' (U12)

'I am now using my listening, understanding and questioning skills with everyone. The way I speak to certain people has changed for the better.' (B14)

In the later sessions more of the mentees reported that they were using the GROW model and SMART⁹ target setting and were becoming more creative about how they used the sessions.

- 3.11 The evaluation interviews also reflected the development of these skills as the mentors progressed. Participants brought out as issues that they had learnt:
- the difference between being directive and non-directive
 - not interrupting when people were talking
 - using open questions
 - being careful with using the question why
 - how to get their mentees to come to the right answer on their own.

One participant said that he realised after the first four sessions that questions were just coming naturally: 'I didn't even need to think about what to ask if I listened carefully. The question would just follow on'. Another said:

I didn't realise how effective open questions could be rather than just using closed questions. They open up the conversation a lot more. (U 4)

Listening

- 3.12 Listening skills was a theme most often raised by participants during interviews, suggesting a considerable impact. This impact is not, however, demonstrated by the change in self-assessed rating scores.

Effective and careful listening¹⁰

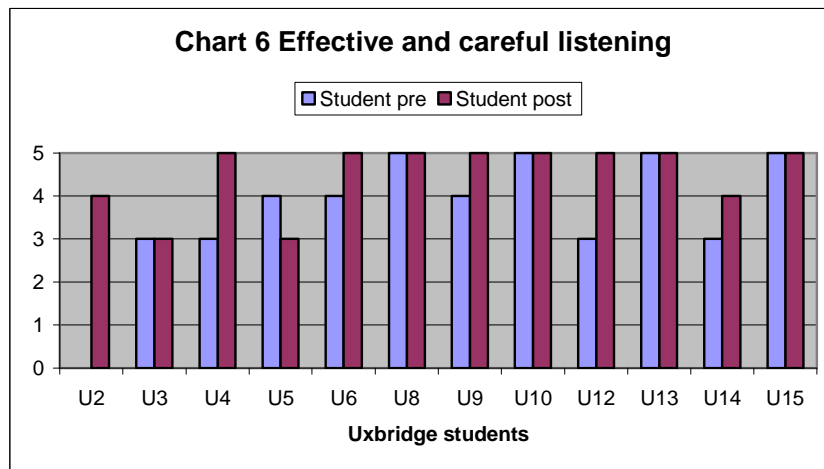
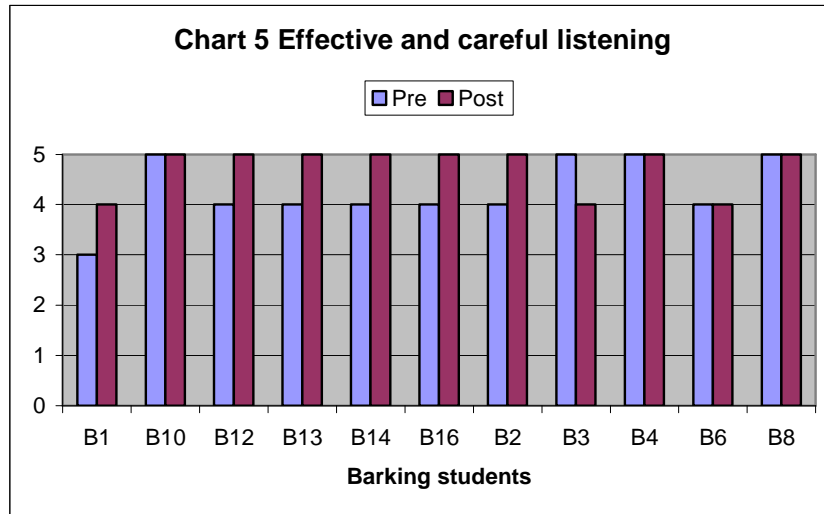
Before	After
4.14	4.63

The modest increase was influenced by the relatively high initial scores, with eight students marking themselves at a five at the beginning of the programme. Together with 'determination to succeed' this area had the highest final average score, with 16 students rating themselves at a five with their final score.

Individual scores are shown in Chart 5 and Chart 6 on page 14.

⁹ SMART = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic.

¹⁰ Scores were complete for 22 students only on this measure.



3.13 One interview participant who had previous experience of being a mentor found that the particular advantage of the Hanover course was the emphasis on listening skills.

*‘Before when I was talking to anyone I wasn’t really listening – listening but not **listening** listening like now – only partially. Before, I was thinking about something. Now I am slowing down, and taking five seconds thinking before answering.’ (U6)*

Another participant explained the challenges to usual communication norms entailed in mentoring.

‘There were so many things that I needed to put in place as a mentor. I didn’t know how hard listening is and trying not to interrupt them when there is something at the back of your mind that you think you know that would help them. I helped them instead to work out their own solutions and that is really hard.’ (B16)

'When with a friend, when they ask advice I listen and ask the right questions instead of jumping in and giving my own opinions. I listen now to my friend. Before I was listening, but it wasn't effective listening.'
(U15)

Some students identified communication issues as learning points in their mentoring diaries, recording how they were internalising these new skills, one saying that he was using communication techniques more effectively 'in every area of my life', and another that: 'I already use many skills that I have learnt in conversations with my friends and family members.' There were a number of similar points:

'I have learnt that I can be comfortable with silence in the right situations because I can see it gives the other person space and time to think.'
(U13)

'I am now using my listening, understanding and questioning skills with everyone. The way I speak to certain people has changed for the better.'
(B14)

- 3.14 In a mentoring diary entry towards the end of their six sessions, one participant noted the need for clarity in communication: 'I have learnt how easy it is to unintentionally make a mentee feel uncomfortable by asking unclear questions'. Questioning and listening skills again featured when students were asked in their mentoring diaries how they anticipated using the knowledge and skills gained:

'I will use them both at work and in personal life to really listen to what people are saying and letting them talk without interrupting.' (U12)

This was echoed in interviews. One Barking College student found that that she could apply the GROW model to social situations to broaden the topic of conversation. Several said that they were able to use their new questioning skills in class, one saying that 'a lot of people have noticed the difference with me in lectures' and another reported using challenging questions in class to prompt improved explanations of a topic, and another: 'If I don't understand things I know what kind of questions to ask'.

'I find myself noticing things that people say or knowing how to interpret things more clearly.' (B6)

'A lot of friendships break up because you are not really listening. So now when someone talks to me I just sit there and listen.' (U5)

Organisation, planning and time management

3.15 Not all students identified time management as a personal issue in their pre-course self-assessments or during interviews. However, all of the one-third of the participants who had identified managing college, home, and work commitments as their greatest challenge when starting the course reported meeting this challenge. Some had been initially concerned about taking on the programme as an additional commitment, but had found that instead it had helped them to:

- prioritise and structure their activities
- learn through their coaching sessions how to plan and work to a timetable
- give both college and home life their own time.

3.16 Self-assessment scores around setting goals and planning time showed least difference before and after the programme, influenced by the relatively large numbers placing themselves at a 4 or a 5 at the start (17 for setting goals and 18 for managing time). As with other skills areas, those starting with a score of 2 or 3 showed most change. Students showed an increased understanding of effective goal setting and planning, and this may have influenced them to score more realistically at the end; in some cases they lowered their scores.

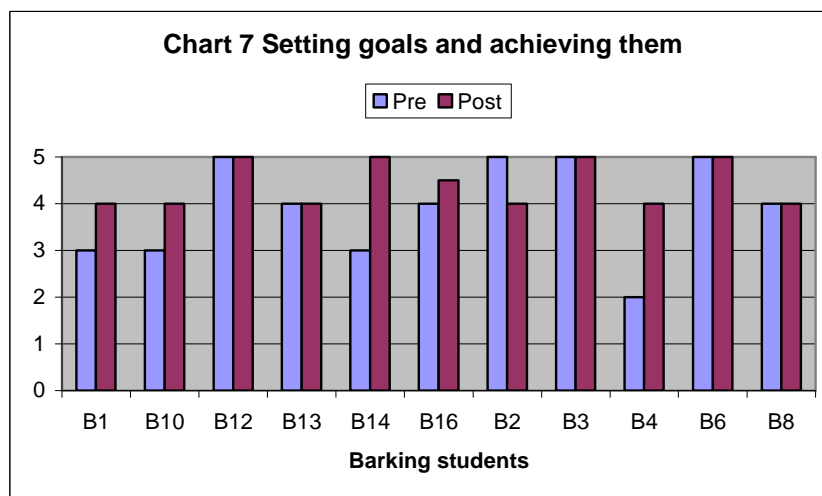
Setting goals and achieving them

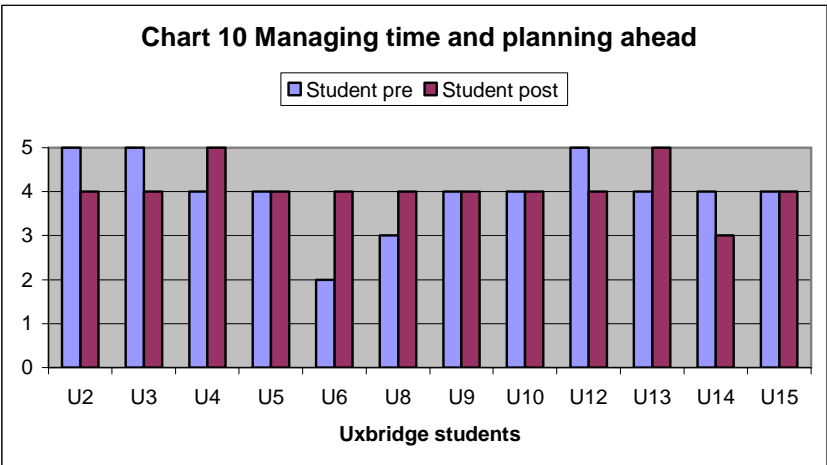
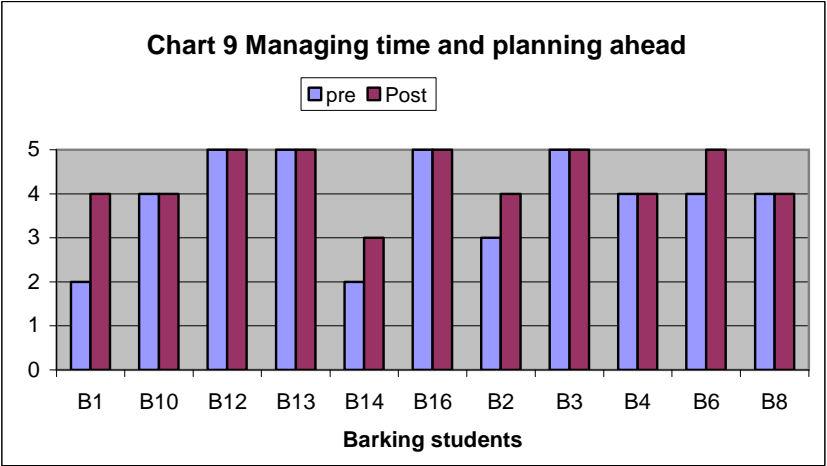
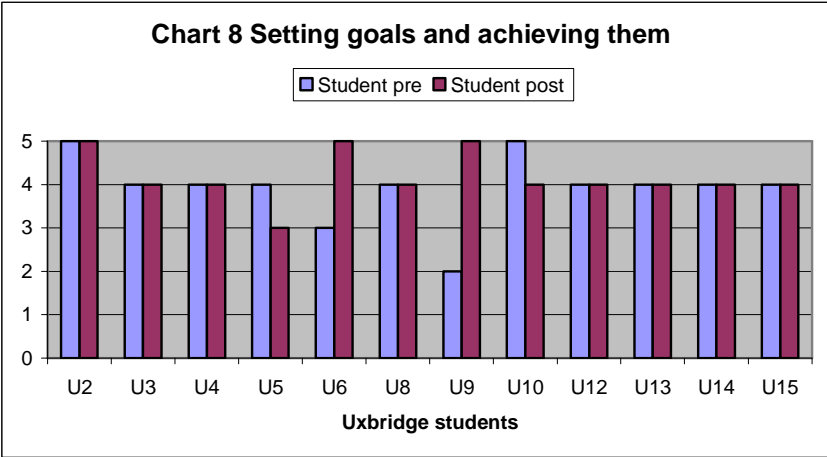
Before	After
3.91	4.28

Managing time and planning ahead

Before	After
3.96	4.22

Individual change for setting goals and managing time are shown in the two sets of charts below.





- 3.17 In interviews, several discussed now setting targets for their course work and getting assignments in on time:

'Before I was concentrating on home rather than college. Now I focus more on college. I know that home will always be there and I know this is my last year. It feels good. I am more relaxed. I can do more things in terms of my college work.' (U11)

'Within the coaching sessions I was taught different techniques to help and it just got better and better. I was making lists of things I had to do and putting it in the right order and that got on top of it.' (B10)

- 3.18 Participants also grappled with the need to be organised and to plan to make their mentoring sessions work and were able to apply lessons learned more generally. Several commented that the mentoring process helped them in thinking about their own goals as the mentees were also setting goals and targets.

'Because I had to do this for someone else it helped and now I think ahead more. I'm a photography student and if I have to do a project now I plan everyday before, rather than running around an hour before.' (B10)

- 3.19 Coaching sessions were key in developing those skills, as mentors were working with mentees to set goals and targets and reviewing progress in their sessions. In interviews, participants illustrated how their new skills were likely to bring a more sustainable effect. Several reported beginning to include improved time management into their normal day-to-day routine: 'I put it into practice everywhere really. If I know I have to do something I will organise myself well before.'

'The skills learnt we use in everyday life. I am now doing action plans for myself and I find myself questioning things more.' (B6)

'I make a timetable for myself when at home. I do my work for the course and assignments at college, so as not to take it home and go into my personal time. I either spend an extra hour in college on a Wednesday or Thursday or just use my time more appropriately.' (B16)

'I never used to write down targets but it reinforces what you want to achieve and I've carried on doing it. It pushes you to achieve things more.' (U12)

Case example: Managing time

A was a Fashion Design student and found it difficult to cope with coursework in the early part of the mentoring programme. Through the coaching, she found strategies to help her manage her workload; her coach said that she became 'adept at planning in advance and chunking down larger projects'. Participant A continued to gain from the programme, attending every session, dealing competently with a challenging mentee and gaining in self-belief.

Participant B was becoming stressed and overwhelmed by other students asking her for help. Through coaching, she was able to identify ways of dealing with people's demands in a way that she felt comfortable with, and with how to encourage other students to work things out for themselves more. Her coach reported that B had gained in confidence through the programme:

'She is now able to set boundaries and ask for her own needs to be met more easily. B has gone on to mentor well, using her ability to empathise and see different perspectives to good effect.'

Self-confidence

3.20 The development of a new confidence was implicit in many of the indications participants gave relating to improvements in communication and organisational skills. In the post-course self-assessments, five participants specifically mentioned an increase in self-confidence as a result of doing the programme.

'Self-confidence has improved and I now find it easier to talk to people.'

'I won't hesitate when I want to express an opinion.'

'I will be able to rely on my own knowledge instead of worrying about asking other people.'

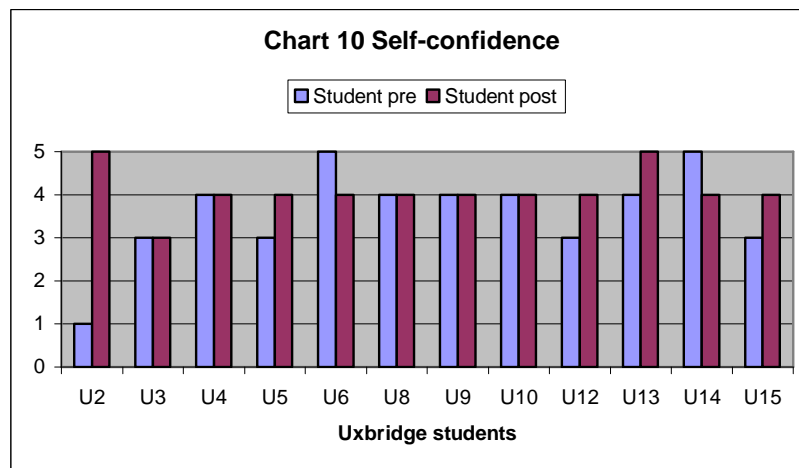
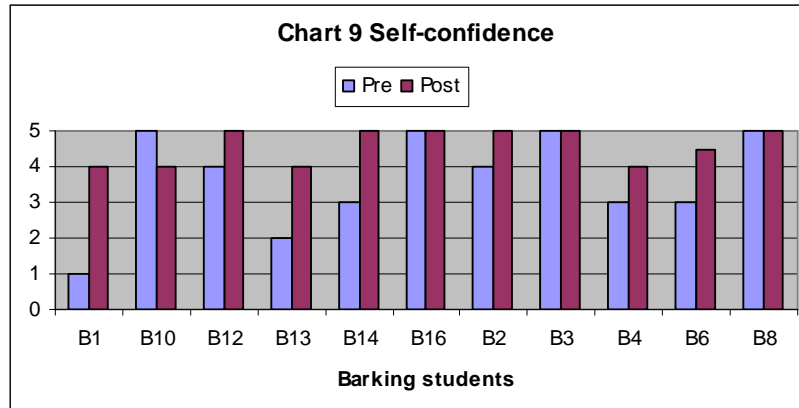
One said that their improved communication skills would give her confidence in upcoming university interviews.

Self-assessment rating of their levels of confidence showed an overall improvement of 20 per cent.

Self-confidence

Before	After
3.61	4.33

The three students that had rated themselves most low in self-confidence (with a rating of 1 or 2) at the start of the programme reported most progress through their rating, showing an average increase in scores of 75 per cent. Self-assessment scores for participants' self-confidence in the two colleges are shown in the charts below.



Case example: developing personal skills through Hanover coaching

Coaches described how participants' confidence was built in initial and subsequent one-to-one sessions through exploring personal barriers, as well as their interests and future options. One coach described the value of the one-to-one sessions to one student:

'Coaching broke down the issues: time management, goal setting and self-esteem and worked on what he could and couldn't control and how to influence some things that were just out of his control. Sessions were also used to explore his potential and the transferable skills set he had acquired. ...Knowing that not all choices are the best, we explored the silver lining and ways of reinterpreting his negative thinking into more realistic and achievable outcomes. C had worked on his self-belief and now has a purpose that has significantly changed his attitude and approach to his academic and personal life.'

- 3.21 Students reflected their new confidence as they completed their mentoring diaries.

'I am motivating; I am a role model to my mentee.'

'I can make a difference. I have the skills to help other people.'

- 3.22 Nearly all the participants in interview reported that their confidence had increased as a result of the course. For some confidence had never been an issue whereas, by contrast, two of the students reflected that they still needed to work on it more.

Several felt that increased confidence had helped with communication in class. One said she was now speaking and contributing more in class; her increased confidence made her feel 'that I can speak and have my own point of view. When I first started college I wasn't doing this.'

Another explained:

'Because I come from another country I always felt that my English was not good and didn't feel confident to speak to other people but since the course I have started speaking up in class. You have to have confidence in order to mentor other people.' (B13)

Some students explained how their increased confidence was positively affecting their personal lives.

'I am more open, talkative and less anti-social in some ways, and I am more social and talk a lot more now than I did because I feel more confident in myself.' (B2)

'The course gave me that confidence. Instead of keeping to people that I know, I was able to make new friends and talk to them and I am continuing to do that.' (U15)

Case example: Developing confidence

D was a music student who started the programme with some personal issues, including self-confidence, which were discussed in the initial coaching sessions. His successful mentoring sessions helped build his self-confidence, and the coaching sessions were able to work with some of his personal issues which were distracting him. His first attempt at the final test was badly affected by home issues, but he worked with the help of further supervision to use his developing communication skills to deal with family issues, and passed his test when he took it a second time.

E was doing her first year HND Certificate in Business Management and also worked in a finance department. E described herself as so shy when she started that it was affecting her at work, college and in social situations. After

three months, her coach described her as a 'different person' who had 'grown so much that she was standing up for herself in lessons'. She had thrived in the mentoring sessions and the coaching had broken down her fears about social gatherings. In interview, E said she found that developing her goals and targets in coaching sessions had helped her. Her confidence had increased '100 per cent', and she was able to speak with her friends more.

'I have just been on holiday and would not normally be talking to people. While we were out there I was talking to different people in the hotel. . . I would usually be too scared to talk.'

For some, an increase in self-confidence was beginning to change their personal perspectives on the future:

'The whole course was a big boost to my confidence in the sense that knowing I can achieve what I want to achieve.' (B14)

'I've not had the confidence before to be creative but now doing the course I have the confidence to challenge myself to be creative.' ((U5)

One Barking participant felt that her improved confidence had helped her gain her university offer. 'It gave me more confidence for the interview. I was more open and I had answers straightaway for the questions'.

Self-awareness

3.23 In the post-course self-assessments, 22 participants reported learning something new about themselves. Four of them reflected an increased self-awareness, or an understanding that they could be effective mentors, or support or guide others:

'I am more intelligent than I thought.'

'I criticize myself too much.'

3.24 Participants recorded in their diaries what they were learning about themselves as they began their mentoring sessions. This included:

- enjoying helping someone else
- the need to become more organised themselves
- how to keep their own expectations realistic
- the need to have clarity about what they wanted to say in advance
- how to bring different resources to bear.

The diaries suggest evidence of the beginning of this growing self-awareness by some students and, for some, a new respect for themselves:

'I noticed I do pre-judge people.' (B10)

'I've learnt so much about myself in such a short space of time and most of them were bad points which I do in my personal life – one of them is interrupting others while speaking.' (U5)

'I have more knowledge than I thought and I am good at turning difficult situations into positive outcomes.' (B1)

As they started to work with their mentees, mentors were aware of a reflection of their own issues and problems, recording in their diaries, for example:

'Talking about his time-keeping made me think about mine.' (B14)

'I am getting closer to knowing a lot about myself through the other student's feelings and problems. Also how they deal with their problems.' (U6)

- 3.25 In the evaluation interviews, participants talked about how mentoring held up a mirror to their own issues:

'Mentoring has helped because you see other people struggling and you realise that, in comparison to the issues that they have, you see that yours is just a question of laziness and you can overcome that.' (B13)

'Working with the mentees helped me to see how they were finding difficulties with university entrance and made me see things about my situation.' (B12)

The mentoring process helped some realise they needed to focus more on sorting themselves out.

'You start to mentor yourself. You analyse yourself a lot more.' (U14)

'I thought that no-one could really understand themselves completely, but it cleared a lot of ideas of who I am.' (U6)

Self-esteem and self-belief

- 3.26 One theme that emerged in interviews with participants was how the mentoring experience – seeing themselves as a role model – had built self-belief. The trust and confidence that mentees displayed, and the feeling that they were making a difference, were new to many mentees: 'He was telling me stuff. It was a nice experience.'

Case example: increasing self-esteem

Participant F, an Uxbridge College student, had six sessions with a mentee who is a permanent resident in a care home. After a successful beginning to the mentoring, with F helping the mentee set overall goals for the programme, his commitment lessened, and he was absent unwell for short period. However, after an absence, the mentee regained enthusiasm and contact, and started working on his goals. F explained in interview that she had not expected her mentee 'to share with me in the way that he did'. This was particularly satisfying as she had persisted with the mentee:

'It made me feel quite good because half-way through I thought it would not work and thought I was making all the effort. But it all fell into place and he started making an effort... He said to me that loads of people have tried with him and it has not helped. But I came along and I've tried and tried and not given up and I'm the only one who has got somewhere.'

The mentors also realised that because they shared problems with their mentees they could help them. One Barking student explained the journey she had been on with her mentee.

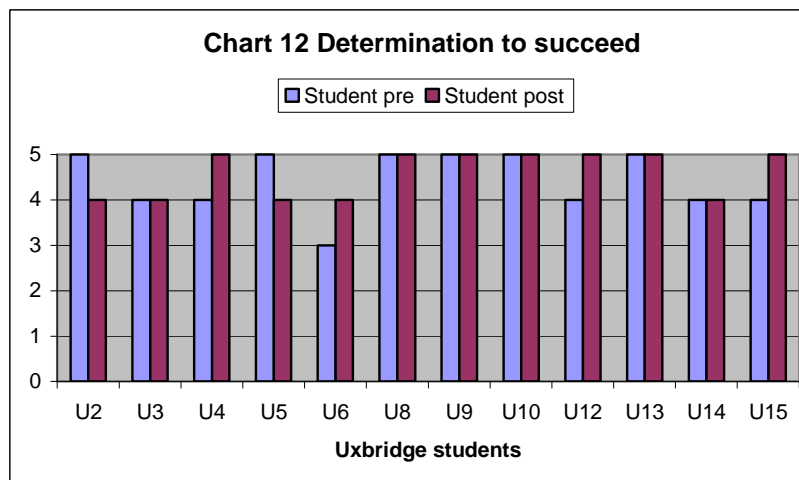
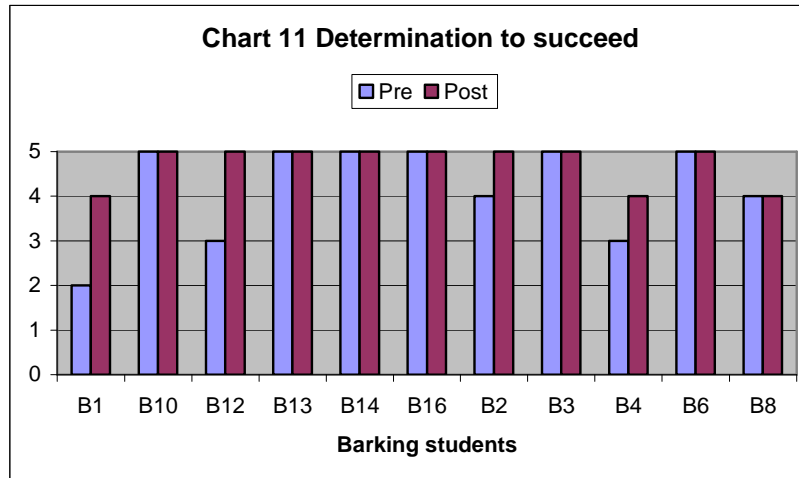
'I never saw my mentee for months because they were on work experience so I had to see a different mentee. However, it was quite good at the end because I saw him for two two-hour sessions. The most difficult thing was setting targets. He wasn't used to doing it ...in the end he started doing everything. I still see him and ask how things are going.'
(B12)

- 3.27 Nineteen of the students had rated their 'determination to succeed' at 4 or 5 in the five-point scale, and this high starting point limited the increase. However, the four students that rated themselves at 3 or below at the start of the programme showed an increase of 1.5 points, that is, a 54.5 per cent change.

Determination to succeed

Before	After
4.30	4.65

Individual scores against determination to succeed are shown in Charts 11 and 12 on the next page.



Ability to act professionally

3.28 Asked to record their learning points in their diaries as they moved into their final sessions, participants noted that they now:

- had greater patience
- were more able to work together with other people
- remained more objective and were able to get 'a positive outcome from a negative situation'
- were able to empower others to succeed
- understood how to use effective questioning and could challenge where necessary
- were able to get people to come up with their own solutions.

One catering and hospitality student who was managing kitchen staff found she could better step in and manage problems and conflicts in the team:

'By using open questions and really listening to them I found that it helps a lot and they feel that you are giving them your time. Everyone is more

motivated to solve things. Before I would have just let them get on with it or send them to head chef. Now I can step in and do more.' (U4)

One interviewee commented on the achievement of meeting the programme's time schedules. Some found that the timing of sessions clashed with classes and they had to get agreement and make arrangements. Some who were working required real commitment to maintain their attendance on the course; one was working during the day and did her mentoring sessions during her lunch break.

Most of the Barking College tutors who provided feedback commented on students' increased communication skills and confidence. However, one tutor commented on other 'work ready' skills, feeling that the main gains for one student were:

'The experience of managing people and especially the challenges of dealing with challenged learners. This includes making appointments, encouraging learners to keep appointments, and motivating learners to complete work in a serious and responsible fashion.'

Case example: taking a risk

Participant G was doing a BTEC in Media Studies and, in her first session, she expressed concern about a documentary-style assignment. The coaching explored her underlying feelings and the documentary was satisfactorily completed. She was able to acknowledge the need to face her fear, take a calculated risk and work on believing in her own abilities.

Faced with a first unreliable mentee, G was able to find herself a new one, put in the extra time needed with the new mentee to make up for missed sessions, demonstrating a growing self-confidence and sense of responsibility for her own achievements.

- 3.29 In common with other personal skills areas, most participants had marked themselves highly at the beginning on decision making/problem solving and on working with and motivating others. These areas showed little average change (8 per cent and 13.3 per cent respectively). However, for the six who had marked themselves as a 3 at the beginning, there was a 39 per cent improvement.

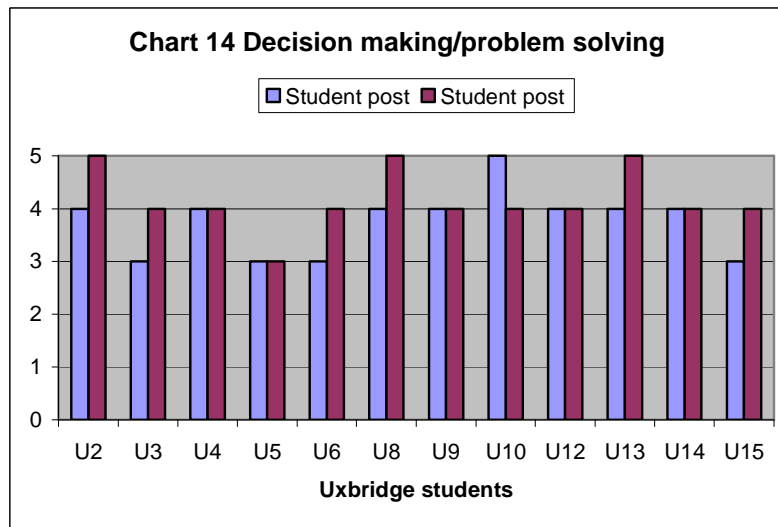
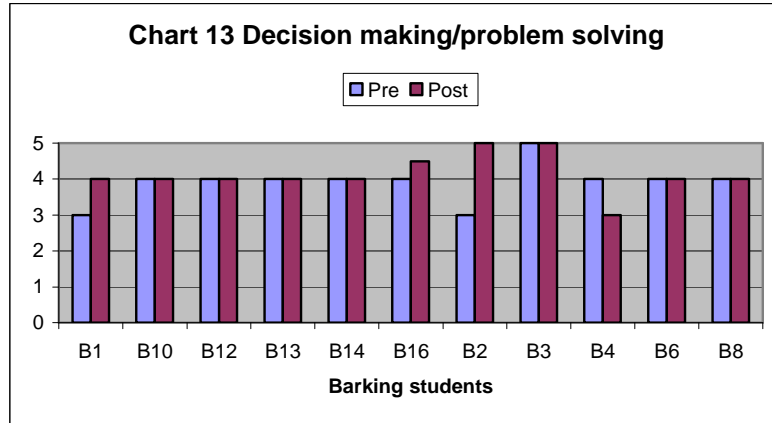
Decision making/problem solving

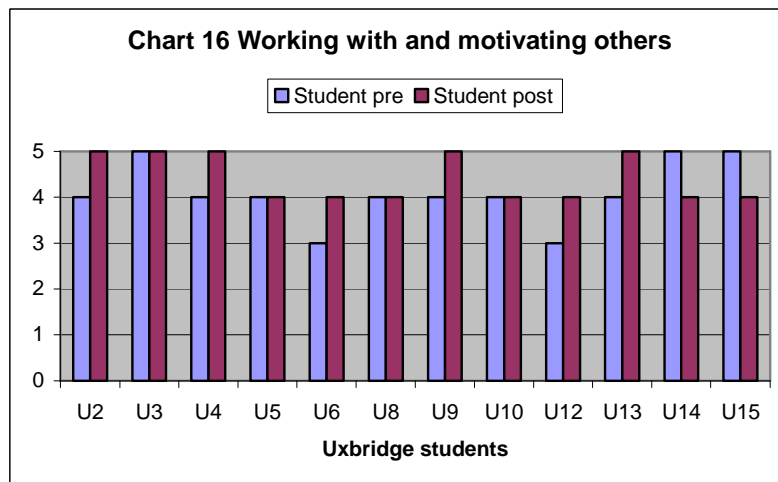
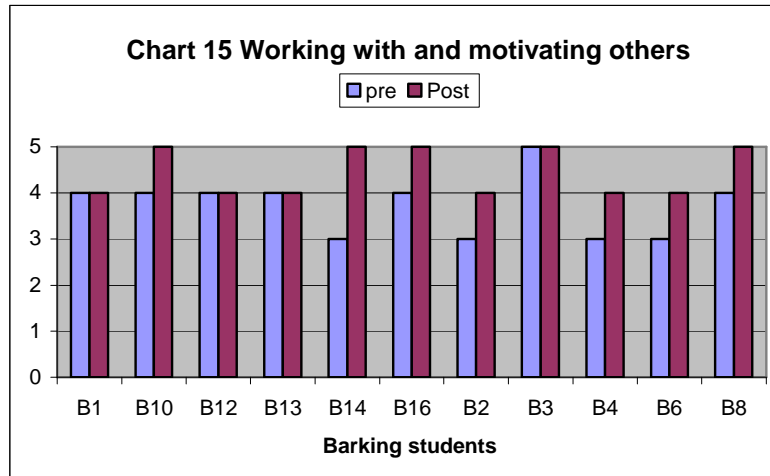
Before	After
3.83	4.15

Working with and motivating others

Before	After
3.91	4.43

Individual scores are shown below.





Ability to develop future plans

3.30 In their post-course self-assessments, 20 of the students said that they had seen new choices for themselves. Six focused on personal skills, one writing: ‘I could work for a team and/or have confidence to manage people’, with one seeing a possible career in mentoring, and another said she ‘would like to volunteer now to help people and charities’.

Asked what further challenges or goals they would like to work towards, most focused on getting good grades, getting into university or a future job. Decisions about future options had featured in participants’ initial assessment of personal challenges. Several reported in interviews that they had discussed and explored university courses and job opportunities with their coaches.

3.31 Some participants also reported that they had worked in coaching sessions on the barriers that prevented them reaching their goals. One student described the feelings of pressure about the possibility of not gaining university admission, but explained that the course had given him the tools to analyse that pressure,

to look at possible options and to develop structured plans. Participants explained how the coaching sessions helped with different methods, for example, 'working backwards':

'By having goals and then thinking about the steps that could have got you there you are able to understand what you need to do to get to your goal.' (B16)

Case example: clarifying goals

H raised in coaching sessions his loss of motivation for his business and finance course. Discussions with his coach revealed the potential to combine his current course with his real passion – for Korean music. After research, he found university courses combining business and Korean studies.

Moving away from London to study threatened a clash with his family, and coaching was used to find a solution – a similar course in London. H was then able to focus on getting high grades, and asked whether Hanover would be able to continue to work with him in his final year.

'[My coach] told me that when I spoke to my father there were different scenarios. There was win-lose, lose-lose or win-win and I needed to find an argument which would be win-win and I managed to do that.'

Overall personal development

3.32 One coach said that the mentoring experience 'really moved them on as individuals'. Students' self-assessments also pointed to this, one reporting that the new knowledge and skills would 'make me work harder and get to the top'.

Three participants said that they would use their skills to improve their mentoring, while others could see that the skills would have more general relevance in life situations and three students could see their applicability for future employment:

'I will try to use my knowledge and skills to become more employable.'
(B1)

'The skills and knowledge I have gained will be very useful in my future career as a mentor/teacher.' (B8)

'I work in a kitchen where lots of problems arise, so by having these new life/mentoring skills I can use them effectively to help both my success and my colleagues.' (U4)

Case example: increasing motivation

Participant J showed an excellent approach to mentoring, bringing to it an understanding born from his own personal difficulties. He was able to use his coaching sessions to look at his own difficulties around motivation, goal setting and self-esteem, and to explore his potential and the transferable skills he was gaining. J worked on his self-belief, deciding to stay with his college course. His coach felt that he had developed a 'purpose that has significantly changed his attitude and approach to his academic and personal life.' In interview J described a lesson from his coaching:

'One thing he did keep on telling me. I said that I just wanted to go for passes [in exams]. And he said no, you should go for the best that you can get.'

- 3.33 In interviews participants described taking their new communication skills into their relations with friends and classmates, for example:

'If someone was to ask me to help – a friend or classmate, I would ask them something different rather than just going and helping them. For example, I would ask them what they have done already rather than me just going in and doing it for them.' (B10)

'My friend had a problem and I realised I couldn't interfere. I had to find other means to help her find her own solutions without using my way of solving it.' (B16)

Some reported that they had been able to use their communication skills in their personal life more readily than in the classroom. One explained how communication skills permeated her life more generally:

'Because you develop practical skills you are just naturally different, you just apply them and it makes you different.' (U14)

Case example: developing potential

K is a mature student interested in studying to become a psychotherapist. After some initial preoccupation with family problems and hesitation about the programme, he threw himself into it with enthusiasm. Coaching and mentoring allowed K some time for reflection, and gave him personal and functional skills, and a developed sense of personal awareness. His coach reflected:

'My feeling is that he was ripe for change. The Level 2 came just at the right time to help him pull all these strands together and to boost his confidence to make it all work. It has given him the chance to see himself in action and to like what he sees.'

Medium-term outcomes

- 3.34 Although their full academic progress would not be clear until later in the year, students described achievements since completing the programme in a questionnaire completed two months after the Level 2 final assessment.¹¹ One reported 'passing my course and doing all of my coursework before the deadline, which I had an issue with before.' Other achievements included:
- passing college exams
 - achieving assignments with distinctions
 - being on time and not missing class
 - being more confident in answering questions and making presentations.

Ten of the 14 students responding felt that the mentoring programme helped them 'a lot' in these achievements, and four said that it helped 'a bit.'

Five of the respondents held jobs while they were doing the programme and another reported starting a job since completing it. Five of them felt that the programme had helped them 'a lot' with their job and one that it had helped 'a bit'. One student working in a finance department, who had struggled with shyness, explained:

'I am more confident communicating with both staff and other visitors. I am able to express what I am trying to say to different people better. I am also more understanding of people's issues and problems they may have and work with them to sort these out. By being able to communicate confidently with different people I am able to get my job done more quickly. I am also able to delegate work to others.'(U 12)

Another, who had English as a second language, was working as a sales assistant:

'The whole mentoring experience has improved my communication and listening skills, also my confidence has increased dramatically. For example, I don't feel embarrassed talking in front of other people or making mistakes when I am talking, as this just shows where else I can improve.' (B 13)

¹¹ Fourteen of the 23 students responded to this questionnaire.

4 The added value of the Hanover programme

'The programme was much more than I had expected – it was much more in depth and not as simple as I thought. I really enjoyed it.'

(Participant)

This chapter assesses the value of the component elements of the programme and the importance of the quality of delivery in achieving positive outcomes.

The initial coaching sessions

'The coaching sessions were most useful as they provided me with reassurance and support.' (B4)

- 4.1 In their post-course self-assessments, 22 students found the coaching element of the course 'excellent' (and one 'good'), and this enthusiasm was also reflected in interviews. The coaching element in the Hanover programme was set up by an introductory workshop and three initial one-to-one coaching sessions, supplementary to the core Level 2 Award coaching and supervision.

All coaches in their interviews stressed the critical importance of these early sessions – with coaching an essential tool to develop personal responsibility. This was an opportunity for the students to look at their own performance, their career goals, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and to discuss personal issues around learning and family; they also aimed to:

- stretch students in terms of their aspirations and motivation
- challenge their limiting beliefs
- address any obstacle that would get in the way of the course.

Addressing personal problems was vital to the participant's progress, one coach saying that 'there is a very important bridge between what is going on in their head and how they connect with school and education'. This was the stage to work through personal characteristics that might impinge on their ability to mentor, such as shyness, or a tendency to be directive. If necessary, issues that had been raised in the early coaching sessions were followed up later in the programme.

Each session was tailored to the individual student; for some students it meant looking at how they could build the mentoring skills into their existing roles and experience. For others it was coming to a clearer understanding about themselves. It was also an important stage for coaches to set up the relationship with the students.

'It felt like setting a foundation – getting them in a ready state.'

'I used a lot of the time to start to get a conversation to a point where they fully understood what the programme was about and understood themselves more.'

(Hanover coaches)

These initial sessions were also an opportunity to introduce exercises, such as the 'wheel of life', 'mind mapping' and 'looking into the future', which the students themselves were able to use in their own mentoring sessions, learning from observation and practice: 'It was almost like a training ground. They learn from us.'

In interviews several of the students reported how useful these exercises were as they gained sufficient confidence to introduce them into their mentoring sessions. More than this, the coaching sessions provided a model for the mentors to take into their mentoring sessions.

The coaching and supervision relationship

'The aim is for the students to take out a sense of direction, more confidence and a belief in themselves and a sense of their future, whether in mentoring or otherwise.'

(Hanover coach)

- 4.2 Following the first workshop, and while participants were establishing their own mentoring relationships, programme participants received six 45 minutes sessions of reflection, supervision and coaching, covering these different elements flexibly to meet individual needs and circumstances, and indeed sometimes merging them.

Hanover regards the coaching and supervision relationship as a crucial part of the programme – where most learning occurs, and where the understanding of the dynamic of the relationship deepens. Participant feedback reinforced this: coaching was what they valued most.

The different elements of these sessions performed different functions:

- *Reflection*: allowing a review of the mentoring sessions and the mentoring diary, and reflection on the techniques mentors had used or could use.
- *Supervision*: allowing a focus on the substance of the sessions, and providing support and guidance on difficult or uncomfortable situations, and providing encouragement to persist with unresponsive mentees.
- *Coaching*: this was client-led and continued the work of the initial three sessions, looking at personal and college issues which were impacting on students' progress with the programme, and worked on issues such as time management, coping with imminent deadlines – helping them with strategies for coping.

One coach described how the sessions would aim to stretch the student's goals and motivate them when it became difficult: 'I would have so much belief in them that they can do what they set out to do that it will rub off on them.'

Hanover coaches stress that working effectively within the limits of the 45 minutes allocated to these sessions was only possible with a high level of skills and experience, and indeed the coaches reported providing more time if it were needed. Part of the skill required was balancing a greater and lesser use of directive coaching, challenging where necessary to move students on to a

different level and judging where to place the focus for each individual at different points in the programme.

- 4.3 Discussion of the mentoring diaries helped to structure the reflective element of the coaching sessions – building learning in a staged way as they developed their skills and confidence over the six mentoring sessions – and was important in building self-awareness. Many students kept notes and did not fill in diaries until they came into their supervision sessions, some finding the exercise difficult, particularly the Uxbridge ESOL students. Indeed, for many of the young people a self-reflective diary was a new experience, requiring honesty about their progress and what they were still finding difficult. Mentors reflected back in their supervision an increased self-awareness. One of the coaches said of one of the mentors, who had a tendency to dominate a conversation: ‘I saw him really working at listening to his mentee.’

In interviews, participants emphasised how much they valued the relationships with their coach, enjoying the flexibility and lack of too much formality.

‘[My coach] worked in a friendly way and in a funny way and talked about what I was planning and gave me ideas about how I could work with the mentees.’ (B12)

One of the coaches described the essence of the coaching and supervision sessions as, in a limited time, providing ‘empathy with a dose of listening and a touch of advice’, giving students time out and helping them to ‘walk out with a way forward’.

- 4.4 Participants described how trust built up in the relationship, and valued the personal support:

‘It was really good. She picked me up on my characteristics when describing sessions with mentees...what I was like and the way I treat people. She just told me, not in a harsh way. “I have noticed that you do this or I’ve noticed that you do that...” (B10)

‘[The coach] not only focused on the work that I was doing as a mentor but also focused on me as a person, which motivated me more. I felt somebody was there for me.’ (B16)

It was in the coaching sessions that much of the self-awareness was developed. In one of the second workshops, one of the participants explained: ‘I have personally discovered things about myself and how I am. I was prejudging my mentee. I have learnt that about myself.’

Participants found that they could bring into their own mentoring sessions the non-directive methods used in their coaching.

‘I could copy the way that he was asking questions and he made me talk a lot.’ (B12)

'As I was getting to grips with what I was doing, she was with me. As I was doing the mentoring she was almost mentoring me...I learnt from her – she was modelling the way do it.' (U14)

Participants emphasised the confidence they had in the coaches which enabled them to experiment with techniques that they were unfamiliar with:

'[The coach] did a confidence circle and initially I thought it was a bit weird but it did actually help. I drew a confidence circle and had to plot where and when I had had confident and happy times in the past.' (B1)

'She [coach] helped me to help myself a lot. She used additional material such as the Rules in Life - what you could do with mentees if they didn't want to talk about anything else.' (U13)

Case example: using the coaching sessions

L worked very well in a mentoring relationship with a student with learning difficulties. She used her coaching to explore whether teaching was the right career choice. Becoming clearer about that, she decided that she wanted to continue mentoring, which would help support her financially in college as she went through university, and later in teaching job applications. The Level 2 mentoring programme helped her to become more aware of her strengths and areas for development and, her coach reported, to 'realise that people learn better when they are helped to become self-sufficient and confident.'

The mentoring relationship

The role of a mentor is to enable the mentee to work out what to do to be more successful and to support him or her in taking action to achieve the agreed goals. (Level 2 Award in Mentoring workbook)

4.5 As with the coaching, the mentoring relationship was of crucial importance in developing key communication and other inter-personal skills. The Hanover programme adopts a client-led coaching model – emphasising the partnership between the mentee and mentor, rather than a directive process more commonly used in mentoring. In the workshops participants learnt about the importance of:

- respect and interest in the mentee
- commitment to helping others to learn and develop
- belief in the mentee's potential
- being non-judgemental
- being persistent.¹²

The range of issues that mentors worked with in their sessions is illustrated in Appendix 3.

¹² Level 2 Award in Mentoring for Young Learners Workbook, p. 12.

The programme stressed the importance of gaining commitment by the mentee to taking action by giving them the chance to take responsibility for it:

*The key to the success of the mentoring conversations is that the responsibility for deciding and taking action on the outcome remains with the mentee throughout.*¹³

- 4.6 Coaches said that the mentoring practice promoted:
- development of mentoring skills in a real situation
 - learning about how to control the conversation
 - a more developed understanding of how to listen
 - learning about how to question rather than to tell
 - development of self-awareness
 - learning about other people and their perspectives
 - learning about how to get on with different people.

Mentors also needed to develop confidence and learn how to empathise rather than to sympathise. These changes were all critical in developing a successful mentoring relationship.

‘You could talk about these things but they needed to learn by doing. They often moved from a situation of feeling they could not do it to wonderment: “I can do this”.’ (Hanover coach)

In their diaries, participants recorded the difficulties they had in the early sessions. They were nervous and insufficiently prepared. There were also:

- too directive
 - not sufficiently relaxed to allow the mentee time
 - talking too much
 - interrupting the mentee
 - not sufficiently well paced
 - trying too hard for solutions
 - insufficiently skilled to probe.
- 4.7 In their early coaching sessions, the mentors identified and reflected back the techniques they needed to improve. For most of the participants, one of the hardest things was to learn how to listen and the review of the mentoring diaries underlined this. Mentors found that their impulse was to comment and get involved, and they had difficulty in differentiating between their roles, particularly when co-mentoring. One wanted to ‘talk less, explain and get to the point’. Others had similar improvement goals:

‘Listen to what the mentee is really saying...getting used to silence whilst they are thinking – not to give advice unless I ask first and if the mentee is struggling.’ (U15)

¹³ Level 2 Award in Mentoring for Young Learners Workbook, p. 19.

'Listening, allowing the mentee to finish talking instead of jumping in through mid sentence. I have to understand the art of listening.' (U5)

- 4.8 The review of the mentoring diaries showed that confidence began to build after the first few sessions, as some of the mentees were opening up and trust developed. One mentee increasingly found confidence as the mentee was 'realising he has to start taking responsibility for his own learning.'

As their confidence grew, many of the mentors started preparing in advance, and began to use techniques they had learnt in their coaching sessions. By the fourth session, many of the diaries were focusing more on what they had achieved. Diaries spoke of:

- trust, open communication and developing the mentor/mentee relationship
- sessions developing more of a sense of purpose
- differentiating their respective roles as mentor and mentee
- devising plans and helping to get over barriers
- developing respect for their mentee and resisting being judgemental.

'The silence worked very well. It allowed [the mentee] to deepen his thoughts about what his problems were.' (U13)

'The mentee believes he can achieve more because he has more confidence. He feels now that he can meet any targets me or somebody else may set for him.' (B2)

'[The mentee] is figuring things out for himself without asking me for suggestions, therefore I feel this is a great progression.' (U4)

As the mentors moved through their sessions they began to focus on using more challenging questions and consciously tried to structure their mentoring conversations using the GROW model. This offered a way to work sequentially through what the mentee wanted to think through and achieve in the session, checking the reality of what was happening, what the mentee could do to improve, and finally establishing who would do what, and when and how.

- 4.9 The evaluation looked for more evidence of the distance travelled by mentors by issuing a questionnaire to mentees. Of the 20 that returned the questionnaire, 15 found the sessions 'very helpful', and four found them 'quite helpful.' One of the co-mentors had not found the sessions as helpful as she had hoped because of the difficulty of developing a professional relationship with another participant.

All of the mentees had seen improvements during the sessions in their mentor's communication skills, as shown in the table on the next page:

Table 2: Responses to the question: Did your mentor’s skills improve during your sessions? (n=20)

	Listening	Asking questions	Reflecting things back	Speaking positively
Yes, a lot	15	13	14	18
Yes, a bit	5	7	6	2
No, not really	0	0	0	0

Twelve of the 20 mentees responding found that their mentor’s confidence had improved very much during the sessions, while eight found that it had improved ‘a bit’.

- 4.10 The achievement of the mentors as evaluated by their mentees – in just six sessions – is striking. One of the mentees had found being able to talk confidentially helpful, and three reported understanding themselves or their work better. One valued just the ‘time to think’. Seven wrote of setting goals and targets, planning better and becoming more organised, and others of becoming more serious and more focused on their college work.

‘Mentoring has improved my organisational skills. Also mentoring has helped me to meet deadlines and become more confident.’

Three talked of having more confidence and faith in their own ability.

‘It has given me more confidence within myself. Before I was always too scared to answer questions in a lecture, worried what other classmates may say. Now I have confidence.’

Mentees were able to point to things that the mentor had done or said that had been helpful. For example, the mentor had:

- encouraged and listened
- helped set goals
- showed enthusiasm and interest
- asked questions that made the mentee think
- done practical things such as giving examples
- provided honest feedback.
- been supportive and encouraging.

‘[The mentor] helped me realise that I won’t pass if I don’t do the work.’

‘My mentor is very reflective and understanding. She listens very well and asks questions to provide feedback.’

‘He is a great role model and has helped me a lot.’

‘I think [the mentor] was more helpful than some of my tutors.’

Some said that the mentor had helped them in relation to their personal life:

'He said to me that "I should believe in myself", and those words are not a lot but have helped me.'

'I found these 6 mentoring sessions very useful and would like to thank and congratulate my mentor for his improvements.'

'She has been very helpful and patient with me during mentoring as I can be a challenge. She is always understanding and never patronising. She's a good mentor!'

Six of the mentees said they would consider being a mentee in the future and would like to take the programme if it were available.

Going forward

- 4.11 When participants were asked in interviews what they were taking away with them from the mentoring experience, they talked about feeling better about themselves, feeling more patient and tolerant towards people, being better motivated and better able to problem solve. The new understanding about communication was important to them, particularly around listening skills:

'Before I say something I think about whether there is any better way of saying something...I focus on a lot of different skills, such as maintaining eye contact and I think about your body language.' (U6)

'I realise how important it is to listen. A lot of times I would have talked when [my friend] stopped, but I found I could just sit and look at her and not saying anything and she would say more. But by not saying anything it gave them the opportunity to speak.' (U12)

Two participants who were mentoring in Barking College spoke specifically of finding a way of accommodating the two approaches – the college approach being more directive, and focusing more on achieving targets related to completing course work and assignments. It was felt that while the two approaches were different, they could adapt each approach depending on the level of their mentee and what was needed.

5 Learning from the pilot programme

'It was a great programme, and just needs some fine tuning.'
(Participant)

The Hanover Level 2 Award in Mentoring pilot programme was highly valued by both Barking College and Uxbridge College participants, and the evidence suggests excellent immediate and medium-term outcomes. This chapter assesses some of the learning related to the implementation of the programme.

Participants

- 5.1 The programme was targeted at 16 to 19 year olds, and 17 of the 23 students completing the course fell in the age bracket 17 to 19 at registration, three were aged 20 and three were in the age range 22 to 38. There were eight male and 15 female participants.

Participants reflected the ethnic diversity of the two colleges.¹⁴ Students were taken in both colleges from across the curriculum areas and from all year groups. In Barking College five students were business studies students and the remaining were following a range of studies, including fashion and design, sports, IT and photography. In Uxbridge College there was only one business studies student, one doing a first diploma in Public Services, and the rest more widely spread across a range of study areas, from music technology, catering and hospitality, through psychology, media studies and travel and tourism. Two Uxbridge participants were ESOL students.¹⁵

- 5.2 The programme undoubtedly stretched some of the students who were working in their second or third language in Uxbridge College, but Hanover coaches provided flexible input to make sure that lack of English language skills did not provide a barrier to enhancing the communication skills that underlay the programme. Some of the students were drawn from more technical subjects with a different experience of classroom learning; indeed the successful completion of the programme by students drawn from a range of curriculum areas suggests the application of the programme to a wider curriculum.

Coaches managed the range of competencies by timetabling in more support where it was needed, if necessary having sessions of 60 or 90 minutes. There were differences in the depth to which students were able to reflect on their practice, but articulacy or lack of it was not felt by coaches to be a barrier: 'As long as they knew what their role was it did not matter if their language was not at a higher level.'

¹⁴ Age and ethnic profile details are attached as Table 3 and Table 4 in Appendix 1.

¹⁵ See Table 5 and Table 6 in Appendix 2.

Case example: working with challenging concepts

M was in her second year of a Level 1 accounting course. She was born in Yemen, but lived in Somalia until 2007; English was her third language, and her use of written English was both a challenge in undertaking the programme and a focus of her efforts to improve.

M lost her first mentor and had to wait a period of time before establishing a replacement mentoring relationship. During that time she was keen to build on her learning and be better prepared for the later sessions. She frequently asked for additional sessions with her coach (often of 45 to 60 minutes), regularly coming into college on her day off, and using the time build up a better understanding of mentoring concepts, translating them into her own language and back again. She learnt, she said, 'the true meaning of building empathy between people'. In interview, M said:

'What really helped was that he listened to me. I can't get anyone to listen to me in my house. So it was perfect for me.'

Participant retention

5.3 Five participants dropped out from Barking College and four from Uxbridge College. In both colleges this related to a timetable clash and pressure of college work rather than student competency or compatibility with the programme. In Barking College, for example, two Health and Social Care students were unable to fit in attendance around placements during the week, one student found competing deadlines too difficult, while one student dropped out of college altogether. Barking College students contended with an additional workload in their mentoring; they wrote records of sessions with mentees for the college focusing on the student's progress, and at the same time completed mentoring diaries for the Hanover level 2 award programme with a focus on the process of the session itself and the learning from it.

The evaluator interviewed one Uxbridge student who had left the programme; he confirmed that he had left it because of the pressure from his course work alone. He had found both the first workshop and the two coaching sessions he had attended helpful, but had not realised how intensive the programme would be.

Given the conflicting pressures on students, both the agency staff and Hanover were impressed with the high levels of motivation and commitment by the students who stayed with the programme, some of them managing work commitments as well as course work, and arranging their sessions in lunch times or at the end of the day. Barking students came into college during their half term to attend the second workshop.

- 5.4 In the further education context, with complex timetabling and poor attendance rates, the drop-out rate from the programme was not significant. However, there are a number of options for consideration in developing the programme:
- tightening the mentor selection process or criteria, particularly relating to timetabling issues and curriculum
 - more targeted selection in relation to curriculum area
 - an early meeting by Hanover coaches with potential mentors to stress the commitment required, but also the benefits
 - starting the programme with a slightly higher number of students to allow for a drop-out element.

Restricting selection to a single curriculum area may be a more sensible option in a context where there is no existing mentoring programme. The Director of Student Services at Uxbridge College favoured targeting business studies students; in the previous partnership experience with Hanover the college had found that working in one curriculum area had given more 'sense of common enterprise' and easier coordination, with 100 per cent retention. On the other hand, the programme is clearly useful and applicable to all curriculum areas and, where college support structures are in place, the opportunity to extend the programme to a wider group is less problematic.

Working with mentees

- 5.5 Ideally, the student mentors should have built a relationship with the mentees over the six spaced sessions. In Barking College, working within an already established programme, a small percentage of mentoring relationships broke down (largely because of the pressure of course work on mentees) and some participants had multiple mentees. In Uxbridge College, in the absence of an existing mentoring programme, the difficulty was greater. As well as contending with a rapidly expanding student population – 71 per cent minority ethnic – complex timetables and poor attendance, mentoring was not a familiar approach and for many was an alien concept. Additionally, in contrast to Barking College, the main focus of the college was on the mentors' learning benefits and qualification, rather than on successful work with mentees.

In interviews, participants described the challenge of losing mentees and starting new relationships, and a very small number expressed some disappointment with the difficulties experienced in arranging mentoring sessions. One student explained: 'If there were a few weeks between each one, it was difficult to take up what they had been discussing previously.'

However, both the Hanover coaches and the students met a challenging situation flexibly, and mentors found it easier when they were able to make their own arrangements. Co-mentoring relationships were developed where necessary, coaches using supervision sessions differently where mentoring had not taken place, and students scheduled mentoring sessions to catch up.

- 5.6 Co-mentoring may be a more viable option for a college context without a mentoring set up. However, one student at least in the pilot did feel that co-mentoring had been a second-best option: 'As we got to know each other he

tried less. His techniques improved but he made less effort to structure the conversation.'

The challenge of working with mentees drawn from the wider student population, bringing with them a range of problems, did provide much of the learning through mentoring practice. Hanover might consider:

- greater involvement in choosing mentees, or developing tighter criteria for mentees
- developing some element of the programme specifically for the mentees, to raise commitment and help them be aware of the benefits of continuing with their mentoring
- developing a bank of students from which replacement mentees could more easily be drawn.

Managing the programme

5.7 The quality of the partnership working with the agency, and the agency commitment to the programme is important. The pre-programme management and attention to the specific needs of the host agency were appreciated by both colleges, including:

- the provision of the Level 3 ILM Walking with Leaders course for two staff members at each college. (This had the intention of providing someone on site who would be able to take forward the programme afterwards and provide some sustainability.)
- the presentation and marketing of the programme to students
- discussion of specific issues
- agreement on timelines for the programme.

5.8 The programme ran to schedule, with some slight readjustment in Uxbridge College, from the end of October 2009 to the end of March 2010 – with completion before college exam time. The programme was bound by the second workshop which included the final test, with some additional time given in each college for students to complete the mentoring sessions and mentoring diaries, and for test resits for three Uxbridge students.

One coach explained that Hanover Foundations had built into the award a flexible dimension which would prioritise success and outcomes and provide additional hours if the student needed additional help. In Barking College, the coaches held a review half way through the course, which led to the provision of an additional half day. The Hanover project manager at Barking College explained: 'At the end it was about making sure that every student felt supported and had extra catch up if it was needed with the deadline.'

One of the coaches working in Uxbridge College, which also provided catch-up time, made a similar point:

'In my cohort I was working with the young people to make sure that they got through the tests and the diary and were in a good position to get the award. But in order to do that I was going outside the parameters of the

hours to ensure that they were successful – particularly with the ESOL students.'

From its extensive experience, Hanover is realistic about the agency support that can be provided, and is flexible enough to step in when needed. Both the Barking College Mentoring Co-ordinator and the Director of Student Services at Uxbridge College were highly appreciative of this flexibility, as well as of the good level of communication maintained between the coaches and the college, and their readiness to find ways of catching up for individual students and to find solutions to timetable problems. In Uxbridge College the Director of Student Services recognised the particular pressures from the college of tight timetables, pressure on room space from an expanded student population and work over two campuses, saying that 'the coaches took on much of the overseeing of the programme.'

- 5.9 Some students had difficulty in getting leave from class to attend the programme. In interview, some students felt that the programme was not sufficiently supported within the college itself to meet logistical difficulties. However, all praised the Hanover coaches for their flexibility and support. One said that, if he was unable to meet his coach at the scheduled time, 'he was always willing to stay behind or arrange it differently.'

'I had bookkeeping exams in the morning with both the workshops. When I enrolled for the mentoring programme I had understood that it would be outside the study day but it wasn't like that. I didn't get to some of my classes so I was missing a lot and had to ask colleagues for notes and asked my teacher for extra work. Other people had the same problem. I discussed this in coaching sessions with my coach who was so helpful ... but [the college] didn't do anything about it.' (U6)

- 5.10 Improved understanding of the programme by college tutors, and shared commitment to it, is a key area to strengthen in the programme. In the pilots the communication with the tutors flowed through the Barking Mentoring Co-ordinator and the Director of Student Services in Uxbridge College. The programme could have been enhanced with better feedback from tutors from observation in the classroom. The evidence of lack of engagement was reinforced by the poor response by tutors to requests for feedback to the evaluation.

While a programme which remained outside the educational core of the college achieved excellent outcomes for the students, the programme would be likely to achieve maximum success if it were tied into a strong tutorial system, where the programme could be reinforced through feedback in weekly tutorials.

The quality of Hanover coaches

- 5.11 Feedback from both the course participants and the two host colleges make it clear that the excellent project management and the quality of the coaching support was a key element in driving the success of the programme. Hanover

has an excellent reputation for the calibre of its coaches. Hanover uses only its own trained and supervised coaching professionals, all of whom have extensive experience as coaches, leadership mentors and performance management, and of working with young people and are contracted to match the needs of specific projects.

The broader Hanover support structure was also integral to the quality of delivery. Hanover coaches receive specific Hanover Foundations training and induction and have access to both individual and group supervision every four to six weeks. Group supervision brings together the combined experience of the coaches, and can offer suggestions of a new way of doing things or a change of style or technique, resourcing and stimulating the coaches.

'It is seldom you walk out of supervision without feeling that you have got something.' (Hanover Level 2 coach)

'This supervision is about modelling and using group wisdom.' (Coach supervisor)

The Hanover team itself provided an additional safety net, with two coaches working at each college talking together regularly during the programme, discussing issues jointly and getting feedback on how the programme was going in the other college.

Sustainability

- 5.12 A specific area for further consideration by Hanover is the sustainability of the learning and development outcomes. The Level 2 mentoring award was designed primarily as a vehicle for the development of essential speaking, questioning and listening skills, which participants could take into their inter-personal development, increasing their employability.

Responses to a questionnaire¹⁶ two months after the final Level 2 assessment indicated that students were using and retaining their new skills, with participants reporting a range of sustained gains. Most important were increased confidence and communications skills – 'really listening to what is being said'. Also important were 'understanding myself better', how to deal with problems, improved presentation skills and 'how to help others to help themselves'. Responses indicated that new skills reported at the end of the course were being used and retained to help both in college and work situations.

At least half of the participants said in interviews that they would like to continue mentoring or to continue with a higher mentoring qualification. Some were not sure what their options were for continuing. One mentioned the possibility of a local summer scheme working with mentees of 12 years and over. One was moving out of London and would look for opportunities in her new locality. The Barking College mentoring programme would allow them to continue within its

¹⁶ Fourteen of the 23 students responded to this questionnaire.

own mentoring programme. In Uxbridge College some students had spoken with coaches and the college about putting in place a supervisory element to permit them to continue mentoring. Eight of the fourteen students responding to the questionnaire two months later retained their enthusiasm for continuing to mentor, a further three saying they would like to at a future point. One student had applied for a part-time mentoring post.

Coaches worked with participants in one-to-one sessions on how to take their learning into their own lives – to become their own performance manager. One participant expressed the feeling, expressed by several participants, that it was the beginning of a journey, and in some ways frustrating as they needed more:

'It was so different from what I expected. In some ways it was really good but in some ways I couldn't really understand it. It was like when you are really thirsty and you want some water and if you finish it quickly you need more water.' (U6)

Continued mentoring could also offer a potential means of sustaining the skills obtained and developing them further. Hanover might consider providing some information about ways to take mentoring further, or include a motivational element within the programme to take it forward.

6 Conclusion

'After doing the mentoring it made me want to help myself more, not just other people in college and work, just to better myself really.'

(Participant)

What does the award offer?

- 6.1 Hanover's pilot programme delivered an accredited qualification in mentoring to 23 young people in two London colleges, at the same time developing key communication and other inter-personal skills, and a sense of their own potential. Participants described their new skills as having an immediate application to their college, work and personal lives.
- 6.2 The evaluation found good evidence, not only that key learning outcomes had been achieved by the participants, but that the Hanover-designed and delivered programme was critical to that achievement. A review of the participant self-assessments, the mentoring diaries, and the participant interviews all pointed to the importance of each of the component parts of the programme; the workshops, the coaching and supervision, the practice mentoring and reflection on practice through mentoring diaries, all helped to build and reinforce the development of skills.
- 6.3 The interviews with programme participants illustrated clearly the importance of the initial coaching sessions (additional to core elements of the award). These lay a foundation for an approach targeted to each individual in each cohort, and on which the important coaching relationship could be built. The mentoring diaries showed the importance of the development of self-awareness and the development of skills through practice and reflection back in supervision over a period of time. The programme increased the guided learning hours from 22 to 25.5, stretching the programme over 20 weeks. This allowed an extended period of induction – coaching – training – coaching – practice – reflection – training – coaching to encourage a solid skills development.

Who does the programme work for?

- 6.4 The pilot delivered learning at a number of levels about who could benefit from the programme and in what circumstances. Barking College had targeted the intervention at highly achieving and motivated students, and this was evidenced in the outstanding knowledge-based results achieved by some Barking students. Uxbridge College had drawn into the programme students who could benefit from additional input to meet their potential, some of these being at a Level 1 standard. Students in both colleges were taken from across curriculum areas, including some from technical and practical disciplines, and a number of students who were working in English as a second, or even a third language.

The programme worked at all these levels – from business studies students aiming at university, to those that were already in the workplace, to those who were struggling or who were challenged by written English. The more

ambitious students were able to use the programme to increase their focus and improve their skills further – and some became more aware of personal traits that might hold them back. However, individual student stories demonstrate the distance travelled by some who started the course either with personal issues, little self-confidence or lack of motivation. The self-assessment rating by the participants also suggested that some of the greatest progress was made by these students.

Achieving outcomes

- 6.5 The prime focus of the programme was developing key communication skills – improved questioning, listening, giving feedback – which would serve to increase their employability and their ability to function successfully in the work environment. Students valued the qualification that the programme gave them, and many were keen to continue with their mentoring.

One coach said that the students moved from complete lack of knowledge of mentoring and the mentoring role ‘to the end where they presented themselves very differently, with confidence, managing challenges. They knew their boundaries more, and were able to structure what they were doing. They presented themselves as mentors.’

Most in evidence was participants’ enthusiasm for a new understanding of the components of effective communication. The evaluation particularly found a new respect for effective listening, hearing another perspective without interjecting, and realising how that perspective could shed light on themselves.

- 6.6 Developed self-awareness, and greater confidence derived from their sense of improved communication as well as from their successful management of the mentee relationship were also important to participants. Some had indicated time management as a real issue at the start. Fitting the programme into complicated timetables in itself required new approaches, and many of the students recorded improvement in their ability to set goals and targets (an essential part of the mentoring sessions), organise and plan ahead.

Participants were enthusiastic about the success of the programme, and this related strongly to what they experienced as personal change, as well as the development of new skills. When participants were asked in interviews what they were taking away with them from the mentoring experience, they talked about feeling better about themselves, feeling more patient and tolerant towards people, being better motivated and better able to problem solve.

- 6.7 Although the sample size was limited by the total number of participants completing the programme, a number of factors give greater weight to the evidence of positive outcomes, and the likelihood of a similar programme with the same quality of delivery achieving similar results. The sample comprised a diverse group, both in profile and competency levels, and there was 100 per cent response rate to the core parts of the evaluation, including the interviews. Evidence gained from a mix of data sources, including knowledge tests, tutor

and mentee feedback, coach case studies, mentoring diaries and self-reports all pointed to positive change in key outcome areas in all students participating.

Managing the programme

- 6.8 Both host colleges were enthusiastic about the programme, and appreciated the high standard of the project management and quality of the coaches. However, there has been some learning in terms of:
- the need to take into account even more the specific context of the host agency
 - the importance of integrating the programme as far as possible within the educational system in order to maximise benefits.
- 6.9 As Barking College was motivated to improve its existing mentoring programme, it was in a better position to provide a receptive structure. While the college had originally looked for improved mentee outcomes through a pool of trained and qualified mentors, they subsequently realised the full benefit for the mentors as well as the mentees. It was a programme that 'ticked all the boxes'.
- 6.10 Many of the logistical problems arose in Uxbridge College, where a previous attempt at introducing mentoring had been unsuccessful, and instability around the mentoring sessions disappointed some students and required a flexible response all round. It is clear that specific attention needs to be made in future programmes to the internal support provided by the host agency.

The experience of working with both colleges also highlighted the importance of delivering more closely in partnership with the tutorial system to make it a more integrated part of the educational offer.

The importance of quality in delivery

- 6.11 Logistical difficulties during the pilot emphasised the importance of Hanover's project management experience and approach. The key element of this was flexibility. This flexibility, matched with the calibre of the Hanover coaches and high commitment to outcomes for the students was central to the success of the programme at its different levels.
- 6.12 Nearly all students were enthusiastic about the workshops in delivering and reinforcing the knowledge element of the programme, and increasing their understanding of mentoring techniques. However, both in their post-course self-assessments and in their interviews, participants were unanimous in the high value they placed on the coaching.

Coaches used the performance management element within the programme to deal with the different skills levels and to minimise difficulties, spending more time with individual mentors as needed. Trust levels were high and there was a strong sense of partnership between the coach and the student mentor. One

coach reflected on the need to bring to that partnership with young people both patience and pace, and an awareness of the fine line that should be maintained between challenging and overwhelming them.

One coach said that the coaching dimension to the programme made it 'a performance management programme that encompasses a mentoring programme as an element within it'.

What is the added value of the Hanover Level 2 Award?

- 6.13 Hanover's pilot programme placed peer mentoring within a college context on a more professional level. More than that, the evidence of short-term outcomes indicates that the Hanover Level 2 Award in Mentoring programme is well-designed to develop key communication skills and is well aligned to the functional skills agenda. The programme does not focus on communication skills in isolation. Rather it delivers a mentoring qualification that has its own value and utility, and which at the same time places communication skills at the heart of personal development, allowing those skills to develop the individual more holistically.

'Brilliant. Carry it on. There should be more things like this to go on while people are studying. The qualifications are really useful particularly for someone like me that wants to become a teacher.' (B3)

'The course was brilliant at making young people confident and helping them to help others.'(B16)

'I thoroughly enjoyed it and it has made me a better person.' (U14)

Appendix 1: Participant profile

Table 3: Age profile of participants (at start of programme)

Age	Barking	Uxbridge
38		1
25		1
22		1
20	2	1
19	3	4
18	3	3
17	3	1

Table 4: Ethnic profile of participants (at start of programme)

Ethnic profile	Barking	Uxbridge
Black British		2
Black British – Caribbean	1	
Black British – African	1	
Asian British Pakistani	1	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	
White British	3	1
White – other	1	1
Mixed – White and Asian	2	
British		4
Somali		3
Sikh		1

Appendix 2: Course affiliation of participants

Table 5: Barking college – course affiliation of participants

Course	Number of students
BTEC National Diploma in Art & Design (Fashion Design)	1
BTEC HND Computing (Top-Up)	1
BTEC National Diploma in Sport (Development, Coaching and Fitness)	1
AQA GCE A2 Level English Literature, AQA GCE A2 Level Psychology, AQA GCE A2 Level Sociology (Humanities Pathway)	1
BTEC National Diploma for IT Practitioners	1
BTEC National Diploma in Photography	1
BTEC National Diploma in Business and Online Technology	5

Table 6 Uxbridge College – course affiliation of students

Course	Number of students
BTEC Nat Dip In Music Technology	1
NVQ 3 Professional Cookery	1
BTEC Nat Dip For IT Practitioners (Software Development)	1
ESOL Writing & Reading	1
OCR Level 1 Book Keeping; ESOL Writing and Reading	1
NVQ 2 In Food And Drink Service; NVQ 2 in Catering and Hospitality	1
NVQ 2 In Food And Drink Service; NVQ 2 in Catering and Hospitality	1
AAT Foundation (NVQ 2 In Accounting)	1
BTEC Nat Dip In Media Yr 1/2	1
BTEC HNC In Business Yr 1/2	1
BTEC First Diploma In Public Services	1
BTEC First Diploma In Travel And Tourism	1

Appendix 3: Focus of mentoring sessions

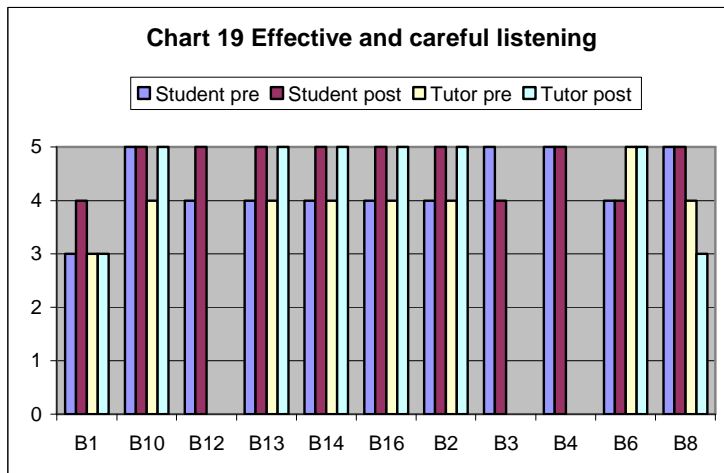
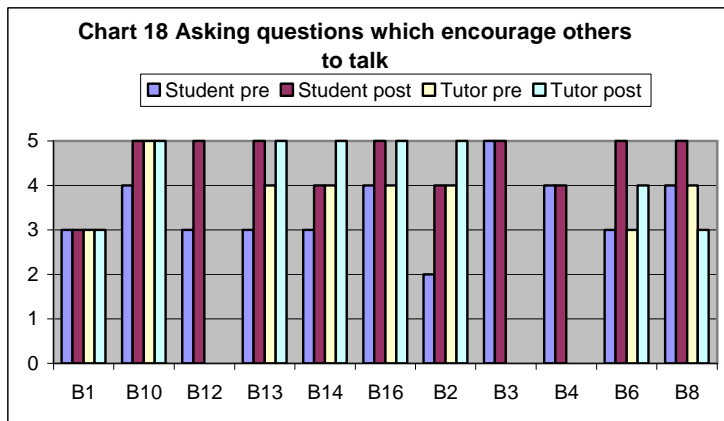
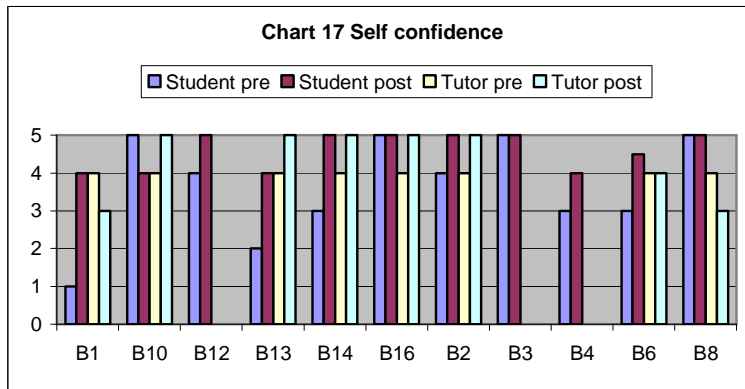
The mentoring diaries showed that the main issues discussed in mentoring sessions were:

- life after university
- specific pieces of college work
- assignments
- relationships with teachers
- distractions from work
- work experience
- focusing on university ambitions and what was needed to get there
- university options.

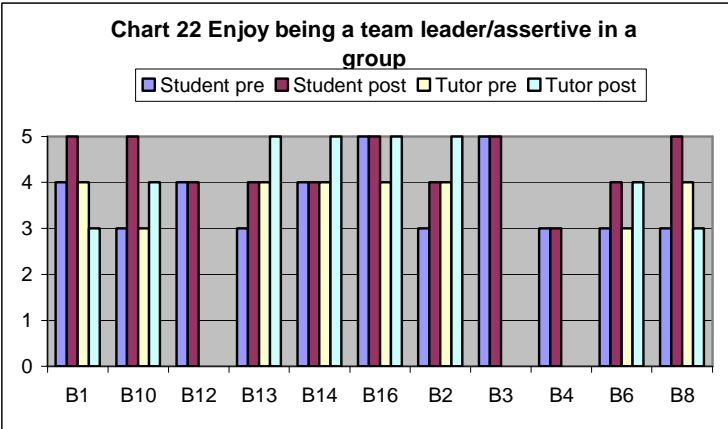
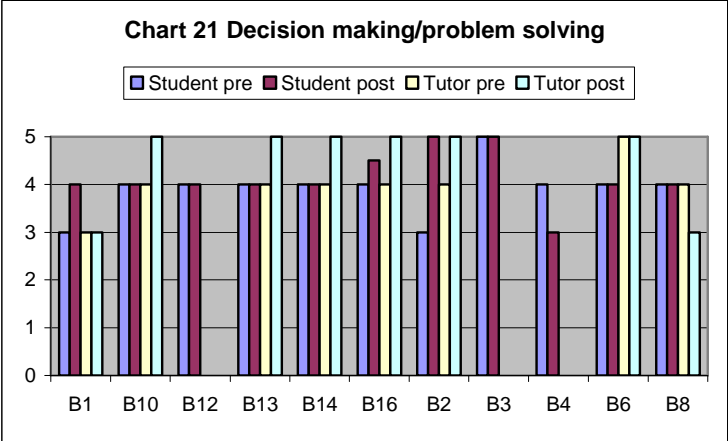
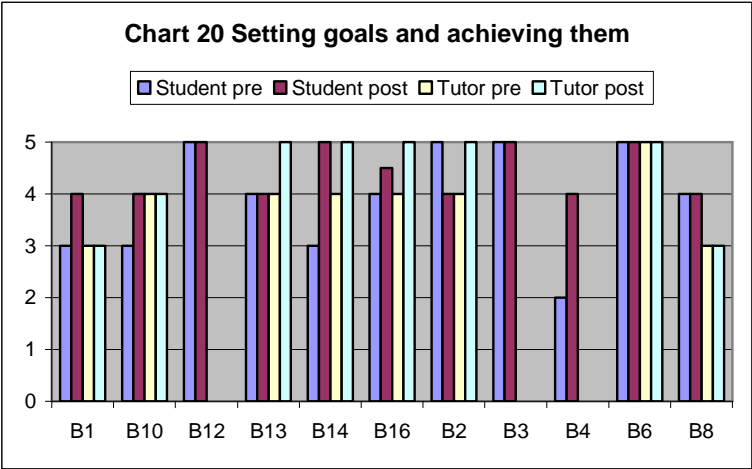
Actions agreed by the mentee concerned:

- Planning and organising college work better
- Taking active steps to move forward on UCAS applications and researching universities
- improving time management and completing college assignments and meeting deadlines
- coping with peer pressure and intimidation and issues of personal identity.
- opening up communication with teachers
- following a timetable to plan revision and other college work
- opening up communication with family
- Concentrating more on college work and working harder.

Appendix 4: Comparison of Barking College student and tutor assessments¹⁷



¹⁷ Tutor assessments were not available for Uxbridge students.



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