



University of  
**Strathclyde**  
Humanities &  
Social Sciences

# Glasgow intergenerational mentoring programme

Strathclyde University

Research Team: Alastair Wilson & Katie Hunter, School of Education.

# Presentation:

- Background to the project
- Why mentoring?
- Key issues emerging

# Background

- Present work is result of a 7 year partnership between a large secondary school and researchers within the School of Education, University of Strathclyde.
- Researchers have worked on a range of projects and when possible helped with school development. Have developed a strong researcher/school collaboration.
- Basis of the work is to better understand the ‘attainment gap’ between socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.
- Major problem for Scottish education and particularly acute in Glasgow.



## Some data:

<b>Higher education</b>	<b>Springburn Academy</b> 21%	<b>Glasgow City</b> 28%	<b>Scotland</b> 36%
<b>Higher education</b>	<b>St Ninian's High School</b> 74%	<b>East Renfrewshire</b> 61%	<b>Scotland</b> 36%

- In 2011 one East Renfrewshire school sent 44 students to Strathclyde University. Six of Glasgow's schools in poorest areas sent 10 between them.
- Major problem for Glasgow.



# Initial research/development project

- Interested in why some young people were successful. Particularly their friendship groups, family situations and school relationships
- Of 150 pupils in a 5<sup>th</sup> year group, 31 were identified by the school as 'having the potential' to enter higher education'
- Each pupil was given a modern smart phone (Google Nexus One – pupils enjoyed!) with added software capable of recording their text message traffic, (numbers sent to and received from, not content), phone calls (numbers called and received) and proximity to other (within group) phones
- Data were collected by each phone and automatically pushed to a server for analysis at regular intervals



# Issues arising from research

- Compounded by ‘Newness’ of possibilities - entry to HE not thought of/talked about till later in school life when high attainment raises opportunity.
- Difficulties in terms of access to and, crucially established relationships with adults who understand and can advise on HE e.g. Within social networks one uncle and one aunt from main study group had been to university.
- Not simply a matter of accessing information – discussion, interpretation and understanding is needed.
- Pupil (crucial) decision making in influenced by small supportive networks.
- Mentoring seen as a key to supporting young people in addressing these issues



# Our (school/research team) response:

- Developed one to one mentoring/tutoring for S5/S6 pupils – Springburn Academy
- Included all those borderline and above in terms of being likely to achieve five highers and therefore entry to university
- Pupils were identified and recruited by the school. Mentors recruited from variety of sources, primarily within University – emphasis on retired professionals
- The research nature of this project has involved an ongoing process of reflection and evaluation of the project which has shaped its development
- Commenced December 2010 and is ongoing...



# Is it working?

- Mentor input was crucial in providing support (emotional, practical, academic).
- Offers personal extensive support on planning for and entering higher education.
- Students were very positive about the experience - cited numerous specific examples of learning from their mentors.
- Intergenerationality holds significant advantages – flexibility and time for mentors different perspective and experience for students.
- Mentoring opened up the chance to get to know each other on a personal basis – different from a formal tutoring relationship.



# Understanding why it works

- Academically able young people – school(s) capable of delivering highers
- Attention needs to be diverted from schools
- Expands social networks of young people – grows social capital
- Young people alien/strangers to valued cultural norms
- Mentor as conduit/brokerage - in absence of planning cultural ‘exposure’ may be alienating



# Understanding why it works

- Preparation for university crucial – application, personal statements and interview process
- Process is a focal point for understanding role of cultural capital in access to HE
- Scale of the problem – no familiarity with world about to enter - insecurity and self esteem (shorthand) are aware of their ‘stranger’ status.
- Lack of experience – e.g. school visits and trips limited



# Preparing for HE entry: the work of mentors

- Personal statements – what to write – absence of Duke of Edinburgh awards or ‘captain of hockey team’ etc
- Using contacts to provide work experience/support (e.g. paid work more valued)
- Use of libraries, reading the Guardian access to museums, ballet etc etc
- Language, dress, posture, knowledge of current affairs, arts...
- UKCAT tests

# Issues for researchers:

- Use of new technologies by researchers – new capacity to explore social networks
- Connectedness of young people to what, when and where
- Not all about correcting the deficit of young people – challenge also to dominant culture
- Headteacher advises not to apply to certain universities
- Finding focal points and gathering data to do so
- Economic issues are implicit and crucial
- Change/challenge is achievable