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#### The theory behind the little moments

Little moments don't happen by chance at **Into**University; they are part of a deliberate effort to create the optimal learning environment for our young people to achieve.

#### Little Moments, Big City

As we enter the 10<sup>th</sup> year of our Big City Bright Future internship, we speak to two former **Into**University students about the little moments from the programme that affected their career pathways.



# Eilis O'Donnell, Director of Programmes and Delivery, describes how **Into**University's programmes facilitate the little moments which lead to a big impact.

At **Into**University, we're currently taking the opportunity to celebrate all of the little moments that take place across our centres every day, which add up to the big impact we all aspire to achieve. Hearing about one of those little moments never fails to bring a smile to my face. Who doesn't love hearing about Year 6 students making a (loud) dash for spinning chairs at a Russell Group University? Who wouldn't be moved by the thought of a boy finding connection with a fellow Hindi-speaker in Brighton? And I get goosebumps when I think about those students that visited the Royal Courts of Justice and now want to be barristers. How much better off would we be as a society if they achieve that dream?

Just imagine if any one of those little moments turns out to be the moment? Like in a Hollywood film - time slows down, everything comes into sharp focus, our hero sees their future clearly for the first time. Awesome! At IntoUniversity, we're certainly here for those moments. But we're also here for all the other ones. Like the rainy Thursday when you forget your PE kit and have to wait ages for your bus. At the end of the day, members of IntoUniversity teams will be there, ready and smilling, to greet our children and young people. We will celebrate their small wins, commiserate their setbacks, and build up to their bright future ahead. Our teams will be there to listen and remember the small important details: How was the football match? How did the French test go?

For most people, your future isn't decided in one single life-changing moment, but is the culmination of decisions, effort and opportunities over time that shapes your path. At **Into**University, we aim to provide the culture, environment, programmes and relationships over the long term that add up to transform the lives of young people.

Everyone I work with has a wealth of stories of these little moments. It's no surprise, because we've designed our programmes and way of working precisely to create space for these little moments of magic to happen as frequently as possible.

The acute, deep and ongoing effects of the global pandemic and cost of living crisis are painfully apparent and re-confirm our commitment to creating as many magical little moments as possible. The negative impact on both students' wellbeing and mental health, as well as attainment has been widely reported (EEF, 2022). The Sutton Trust surveyed over 6,000 teachers back in 2022 and reported that 72% of those working in State schools in areas with the highest levels of deprivation thought the cost of living crisis and associated impact on pupils would increase the attainment gap at their school.

Our place-based centres and model mean we are ideally placed to provide support to young people facing these tough challenges. We work with young people from the age of 7. We do this because we know that young people's aspirations matter. We recruit compassionate staff who form excellent relationships with young people. Secure and trusting relationships provide young people with the safety needed to learn.

We design our programmes and train teams to use evidence-based practices. For example, we know that metacognition is strongly correlated with improved attainment. Simply put, developing metacognition



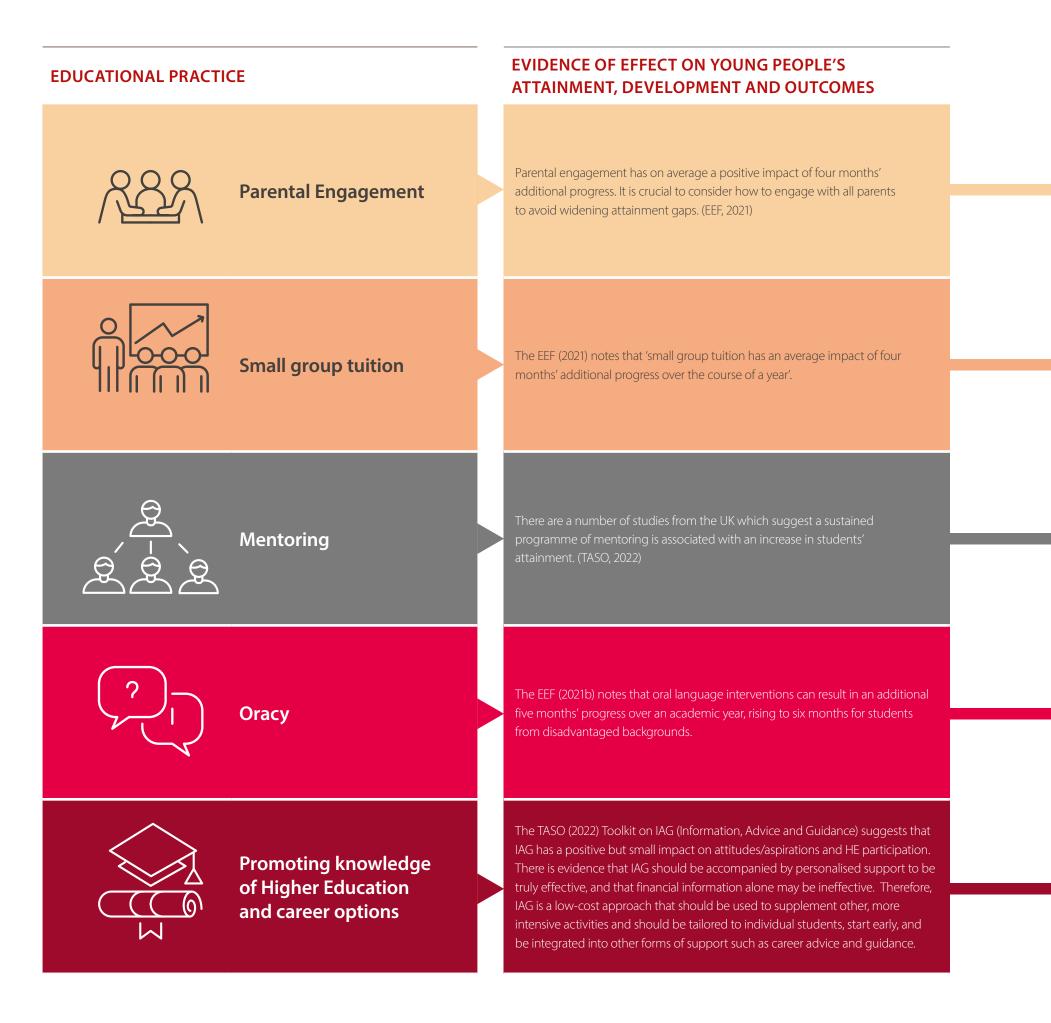
is about learning how to think about what you are learning, to understand what you already know and what you need to do to learn more. One way we design this into action is through our 'Future Readiness' Award for Secondary students: young people design, implement and evaluate their own projects. They are supported to try a range of tools, such as knowledge organisers, and are guided through reflective practices all designed to build their metacognitive skills. By focusing on their own interests, they are encouraged to develop a love of learning alongside critical skills to take back into their school classrooms.

We're incredibly fortunate to have fantastic partnerships with universities and businesses which offer experiences to our young people that are rich, diverse and inspirational. These experiences include our Big City Bright Future internship, which provides over 120 students each year with a life-changing career opportunity to work in a top firm in the City. Being based in communities means we can bring these opportunities directly to where our young people live. We are there for the long term and part of the local fabric.

So when I hear that those **Into**University alumni have become barristers, I will not be surprised. But I will be incredibly proud.

# The theory behind the little moments

Everyday, across the IntoUniversity network, thousands of little moments occur which support students to develop learning skills and improve their attainment. But these little moments don't happen by chance, they are part of a deliberate effort to create the optimal learning environment for our young people to achieve.









## THE INTOUNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

Parents and carers of Academic Support students are formally engaged at Adult at Home evenings, Learning Together and Mentoring Celebration events. Parents and carers of Primary FOCUS students are welcomed to graduations on university campuses.

Adult to student ratios at Academic Support are intentionally high, with students receiving support in small groups. In both Primary and Secondary sessions students receive small group and one-to-one support tailored to their homework.

Mentoring is available to young people aged 10-18. Mentoring relationships are purposeful, with pairs supported to set and meet an academic goal. Mentors are trained and have access to resources to raise the attainment of the young people with whom they are working.

An oracy framework and practices are embedded across all of our programmes, for example: discussion guidelines are co-created with the class on Primary FOCUS Weeks; presentations of University Tree 'leaves' include practice and feedback; and starter tasks are completed for each Primary Academic Support session.

Into University's work starts in Primary FOCUS, when young people are introduced to Higher Education and Careers. This knowledge is built up over the Primary and Secondary FOCUS programmes. Workshops include: 'What is a University?'; 'What is a career?'; education pathways, benefits of Higher Education, university subject options, student finance options, how Higher Education links to careers. Corporate mentoring and 1:1 Year 13 sessions provide tailored and individualised support through which young people gain relevant knowledge of HE and career options.

### THE LITTLE MOMENT

"We held a Photography Exhibition in our centre as a part of the Primary Academic Support curriculum. The event was quite a success, with the largest number of young people we had in our Academic Support session over the year attending, and we were glad to see that they had brought their families with them. We set up a photo booth and took polaroid pictures of the young people with their families, and had activities that parents and carers also got involved in. Multiple parents and carers were happy with the event, thanking the staff for the evening and chatting about the young people and their education."

"A student who has English as an additional language started attending Secondary Academic Support earlier this year and I had the pleasure of completing a Year 7 'Future Readiness' project with her. During this time working with her, her English came on leaps and bounds. She is now a frequent member of Academic Support and works diligently on her Maths week in week out which has also helped with her confidence and English language skills! It has been a joy to watch her improve academically and socially."

"We have recently matched a Year 6 student with a University Student Mentor and it's been amazing to see them fully engage with the programme during their first couple of meetings. They are feeling determined to do their best in their SATs, and are aiming high by even considering what GCSE options they might take in the future. It's especially lovely to see them recognising the value of mentoring straightaway."

"When a Primary student first started Academic Support, her mum was worried that she was too shy and wouldn't speak up for herself. She would only whisper answers and would never volunteer. We've been working on oracy and talk tasks in Academic Support, and our once super shy student has completely come out of her shell. She is really vocal and is even on the student council and it's amazing to see!"

"During a Secondary school workshop, I was talking through all of the Post-16 options and there was a student who was at first disruptive and didn't want to be there because she didn't think any of the options were for her. Then, she learned about an apprenticeship to become a Flight Attendant; her face lit up and she started asking lots of questions. She ended up loving the session and we even came up with a step-by-step plan for what to do after her GCSEs."

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# **Little Moments, Big City**

This summer, we will run our tenth annual Big City Bright Future programme, a three-week paid work experience programme, created especially to help school leavers who aspire to work within competitive industries. We speak to two former IntoUniversity students who took part in the programme about the little moments from the programme that affected their career pathways.



#### Isha – BCBF 2019

Isha is a former IntoUniversity Walworth student who took part in Big City Bright Future in 2019 where she interned at BlackRock. She first heard



about IntoUniversity during Secondary school as staff came to her school every year to run FOCUS workshops, before she decided to attend the centre to access our mentoring and work experience opportunities.

"I remember receiving the email, just saying 'Congratulations, you've been chosen' and finding out that I was going to work at BlackRock. So [I loved] getting the email and knowing that everyone around me that helped me to get to that point were also as excited as I was."

"It's nice that through Big City Bright Future, I've met amazing people that I can say I'm still in touch with, and have actually guided me to where I am now with a lot of the decisions I've made with employment as well. Because back then you were not really taught much about employment at school.

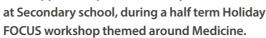
"[During the internship] they put a lot of emphasis on networking; I didn't realise till I was part of IntoUniversity and the Big City Bright Future programme that networking is a powerful tool. When you meet someone, they can connect you to another person, and they would say "You want to study law. I know someone you could speak to" or "I know someone in our office that works with the in-house law team," and they would guide you on how to go about your journey and your routes".

"IntoUniversity and Big City Bright Future has helped me with getting to where I am because of networking and building my confidence in effective communication. When I was in Secondary school I didn't have much confidence to push myself and involve myself in a lot of things, but after being part of the

programme it's really allowed me to see a different side of what putting yourself out there can do. "To younger students], I would say don't shy away from putting yourself out there now. Into University is a powerful, powerful, powerful organisation because they open doors for a lot of people and their reach is amazing. Networking is a powerful tool. Continue using the tools and the resources around you and don't limit yourself."

#### Asma – BCBF 2021

Asma is a former IntoUniversity Kennington student who took part in a virtual Big City Bright Future in 2021, where she interned at Bloomberg. She was first supported by IntoUniversity



"[The biggest lesson I learned while at IntoUniversity is] perseverance. Well, more so they've allowed me to learn it myself. Throughout GCSEs and A levels, and then through extenuating circumstances I had to go through during COVID which affected my education quite severely, I was able to get their support. And I think I wouldn't have been able to persevere through that if it wasn't for the support and the shoulder to lean on which was **Into**University.

"In Year 13, I got back in touch with one of the **Into**University staff and told her how I have been really affected going back to school and my grades have completely plummeted.

"We had a meeting and I told her about how it's very difficult for me to apply directly for Medicine for undergrad now and as we were working through graduate medicine routes, we got into a conversation where she saw from my CV that I'm also actually very suited for finance without me realising it. That's how

"My interview at Bloomberg really stood out to me. I think it's because they really treated me like an adult; they treated me the same as they treated any other person trying to also get into Bloomberg. That's something I really appreciated because it meant that they didn't see me as a teenager; I appreciated that they respected me in that way.

"Bloomberg had such a variety of departments and I think seeing just the variety by itself was the one thing that stood out to me the most – the way that they showed us the engineering department, the consulting department, the finance department.

"In Year 13, I was still very much set on applying to Medicine. It was quite a daunting interview process and I wasn't able to prepare for it or do mocks due to lockdowns so I decided to take a gap year. I knew that I had Big City Bright Future in the summer at that point which could financially cover me over the summer as well.

"[It was during my gap year] I decided to do something different. Engineering was something that I was passionate about as a hobby, I was into robotics. I think that's what made me decide to go for Biomedical Engineering. I came across a specific YouTube video where biomedical engineers and surgeons were able to work together and I was in awe. And I thought if I do manage to get a role in engineering, that's the kind of thing I want to do. And if I don't, I've got Big City Bright Future as an experience that would allow me to stand a chance in finance jobs because I know how competitive they are. And I also have medicine as an option because I would be doing biomedical. And I was like, well that's the degree that will allow me to have the most doors open to me.

"The main advice I would give to younger students is that things will work out one way or another. It might take longer for it to work out, but it will work out as long as you just keep working hard and persevering."





# We would love to hear your feedback about aspire.

To get in touch or to find out more about **Into**University please visit our website www.intouniversity.org, drop Vicky an email at aspire@intouniversity.org or call us on 020 7243 0242.

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