

METHODOLOGY

- interpretivist
- mixed methods
- anonymous online survey (135 students; 32 staff)
- student focus groups (3)
- staff interviews (11)
- statistical, thematic and linguistic analyses
- purposive sampling

Metaphors were rated for the degree to which they captured the essence of the personal tutoring role.

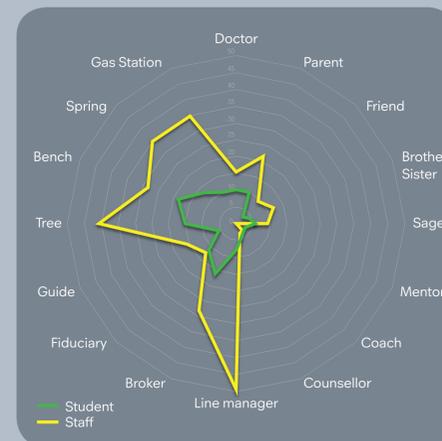
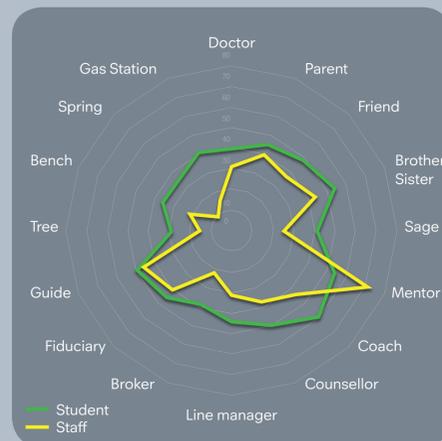
Research team: Ricky Lowes, Senior Personal Tutor, Plymouth Business School, Chao Su, Visiting Scholar, Hunan Agricultural University and Dejie Kong, Plymouth Business School.

Participants: mainland Chinese students; UK based lecturers.

FINDINGS

Most preferred metaphors

Least preferred metaphors



QUALITIES

Most important quality of tutor as rated by:	Tutors	Tutees
to know about university systems and processes	15.6%	25%
to like their tutees	3.1%	3.5%
to be a friendly person	12.5%	18%
to be highly knowledgeable in her/his field of study	3.1%	7%
to be highly intelligent	0.0%	3.5%
to be a caring person	18.8%	7%
to be a good listener	40.6%	10%
to be efficient and quick to respond	6.3%	25%
Total	100%	100%

QUALITATIVE DATA

THEMATIC ANALYSIS SHOWED THAT:

Staff value:

- Student autonomy
- Tutor / tutee boundaries

I don't think it's a friend role, I think there have to be boundaries with students, we are not their pal. Lecturer
 [Suggested metaphor for tutor]
 111 operator- you call to explain what's wrong and you will be directed somewhere else; i.e. A&E, doctor's call back, nurse or paracetamol!

Students value:

- Help
- Support
- Care
- Warmth

[Characteristic sought in tutor]
 Love which makes me feel that I am worthy of being loved and become the motive of my effort.

My personal tutor is like a beacon who can show me the way when I feel lost.

MIXED METAPHORS

COMPARING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL TUTORING OF CHINESE STUDENTS & UK TUTORS

The personal tutor potentially plays a crucial role in aiding and supporting international students' successful transition to UKHE. However, personal tutoring, particularly with regard to international students, is an under-researched area. Given staff perceptions of the problematic nature of international student engagement with tutoring, this is a timely piece of research.

METAPHOR CENTRAL HEURISTIC FOR ELICITING VIEWS

A tutor is like a...



LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT STUDY:

- Small sample
- Difficult to recruit willing st participants
- Focus only on views and expectations

FUTURE RESEARCH COULD FOCUS ON:

- Sts lived experience of tutoring
- Level of engagement
- Factors predicting engagement

BARRIERS PERCEIVED BY STAFF

ENGLISH

Some of them would only come in pairs because the one who wanted to see me was too shy to speak or felt that their English was not very good.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

But culture is [a barrier] ... when they say one thing I don't know whether that is what they really mean or whether it is a euphemism for something else.

STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR

Studying, should be a central question. But, as I said, they rarely would admit that they are struggling with their study.

RELATIONSHIPS

I aim to keep in touch with tutees who are facing issues but it is difficult within the time allocated to maintain regular contact.

CONCLUSIONS

- Some degree of misalignment between the views of Chinese students and their UK tutors, both in terms of practical details and underlying orientations.
- Students' previous experience may vary considerably, which may affect their expectations.
- They may not understand system at their UK institution
- Tutors need some comprehension of what their Chinese tutees may or may not understand by the role.
- UK tutors, on the whole, even those of Chinese origin, may have a less hands-on, directive

approach than Chinese students would like. This may lead to the students becoming disenchanted and feeling that the tutor is not meeting their needs.

- Findings indicate that Chinese students appreciate their tutors taking a vivid interest in their progress, they would like practical and constructive suggestions, particularly on academic matters, in a timely fashion, and that they value a caring attitude. They are unlikely to be as proactive and independent as UK tutors might expect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure clarification of the personal tutoring system
- Provide a framework for tutoring and a structure to tutorial meetings.
- Focus the tutorial meetings on students' expressed needs.
- Be aware of the precise needs of the students.
- Advice and guidance has to be timely.
- Keep the focus of the meetings practical and seek tangible outcomes.
- Target English language support at the students' specific needs.
- Allocate tutors effectively
- Provide cultural briefings for tutors working with Chinese students.
- Allocate sufficient time for tutoring

*From my experience, the students look for two things: they look for someone who is on their side and is a friend. A lot of teachers, I think, only believe that their job is to be a competent teacher. So they focus all their time on trying to communicate their subject and **don't spend any time looking at it from the students' point of view.** And for me, students look for someone who is eager that they do well. Lecturer*