



# Making mentoring impactful

Using practitioner assessment to drive student  
outcomes in widening participation

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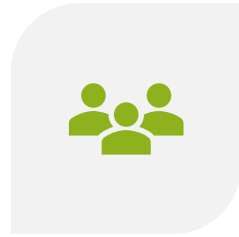
# What we'll cover today



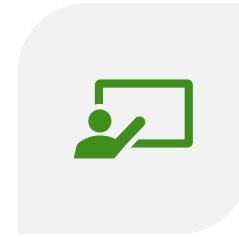
MENTORING IN  
WIDENING  
PARTICIPATION



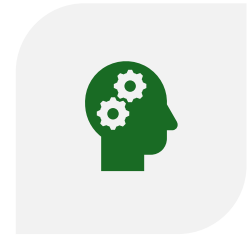
EVALUATING  
MENTORING



THE ACCESS  
PROJECT'S  
MENTORING  
MODEL



MENTORING  
EVALUATION →  
MENTORING  
PRACTICE



IMPROVING  
STUDENT  
OUTCOMES



# Mentoring in widening participation

*Mentoring programmes are impactful in widening access to and participation in higher education, but they are challenging to evaluate*

“Mentoring programmes boost confidence and motivation, raise aspirations and “support students from low participation groups to progress to the most prestigious institutions”

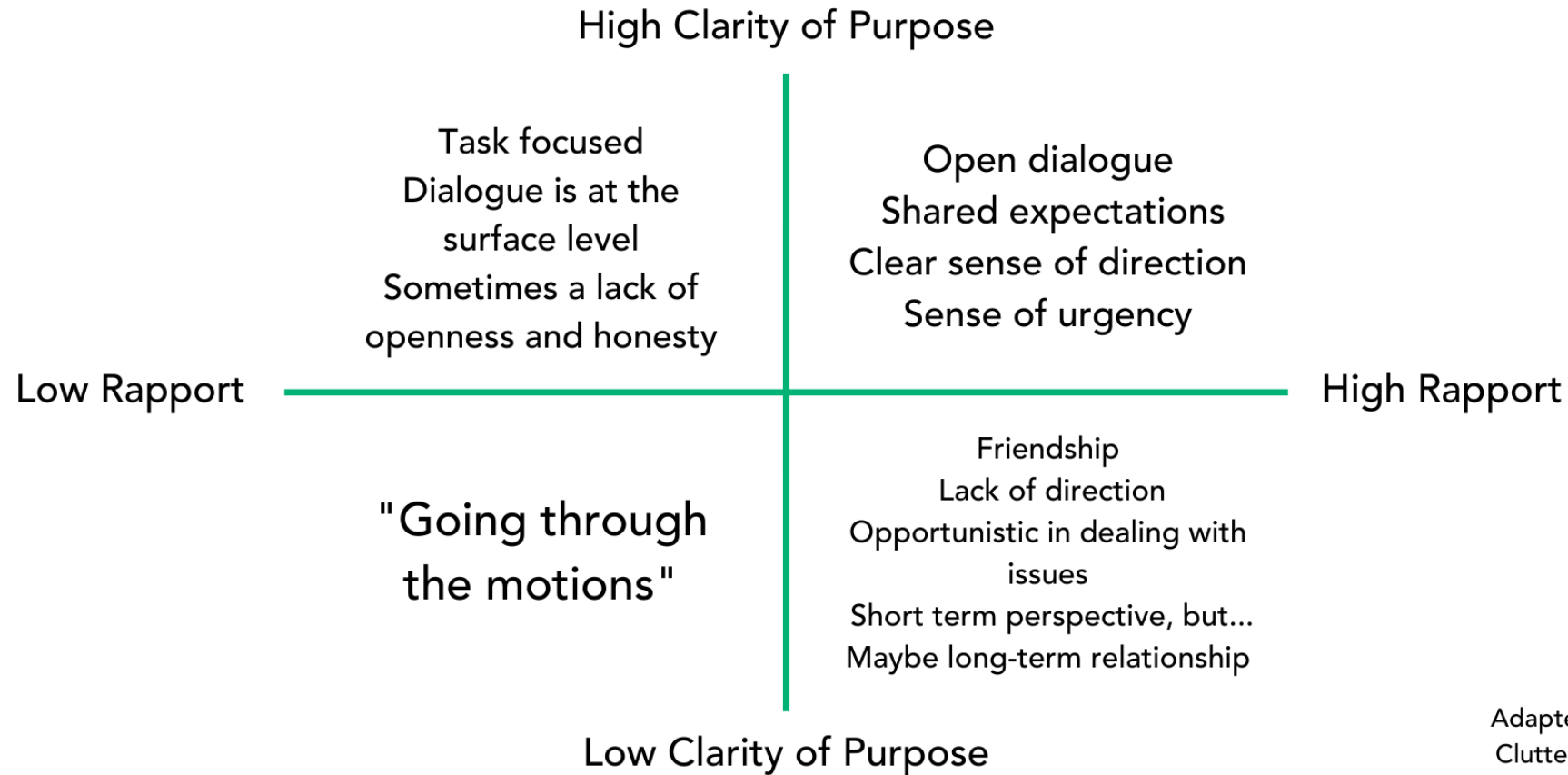
(Robinson and Salvestrini 2020)

## Evaluation Challenges

1. Encompassed within multi-intervention programmes
2. Drives multiple academic, interpersonal and socio-emotional outcome types
3. No database or large-scale studies to benchmark
4. Mentees may receive multiple ‘mentorships’



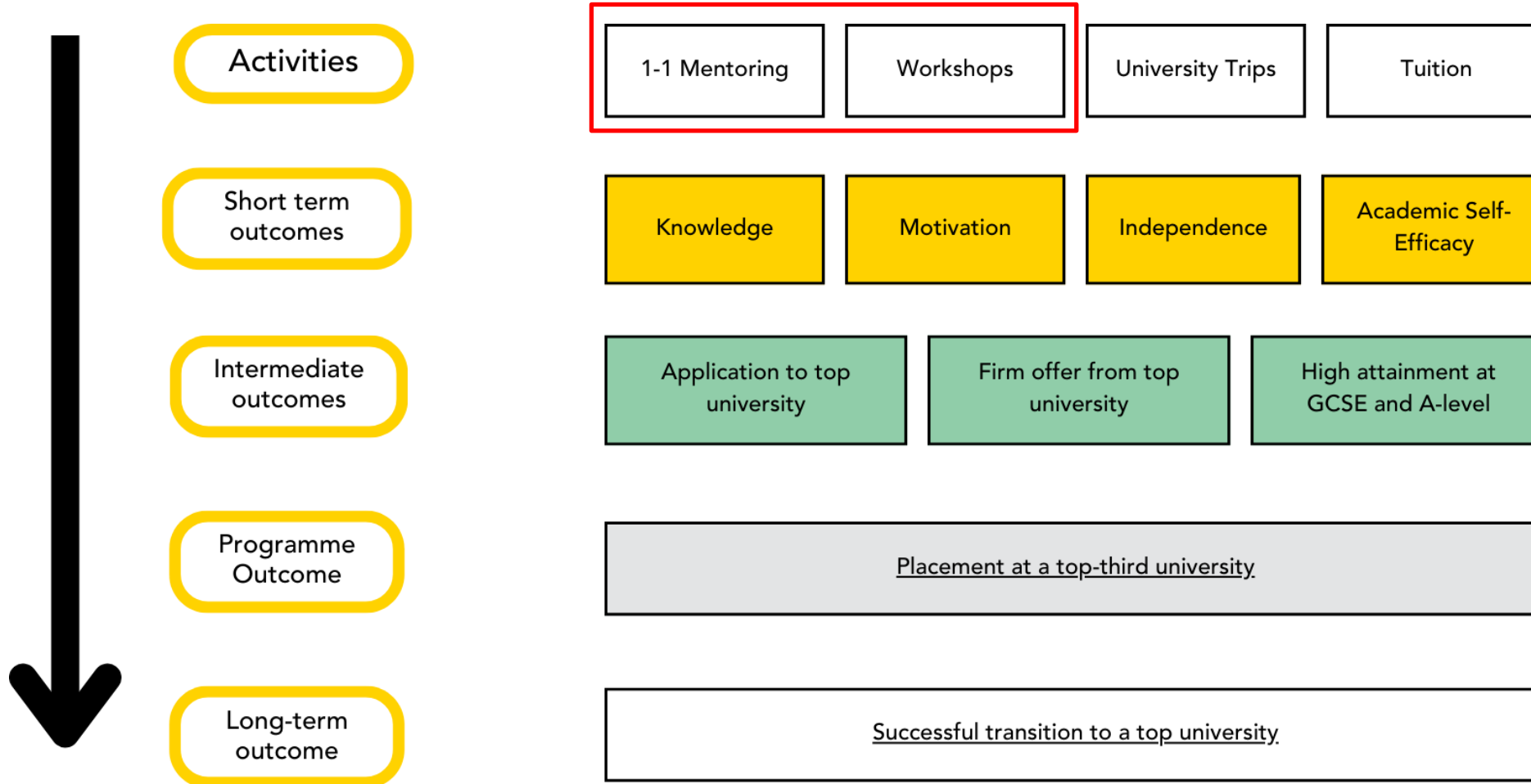
# Mentoring at The Access Project



Adapted from:  
Clutterbuck &  
Megginson (2004)



# The Access Project Theory of Change





# Key Mentoring Outcomes

## Knowledge

about university applications, choices, student life, and finance

## Motivation

to attend a top university and the ability to convincingly articulate it



## Academic Results

## Independence

to complete actions and actively engage in out of school activities to develop academic interests

## Academic Self Efficacy

to develop the self-awareness and self-belief required to achieve academic success



# Example Assessment of Outcome

Outcome Type

Motivation

“Student can articulate an ambition to attend university”

*Suggested mentoring question: Do you want to attend university? Why?*

**Based on the student’s response, the mentor evaluates them on a scale of 1-4**

1: Student does not want to attend university

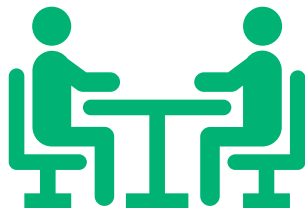
2: Can articulate an ambition but cannot explain why

3: Can articulate an ambition and give vague reasons

4: Can articulate an ambition and give specific reasons

**They upload this score to a database to inform two different processes**

Mentoring practice

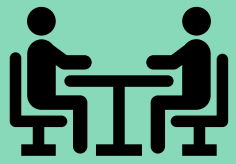


Data analysis





# Improving Mentoring Practice



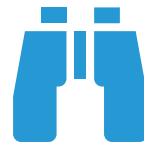
*Mentors can use outcomes scores to inform and support their mentoring practice.*

## Reactive mentoring



Mentors can use their knowledge and assessment of the outcomes to mentor students during meetings

## Proactive mentoring



Mentors can use scores to set actions between meetings and prepare for following meetings

## Stakeholder Comms

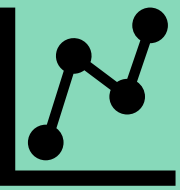


Mentors can use scores to communicate with schools about student progress and provide further support





# Improving Outcomes and Limitations



*Scores recorded by mentors support internal and external evaluation and reporting but there are outstanding questions about their full utility.*

## *Opportunities*

Identify areas for programme improvements

Track student outcomes over time

Report outcomes to partners

Compare across different student groups

## *Limitations*

Student vs practitioner assessment

Mentor tenure in role

Consistency in practitioner assessment

Attrition or drop-out from the programme



# Conclusions

Mentoring is impactful, but challenging to evaluate

Evaluation data generated by mentoring can serve cross functional purposes

When that purpose is articulated it

- Creates cross-functional buy-in
- Generates actionable insights
- Shines a critical light on evaluation in real-time

## Potential future directions?

- Practitioner assessment + student assessment
- Practitioner facilitated student assessment at more regular intervals
- Student led reassessment of outcomes