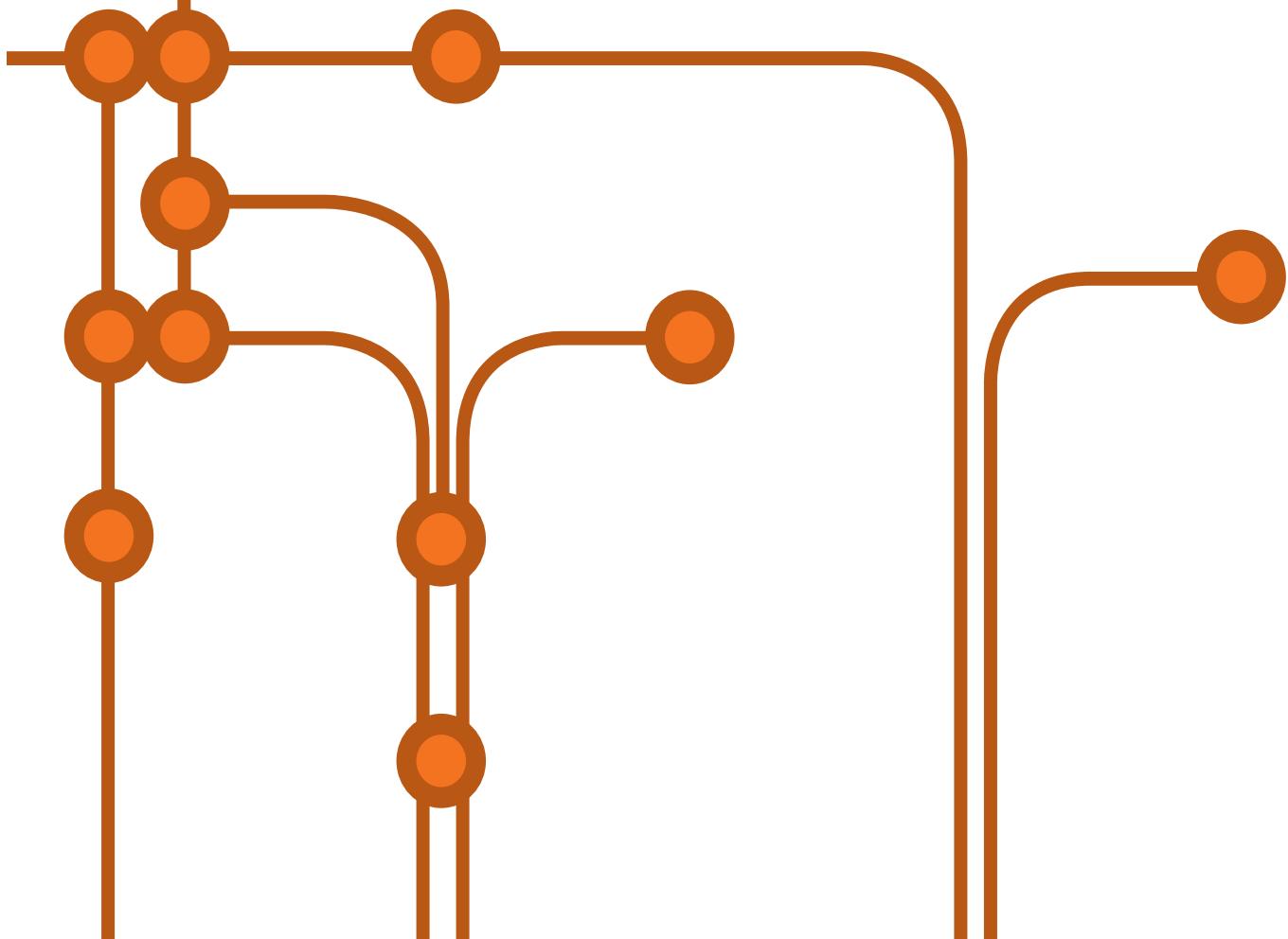


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

a guide to supporting the professional development planning
of writers and literature professionals

Jude Page



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Thanks

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About the author

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About literaturetraining

literaturetraining is the UK's only dedicated provider of free information and advice on professional development for writers and literature professionals. Drawing on the expertise and experience of its nine partner organisations, The National Association of Writers in Education (lead partner), Academi, Apples & Snakes, Lapidus, the National Association for Literature Development, renaissance one, Scottish Book Trust, Survivors' Poetry and wrinternet; its links with networks such as The Playwrights Network, curated by wrinternet; and its role as a partner in CreativePeople (www.creativepeople.org.uk), a national network of organisations supporting professional development in the arts and crafts; it works to bring knowledge together and make it relevant to the new writing and literature sector. Its online directory at www.literaturetraining.com acts as a first stop shop for up-to-the-minute information on training and professional development opportunities in the UK. Other services include a fortnightly e-bulletin service, a developing range of resource materials on key topics relating to creative and professional practice, a free information and advice service, and professional development planning guidance. literaturetraining is funded by Arts Council England.

About Creative Skills

Creative Skills (www.creativeskills.org.uk) is the professional development agency for practitioners working in the Creative Industries in Cornwall. Funded by the Learning and Skills Council and ESF Objective One, Creative Skills supports professional development through structured support and training, providing a free one to one PDP service, as well as specialised business support and guidance, funding, grants and a wide range of seminars/workshops, development programmes and schemes. Creative Skills is also a partner in CreativePeople (www.creativepeople.org.uk).

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1

The Professional Development Landscape

Context

Recent years have seen a spawning of organisations, projects and schemes which have supporting creative professionals in the pursuit of their careers at their heart.

literaturetraining, which is funded by the Arts Council of England to provide information and advice on professional development to writers and literature professionals, is an example of one of these organisations. One of its key objectives is to provide writers and literature professionals with access to structured support to help them plan the next steps in their creative and professional development and over the last four years, it has successfully piloted a professional development planning (PDP) service, working with a small number of professional development specialists. (For a copy of its review of this pilot service, email philippa@literaturetraining.com)

A selection of feedback comments made by writers and literature professionals who took part in these pilot sessions, highlighting some of the aspects of PDP that participants have found valuable, are included throughout this handbook.

literaturetraining is now looking at how it can help to support the development of a network of PDP providers so that access to one-to-one PDP sessions is available nationally. This handbook, and the training it supports, is designed to help to develop and support a pool of arts professionals with PDP guiding skills and thus act as the first step towards building this network.

Continuing Professional Development

Varying interpretations of the term Continuing Professional Development (CPD) abound but the practice generally is understood to relate to the development of professional competence, skills and knowledge by varying means, methods or learning routes, embracing the concept of 'lifelong learning'. Most writers and literature professionals would probably agree that their whole career is a journey of 'continuing professional development' where they strive to improve their work or working life in some way.

Professional Development Planning

One of the characteristics of the literature sector (as well as the creative sector as a whole) is that it is largely made up of self-employed individuals who frequently work in isolation and who are required to handle all the elements of their practice and employment – not just the creative aspect. The practice of CPD needs, therefore, to be individually appropriate and flexible enough to meet very specific and particular requirements, whatever the stage of career or need.

Professional Development Planning (PDP) is a practice that places individuals at the heart of their own learning and provides a structured approach to aid reflection and action around the area of professional development. Essentially, PDP provides the opportunity for an individual to examine the direction in which they would like to take their career and develop strategies or plan appropriate actions in order to move closer towards where they want to be in professional terms.

Due to its individually tailored nature, a PDP session is appropriate for all those who wish to reflect on their current position and to plan actions for the future, regardless of what stage they are within their career. It can be especially beneficial for those individuals who are considering making changes or who are looking to undertake some development within their career and also for those starting out.

Professional Development Planning, in an ideal world, requires the participant to have a number of qualities or skills present in order for them to competently analyse their performance and needs. These include:

- Open mindedness (Including willingness to receive constructive criticism/feedback/encouragement/guidance)
- Honesty
- Awareness (of own attributes, of changes in self and changes around self, of barriers, of opportunities and the wider professional context)
- Self-knowledge (limitations, strengths and weaknesses)
- Objectivity (including ability to re-think/think differently)
- Confidence and courage
- Humour and humility
- Willingness to keep on learning/growing
- Research/Planning skills – analysis and action
- Ability to set goals and priorities

They also need to have access to positive role models and time to commit to the process. Clearly, this is all quite a tall order and support is available to those individuals seeking assistance with their professional development planning via two different routes:

- Self-assessment – the individual makes use of diagnostic toolkits to assist them to ‘self-evaluate’ and then structures their own professional development plan accordingly
- Guided PDP – where another individual or guide assists the professional development planning process.

This handbook focuses upon the latter approach, that of Guided PDP.

Self-Assessment

PDP toolkits are designed to prompt the individual to review, reflect on and analyse their current position in order to establish areas for development and to put in place a plan to assist moving forward. They require the individual to review their own personal and professional competencies, skills and achievements and may include references to learning styles or preferences. This route requires individuals to be very adept at honest self-evaluation (to have what All Ways Learning dubs ‘a sober judgement of self’ – an ability ‘to give a fair measure of your own abilities and neither over-estimate nor under-estimate them’).

An inherent problem with the self-assessment route is that it can be self-limiting as it is often difficult for you to access the ‘things you don’t know you know’. It is also likely that there are a number of things ‘that you don’t know that you **don’t** know’ and in this situation a guide may be able to reveal previously unimagined possibilities to the participant. (This relates to the World of Knowledge model – more details of this can be found in Appendix 2.)

‘The session allowed me to talk out loud about my ‘self’ and the articulation of what had been for the most part an internal conversation. It gave me permission to explore possibilities without being sidetracked by the ‘buts’ that can be generated internally before the exploration has even left the station, so to speak.’

Some examples of toolkits currently in use within the creative sector are listed in the Links section. literaturetraining has itself commissioned a PDP toolkit for writers and literature professionals from the author of this handbook which is to be available as a free download from the literaturetraining site (www.literaturetraining.com) and in printed format in autumn 2007.

Guided Professional Development Planning

Guided Professional Development Planning involves undergoing a similar professional development planning process but this time with the added ingredient of an impartial facilitator or guide. The process is largely about the guide ‘aiding reflection’ and also providing a sense of perspective from an outside eye. It relies upon skilled and active listening on the part of the guide, including the knowledge of when it is appropriate to question or challenge. The articulation and sharing of targets or plans may also take the PDP process a stage further towards action on the part of the participant.

'It was useful to be asked particular questions, to have to commit to a next move (like having a teacher to give the work to, but much freer)'

Guide, mentor, adviser, counsellor, coach or ...?

The individual assisting this process may come in a variety of guises. Terms abound – such as guide, mentor, adviser, counsellor or coach – often with fuzzy, varied and overlapping definitions as to role and each bringing a slightly different perspective to the process. The common ground shared by them all is that they involve the skills of listening, questioning and empathising and are about building relationships, purposeful conversation and articulation.

Listed below are some ways in which perceptions of the roles tend to differ:

Guide: One who may provide assistance to those seeking direction in a course of action. Working with the participant, a guide may help to explore the territory and act as a signposter/route planner/map locator.

Mentor: Someone with relevant experience and expertise in a specific field of work who supports another in an ongoing relationship.

Adviser: Implies a superior knowledge. One who gives advice and who may be in the business of offering their opinion or judgement from a position of wisdom. This may be within a one-off session or as part of an ongoing relationship.

Counsellor: Someone who provides a confidential space to explore issues that may be troubling or which it is helpful to discuss with someone who is not involved. Usually an ongoing relationship, which may involve looking at previous journey/past patterns.

Coach: Coaching is about someone who prepares another for a course of action and who helps them to learn. This may intentionally enter into personal as well as professional territory and frequently involves an ongoing relationship.

Professional development services have used a range of additional words to describe the role taken within a one-to-one guided professional development planning process including Animateur or Professional Development Co-ordinator. For the purposes of this handbook, we will use the term 'Guide'.

Information, Advice or Guidance?

The process of PDP has its roots in helping people to find their own solutions via a guidance-based approach, rather than providing answers, although the provision of information and advice may form part of many PDP sessions.

'...it was a great opportunity to speak to someone who has an outside view and can see problems 'fresh'. I realised, while in conversation, that many of the 'solutions' are known to me already, and discussing my goals allowed me to unlock them.'

Determining where the PDP service or session sits on the information, advice and guidance (IAG) continuum is a factor that requires clarification as each has a different nuance. Below are some definitions adapted from Learning and Skills Council North East's 'Glossary of Terms':

Information: Providing people with information without any discussion about the relative advantages/disadvantages of the options available. This may include information delivered face-to-face, via helplines, email, website, mail shots and through providing access to self-help materials.

Advice: Helping individuals to interpret information and choose the next step. This may include support in searching information sources and enabling them to understand the information, in relation to their needs. Would also include provision of critique services, provision of assistance to complete/refine a professional portfolio, C.V. and/or proposals/applications. May include referral to training and development opportunities or referral to further 'Guidance' as appropriate.

Guidance: In-depth structured support for individuals, for example, through intensive one-to-one sessions.

The professional background of the guide is a related issue in that sessions will be greatly influenced by the guide's approach towards information, advice and guidance. If a guide is steeped in very specific knowledge, they may be more prone to 'provide advice' from a personal viewpoint as opposed to 'guiding' a participant from where they are. For guided PDP to be most effective, it is important that roles and boundaries are clear to all before the process begins. This may well include outlining whether a guide's background knowledge is specific or more general.

'The session provides a very valuable space in which to consider your own position with a neutral party. Whilst other literature professionals can offer advice, they cannot guarantee impartiality or confidentiality.'

NB It is perfectly possible for someone who is ignorant of the participant's 'profession' to provide an effective PDP service if they are a skilled guide with access to sector specific information/networks following on from a session.

Learning Processes

Vast amounts of research have taken place relating to learning and huge advances have been made in the last decade in understanding how the human brain works and learns. If one is about to enter the world of PDP, a general awareness of such matters, and knowing more of your own predisposition towards learning, can form a useful backdrop to your contact with clients.

Please see Appendix 2 for further details relating to the learning process, different learning styles, learning preferences and alternative learning methods, as well as useful links and references pertaining to this area.

2

Guided Professional Development Planning

What is it all about?

When did you last spend over an hour with someone completely impartial, focusing solely upon you and your own professional development? A guided PDP session offers just this opportunity.

'It felt good to have an hour devoted to forward planning for me. And not to feel guilty for taking up that space or like I had to 'give something back.'

The experience of undertaking such a session can be empowering, energising and challenging. It can provide an increased sense of value of self and can promote confidence and motivation.

'I went away charged with confidence and feeling supported'

The opportunity to gain an objective view from someone outside of the situation can help to identify the important issues, to look at things from a new angle and to prioritise what is important. As a result of a session, the way forward can seem clearer and become more focused. Often the session will result in a longer term plan of action as well as some small, practical and achievable steps that can be taken immediately.

'It was particularly useful ... to be heard, and also for breaking down the vastness of the tasks ahead into smaller starting-points'

Professional Development Planning with the aid of a guide can be described as:

'A structured process
That enables an individual to reflect upon
And articulate where they are
And what they need to do
In order for them to define and move towards where they want to be
In terms of their professional and creative development'

'I feel that the session has enabled me to gather together quite vague thoughts and ideas into a more organised plan of action for the future.'

The face-to-face element of the service is key. It encourages honesty, can challenge the participant and may provide insight into previously undiscovered territory.

'Useful to get someone else in on the act, reflect back and be able to use what came up as a focus for my ongoing development'

Essential Ingredients

If PDP were a recipe, there would be a number of ingredients you would need to ensure you have before you begin the PDP cooking process (these relate to both the guide and the participant):

Respect: Also referred to as ‘Unconditional Positive Regard’ or ‘Acceptance’. This is about valuing the other as a human being and being non-judgemental.

Genuineness: A willingness to be honest and open

Empathy: Involves being able to perceive a situation as the other perceives it

Trust

A willingness to challenge/be challenged

Commitment to Development/Progression/Learning: Carl Rogers, the founder of ‘person-centred counselling’, claimed that the top three listed conditions (Respect, Genuineness, Empathy) must be at the core of a relationship if development or growth is to take place. This theory is as relevant within PDP sessions as within the counselling/therapeutic world from whence the concept came.

Other essential ingredients are:

A skilled guide who practises active engaged listening techniques, who can accurately reflect and mirror experiences back to the participant and who knows when it is appropriate to question and challenge them.

Centrality of the participant: Within PDP sessions, the participant is at the centre – their professional development is the focus and they own the content. The process may help an individual to establish where they are, what choices are available, where they want to be, how realistic this is, and what actions may be needed but ultimately any plan, goals or targets must be genuinely owned by them, just as any resulting development and continuing action must also come down to them.

Method

In order for good professional development planning practice to take place, there are a number of other important factors to consider. To use the recipe analogy again, this would be the Method or how to make the recipe with the ingredients.

Therefore, for the PDP recipe to be baked properly, it requires:

Clear Expectations: That participants are clear about what service is being offered to them. Although becoming more common, this kind of service is still unfamiliar to the sector so the language used to describe sessions is obviously very important. The participant needs to know where the session sits on the 'IAG' scale. If they are being offered a PDP service, they should be expecting guidance relating to the process and planning of their professional development rather than an advice/critique session. It is also useful to signify whether sessions enter the territory of personal as well as professional and creative development. Some services may also wish to outline the background of the guide. (See Appendix 1 for sample info sheet.)

Established Boundaries: There are parameters set prior to the session. This relates to practical questions such as:

- How long is the session to last?
- Is it necessary for the participant to provide any information prior to the session and if so, what?
- Is there to be any follow-up contact after the session and if so, what and when?
- Who is eligible/likely to benefit from the PDP service?
- Can participants come back for another session and if so, how soon?
- Are there any specific requirements of the participant – such as to provide data/evaluation or any paperwork for funding or other purposes?

Contracting: Within any PDP session an informal contracting process takes place at the beginning for a number of reasons:

- To check the participant's understanding of what they are about to enter into and to recap the boundaries
- To clarify whether/that the process is confidential
- To ensure the participant is comfortable
- To reinforce a respect for the PDP process i.e. phones are turned off and there are no external distractions
- To signify how any personal information will be used and/or stored (this is a legal requirement for the purposes of data protection – please see further notes on this in Section 6)
- What will happen after the session? Is any report to be sent on? Is there a follow-up procedure?

Physical Space: That some thought has been given to the appropriateness of the space where sessions are to take place. Factors to consider are whether the space is:

- Accessible
- Private – yet also safe for both guide and participant
- Quiet (A drumming workshop/loud DIY in the room next door is not conducive to a reflective atmosphere!)
- Comfortable – access to refreshments/loos?
- Does it have the right ambience – is it relaxed or does it feel institutionalised?
- How is the room set up? (Comfort, type and location of furniture)

'The intimacy in that room was intense and confidentiality needs to be assured well in advance and maintained with professional rigour'

Access or Signposting to Information or Sources of Support: The guide needs to be able to point the participant towards relevant follow-up support either within or following on from the session. To be most effective, the session needs to form part of a wider professional development programme/network. The amount and type of specific information the guide will have to hand within the session will vary depending upon their experience, their defined role and the set-up of the service. The PDP process is likely to raise expectations and result in a number of development ideas and it is important to be able to signify how needs may be met and what learning opportunities are available.

Time: To ensure that enough time has been allowed for the session to take place without it feeling rushed.

'I think most creative people progress in spirals and it is easy to mistake this as just going round in circles. Creative people tend to work organically and from a deep and not always quantifiable place. Much of what we do is subconscious, subliminal and synchronistic, and the most useful thing for me within my session was being able to really reflect on what I wanted to achieve and to prioritise this.'

3

The Participant

Common Factors

Within the world of PDP sessions in the literature sector, there is no such thing as a typical participant! One of the joys of conducting sessions is being placed in the privileged position of being able to peek into a kaleidoscope of humanity and to view such a wide range of individuals' unique and varied professional pathways through life.

There are some general factors that many writers and literature professionals do have in common, however, in that many:

- Are freelance/self-employed
- Are fairly isolated in their working/professional life
- May have to diversify their talents and need/choose to seek a supplementary income from work that may or may not relate to their main area of practice
- Have had to learn business skills – marketing, promotion, budgeting, negotiation skills etc.
- Are compelled to do what they do (i.e. it's more than just 'a job')

'Because I work on my own, it is very easy to focus on what I haven't achieved rather than what I have, and to lose sight of goals in the daily overwhelm of emails, to-do lists and reacting to requests. The opportunity to sit back and ask myself searching questions about my work, with an experienced listener, was invaluable.'

Who is attracted to PDP?

A PDP service can be particularly attractive to those individuals who are:

- Starting out or in the early stages of their career
- At a point of change within their working life
- Interested in undertaking some development or exploring other options/directions
- Wanting to take stock of where they are

It would appear that women are more drawn to the idea of PDP sessions and that some men from the outside may perceive sessions to be a bit 'touchy-feely-emotional'.

Readiness and Timing

A session can be beneficial at whatever stage of career but sessions work best when participants are 'ready' for them. Participants who welcome the opportunity to pause, reflect and explore their options with the assistance of an 'outside eye' and who have some understanding of what they are undertaking, are more likely to benefit from a session than someone who has been forced into it!

'If people genuinely want to give it what it takes and are prepared to feel uncomfortable in the process, are prepared to question themselves scrupulously, then it can be nothing but helpful. But not everyone is ready or in the right space for this.'

How may a Participant benefit from PDP?

A guided PDP session may enable or assist the participant to:

- Prioritise what actually is important to them
- Make discerning choices
- Edit/prioritise the range of activities/opportunities available
- Define realisable goals/targets
- Discover or refine the scope, level or definition of their own professional success
- Gain affirmation/validation
- Obtain a broader perspective

For some participants the value of a session may relate to 'softer' outcomes such as providing an increased sense of value in self/work and a greater self-awareness. Others may value the session for providing the opportunity to explore harder edged practical steps/strategies that relate to their particular situation.

'I felt that I was being fully listened to and appreciated, but also that it was very professional and not 'therapeutic' – that there was a purpose and it was up to me to take the next steps – all of which helped to create a really positive context for the session and helped me to feel that I had the power to make the changes required.'

The PDP session is designed to enable the participant to plan for their future development and therefore isn't about giving critical feedback or providing specific information and advice.

Individuals who already have a clear or fixed idea about what they need in terms of professional development – or who know that they are solely seeking 'hard' information or specific advice around, for instance, finding work or marketing themselves – would probably be better served by an information/advice session rather than a more intensive 'guidance' experience. Although PDP sessions **may** provide 'an outcome' in the form of specialist information and advice tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of the participant, much of the value of the service stems from the '**process**' – the ground that is covered within the course of the session and what the participant reveals to him/herself.

A PDP session may form a useful element at the beginning or within a mentoring relationship. A session may also benefit individuals who are being required to think more strategically about their own development, for example, if considering making a funding application for professional development.

Common Development Needs

The common development needs that arise for writers and literature professionals who have undergone a PDP session are around:

Internal Factors (Confidence, Focus, Motivation)

- Clarifying focus
- Establishing priorities/boundaries
- General confidence issues/fear of failure

Skills/Experience

- Developing skills relating to practice
- Development of experience – shadowing, placements etc.
- Specialist individual feedback/guidance – peer review, mentoring
- Developing business skills e.g. marketing, finance, IT etc.
- Time management

Contacts/Information/Knowledge

- Knowledge of the professional landscape and where the participant sits/fits
- Knowledge of networks/groups/contacts
- Information about opportunities

Resources/Support

- Funding for professional development and R & D projects – sources and how to secure it
- Support from peers, family, friends etc.
- Specialist support e.g. business start up, legal, financial

Equality and Diversity

PDP is a person-centred service and it is a prerequisite that the guide responds to the individual's unique and particular set of circumstances. Any PDP service should be flexible and adaptable enough to meet a fully diverse range of needs. Sensitivity is key – take into account the cultural and social background of the participant, learn from them and develop a service that meets their real needs and aspirations. There is also a matter of perceived empathy in that some participants may desire a guide from their particular background who they feel will be more attuned to where they're coming from so it's important that a diverse pool of guides is developed.

Some participants may be dealing with health issues, either mental or physical, which they choose not to disclose and that a guide may therefore be unaware of but which may have an impact on the

work. Others may require the presence of an advocate, carer or assistant within a session and it is important to be aware of energy levels in that some individuals may need to take breaks or have two shorter sessions. Reports/info need not be written up but can be provided on tape for those who require it. Indeed, the whole session could be recorded, with the agreement of the participant. Signposting and referrals also need consideration. Buildings where interviews take place obviously need to be accessible and if this is not possible it should be clear that alternative arrangements can **and are** made to suit.

It should be noted that some participants may have undergone intrusive questioning within other areas of their life and may find some approaches to questioning and interviews difficult or uncomfortable. Similarly, the guide may have an emotional response to the life/work experiences of particular participants. Research into how a PDP service can be delivered to disabled creative practitioners in a way that takes into account their cultural experiences and context has been carried out by Equata on behalf of Creative People and a full report entitled *Development Needs Analysis – Models of Delivery* is available from barbara.brunsdon@creativepeople.org.uk

Case Studies

These case studies were commissioned in January 2007 from writers and literature professionals who took part in literaturetraining PDP sessions between 2004 and 2006.

Case Study A

Profile: 'A' is a short story writer and award-winning poet. She facilitates poetry workshops and mentoring for new and advanced writers across London and is a poetry editor. Her poems appear in Poetry Review and Wasafiri and in anthologies published by The British Council, Enitharmon and Carcanet.

Session: 'A' was one of six writers (all women) at different stages in their career who took part in a one hour consultation session with an experienced creative and professional development coach run by literaturetraining in partnership with a London literature development agency in May 2004. The session was described as 'You and Your Creative Career: Professional Development for Writers' and formed part of the agency's programme of courses, workshops, events and surgeries for writers. There was an application process for the sessions. All six sessions were delivered on the same day. The writer subsequently attended a follow-up group session designed to provide the six writers with an opportunity for information-sharing, networking and action planning. This session was attended by three of the writers. 'A' continues to belong to a peer mentoring group that grew out of this.

'Attending the one-to-one creative and professional development session with [the guide] was a valuable experience. Prior to the session, I had been attending workshops and mainly writing for myself. After I won an award for poetry and received some recognition, I became creatively blocked. I found myself at a crossroads, not sure whether to start a writing MA or continue with workshops. I was also concerned about whether I could make a living from writing or whether I needed to get a 'proper job'.

'The 'You and Your creative process' questionnaire was a useful way of identifying problem areas as well as seeking possible solutions. It was helpful to clarify my goals before the session and pin point the key issues that were behind my creative block.

'The session encouraged me to really think about my current situation and discuss where I wanted to go next. It allowed me to recognise my needs as a poet and draw upon my skills and resources to take my creative process more seriously and value myself as a creative practitioner.

'The follow up group sessions at [the agency] offered practical advice and insight into action planning and how to adopt a structured approach to making a living as a writer. I gained a clearer sense of what support and resources were available to me.

'I continue to be a part of a cross-arts peer mentoring group that has grown out of [the agency] group sessions. The group offers a supportive space to discuss work in progress. It provides the opportunity to set goals and check in each other's progress and discuss new career developments. Sharing different issues around writing plays, stories and poetry in the group continues to be a nurturing and rewarding experience.

'Many ideas from the sessions and the group work have fed into my own writing workshops and mentoring projects. I have devised specific poetry questionnaires and tailor-made programmes that encourage poets to take a more focused approach to their work, empowering writers and poets to find the balance between a structured approach to their writing while still leaving room for uninterrupted daydreaming.

'Taking part in the professional development sessions helped me to adopt a person-centred approach when working with new poets. Creative problems in the work often mirror issues in life and a lack of direction in a poet's life often translates into unfocused poems.

'Overall the professional development sessions are a creative and practical initiative that addresses the lack of professional support faced by up and coming writers and poets and it offers real solutions and strategies as well as giving each practitioner the space and time to evaluate and take responsibility for their own creative process.

'The professional development sessions have opened up new ways of approaching my own poetry as well as my work as a facilitator and editor. It has given me the sense that my efforts as a writer and creative practitioner are important and worthwhile.'

Case Study B

Profile: 'B' will be a freelance writer from February 2007. His aims in 2007 are to increase his number of clients and to acquire the services of a literary agent. Longer-term aims are to attract publishers' interest in his novels and to explore screenwriting possibilities.

Session: 'B' was one of six writers (all women apart from him) who took part in a one hour 'creative and professional development consultation' with an experienced coach specialising in creative and professional development in May 2004. The session was part of a professional development programme for writers set up by a national agency for reading and writing in partnership with literaturetraining. All six sessions were delivered on the one day. There was an application process. The writer contacted literaturetraining some time after the session for some specific information and advice. This was delivered over the phone. All the writers received a follow-up email from the coach six weeks after the session to check on progress.

'I began writing as an occasional columnist for nursing magazines when I was working as a full-time hospital biomedical scientist. When I was commissioned to write a virology textbook, I made two discoveries. The first was that, if people were prepared to pay me to write, I must have some talent. The second was that I discovered the Law of Locked and Unlocked Doors (LLUD), which states that for every ten doors locked to an imagined opportunity, one door opens to a chance not even envisaged.'

'When I attended the session, I was a part-time freelance writer, having written my first novel. I expected advice on how the balance of the LLUD might be further tilted in my favour, together with tips on accounting and effective time management. What I got was not only the most demanding interview of my life, but also the most rewarding.'

'It was soon plain that [the guide] had an unerring eye for flannel, and an ability to cut through it by asking questions that produced replies with a ring of truth. For example, far from believing my assertion that I'd no more time to write than that afforded by part-time working, [the guide] wanted to know exactly why. My answer that there 'just wasn't time' was unacceptable unless it could be justified and by degrees I talked myself into the conclusion that I was an expert at prognostication.'

'It was a humbling moment ... the first of several. [the guide] had performed the service of prompting me to lay bare some truths about myself. At the end of the interview, I told her how sheepish I felt about the fact that she, a total stranger, had so easily exposed as essentially fraudulent the assertions that I had been making about my creative and professional life ... and which I ought to have been able to discover myself.'

'It is no exaggeration to say that my attendance at the CPD session was a deciding factor in my decision to resign from laboratory work and I'm looking forward to January 2007 when I shall be a full-time writer. Why was the session so influential? I learned the importance of sober self-analysis rather than the time-wasting self-indulgence of 'I'd like to be a writer but I don't have the time'. It gave my self-confidence a considerable boost, and

as someone whose sole income will be through writing, I can say with assurance that there's no such thing as writer's block ... especially with bills to pay.

'A further helpful outcome of my involvement was my subscription to the literaturetraining newsletter where I learned of the Crime Writers' Association's Debut Dagger Award. I entered my novel and found myself short-listed, doing wonders for my self-belief.

'My CPD session with [the guide] was part of the process that ever so gently and thoughtfully and persuasively gave me a much needed kick up the backside and I shall always be grateful for having availed myself of the opportunity.'

Case Study C

Profile: Having worked in arts management since 1992, 'C' moved to literature development in 1999 as a full-time Literature Development Officer, based within a local authority. She currently divides her time between being employed in literature, freelance work and developing her own literature touring business.

Session: 'C' was one of three literature development specialists who took part in a one hour session with an experienced career and life coach. This was billed as 'creative and professional development guidance' and was offered as an optional extra at the end of day one of a two day NALD residential training weekend in December 2003. Participants completed a preparatory questionnaire and were offered an opportunity to explore any specific issues relating to literature development work with NALD staff after the session.

'In 2003 I had a life coaching session which was offered as a free trial at a NALD residential course. I'd been a full-time Literature Development Officer (LDO) for five years, was feeling the pull of wanting to change jobs but wasn't sure where to go next. I'd booked on the course to improve practical aspects of my day-to-day practice. The life coaching was free and I came to it with an open mind and a sense of curiosity. I thought, 'why not?'

'My most vivid memories are about how it felt and some of my answers, which surprised me. My experience of professional development up to that point had been practical, tailored and targeted. This was open-ended, a bit touchy-feely. Responding to that in the midst of a practical, objective-setting course was a stretch, but the intense focus on my aims and aspirations gave me an unusual and very positive experience of validation.'

'Exploring the beliefs which underpinned my work, including examples of people who inspired me, reminded me how passionate I am about creativity. A space opened up, observed and witnessed by another person, in which I could articulate aspirations with a level of honesty and confidentiality which is rare. Asked about future ambitions I picked, without thinking too much, a project I dreamt up years ago, but considered mad and unachievable. We explored how it would feel to take that idea further, with an imaginary setting and partners who might help it develop. As we connected back with the real world and possible future steps, practical was now firmly connected to passion. This created a different framework through which to consider the future.'

'I didn't emerge from the session feeling everything had changed. We didn't develop an action plan and I had no desire to suddenly rush off and make all those mad dreams come true! But over the next few years, which included going on other courses, new work circumstances, setting up mentoring for myself and ultimately changing jobs, the experience of the session stayed with me. The combination of being taken seriously and talking about creative ideas I would love to pursue was very powerful. Over time this has been built upon, to the point where pursuing those ideas is now a priority.'

'Perhaps the changes I made would have happened anyway, but I do remember the session vividly and still want to make good on the sense of possibility I felt in that room. I look back at the notes from the session every so often. Some aspirations have now been fulfilled, others are still to be pursued. Approaching the session with an open mind may have helped generate my own surprise at the outcome. If I'd expected more practical suggestions, I might have been disappointed. But looking back now I believe it was exactly what I needed. A valuable opportunity to stop being so practical for a second, and re-ignite my imagination.'

Case Study D

Profile: 'D' is a writer, an editor and a creative writing tutor. Her creative-writing tutoring embraces mainstream and specialist groups in the community and in education.

Session: 'D' was one of six writers (all women) at very different stages of their careers, some emerging, some very established, who took part in a free one hour 'creative and professional development consultation' with an experienced creative and professional development coach in December 2006. All six sessions were delivered on the one day. The session formed part of a professional development programme for writers set up by a national agency for reading and writing in partnership with literaturetraining. There was an application process for the sessions. All the writers received a follow-up email from the coach six weeks after the session to check on progress.

'When I had the session, I was feeling trapped and frustrated and overwhelmed by the amount of mediocre writing in which I was forced to immerse myself in order to earn a living. I had also worked non-stop for the preceding two and a half years without sign of a break for a further six months. I was deeply unhappy with my living environment and very far away from any kind of peace of mind.'

'I wanted a session because, as a self-employed, creative-writing tutor, I don't really have any colleagues nor any employer offering professional development opportunities. Most of my professional life is about giving, so any opportunity for input to me is welcome. Relevant professional development opportunities in my field of work are rare. What I'd hoped for from it was an objective and perceptive analysis of, and response to, my situation, from an expert, and perhaps, for solutions that I couldn't see to be highlighted.'

'What I feel I gained from taking part in the session is self-esteem. It was immensely beneficial to be taken seriously as a professional writer and to be able to discuss my creative life confidentially with a sympathetic and empathetic stranger in a way that I have never been able to do before. I still remember the calm feeling in that spacious room where the session was held. I also found the session eye-opening because [the guide] was able to see things that I was too close to see. I enjoyed, for once, being able to talk about myself which otherwise seems a selfish indulgence. I found the summary of the consultation useful, and have referred to it several times since. I also came out of it able to see more light at the end of the tunnel.

'As for the kind of impact that the session had on my moving forward professionally, the session was only positive for me. It hardened my resolve to minimise my exposure to mediocre writing that leeches my creativity. It enabled me to reflect on my situation from previously unconsidered angles. It identified changes I could make and actions I could take, in a succinct list.

'In terms of actions that I've taken as a result of the session, I have finished a lengthy editorial project – that would have happened anyway – but I won't be taking such work on again in a hurry.

'I have also moved home. I think the session helped strengthen my resolve to do this. My income remains dependably precarious. I've sunk virtually all my savings (gulp!) into this home where my cost of living is now significantly higher.

'My non-fiction book has also been published – this would have happened anyway but the session gave me the confidence to think of myself as a writer, which has been endorsed by the success of my book which was reprinted six months after initial publication. Not only that, but a sequel has now been requested, so it looks like I'll get to write another book.

'One of the things highlighted in the session was the need for me to change my attitude. I think perhaps I need to acknowledge exactly what my strengths as a writer are, as opposed to what I might wish they were. That my book has been a success is a source of enormous pride to me. I didn't find it particularly difficult and I enjoyed the process. Perhaps by dreaming of success with fiction, I was following the wrong dream?

'In terms of income, I still don't need to start looking for further work, yet ... which is good.

'Another of the things highlighted in the session was my need to find work at a more stimulating level. This has come to me, on the back of my book, with some well-paid workshops and seminars at a higher level.

'I am now working less and I found time to read again when I had time off last summer. I decided, in part encouraged by the session, to give myself a break from all writing and learned to enjoy reading novels again.

'I think it is difficult to evaluate the specific impact of the session on what has happened since, but the increase in self-esteem, self-awareness and confidence has been invaluable. Thank you.'

Case Study E

Profile: The early writing career of 'E' was in education and arts journalism. In recent years, she has moved into scriptwriting and has written for stage, radio and film, receiving grants and bursaries from Arts Council England and the UK Film Council. Throughout her writing career, she has written short literary fiction which has been published in several literary magazines.

Session: 'E' was one of five writers (all but one of whom were women) who took part in a free one hour consultation session with an experienced creative and professional development coach in July 2004. The sessions were billed as 'Investing in Yourself: Professional Development for Writers' and took place on one day as part of a new writing theatre festival. They were organised in collaboration with a theatre company who invited particular writers to take part. 'E' contacted literaturetraining immediately after the session for specific information and advice and contact was maintained for some months afterwards.

'My experience with the literaturetraining creative and professional development session began before the actual session with filling in a detailed form. I mention this because I found the activity of filling in the form quite helpful as it gave me a chance to examine where I was professionally, to put some focus into the session and to set realistic goals for what I expected to get out of the session.'

'At that time, I had had a few plays produced locally and was a published author of fiction and non-fiction. Despite these achievements, I was finding it difficult to get stage plays produced at the better-known theatres or to get my radio plays produced. To add to this frustration was the feeling that I couldn't really have any more training; many of the workshops and courses I had been on were rather dull for me, given my background in literature and literary stylistics. I had even started mentoring other writers by that time. With all of this in mind, I went into the session hoping for some explanation of what I wasn't doing right.'

'During the session, we went over how I had been promoting my theatre and radio work. Here, I expected I would be told I should be doing something else. But much to my surprise, I had been doing all the right things; for example, networking and thinking outside the box by starting a small theatre company. What I needed to do, I realised, was to continue with those activities as they weren't just things to do in the first few years of being a professional creative writer. I understood then and there that the writing business involves continual promotion in a highly competitive environment and that I needed to be a bit more patient in expecting results.'

'Another valuable point that came out of the session was that the support I had for my work may not have been coming from the right people. I needed to get support from people who could actually do something about it, perhaps people who are more closely related to production of stage and radio plays. Up until then, most of my contacts were writers, script editors and freelance directors. In this respect, I feel the session made a positive impact on my career and the type of action I took. For example, with a recommendation from literaturetraining (their follow-up to my session), I enrolled on an Arvon course for

experienced radio play writers. As the course was run by two radio producers, I made valuable contacts who have helped to move that part of my career forward.

'Since this session, I have remained active as a playwright and radio dramatist, but given the competitive nature of the business and all of the time and money I've spent promoting myself, I've also returned to writing commissioned prose and spending more hours in part-time employment. While this was a difficult decision to make, the session I had with literaturetraining made me more realistic about the business of creative writing and less anxious about such a decision on my career.'

4

The Guide

Key Qualities

A skilled guide is a key component in the professional development planning process. The role is a varied one requiring the employment of a wide range of approaches within one session. (Upon asking a number of PDP guides to liken themselves to a household object, the responses ranged from mirror to sieve, notice board and knitting untangler!) As a guide you are privileged to wholly enter another's world for a short time and are placed in a position of great trust. One is often party to another's moments of insight, which can be very powerful.

The skills of listening and questioning are the key tools used but the role also demands a range of qualities.

Respect, Genuineness and Trust

Most of the core ingredients mentioned in Section 2 need to be embodied by the PDP guide. It may be the first time that the participant has focused singularly upon their career path or profession and frankly shared their related thoughts and feelings to someone outside of their situation. For some, it is not an easy process; others may be in difficult circumstances stemming from their professional life. It is important that the participant knows that the guide can be trusted with what they reveal and that they will be dealt with honestly and genuinely.

Empathy

The word 'empathy' is a translation of the German term 'einfühlung' which means 'feeling into'. Empathy involves being able – or endeavouring to – perceive a situation as the interviewee perceives it. It is very different from sympathy (this latter being concerned with appreciating how someone feels as YOU would in that situation). Empathy can be described as if walking in another's shoes or borrowing their spectacles. The participant's world – their thoughts, values, cultural influences, experiences, reactions and perceptions – may be quite different to that of your own as guide. An empathetic approach means that you are endeavouring to temporarily enter the participant's world and understand their situation from their perspective and conveys that you will not be sitting in judgement upon them from your own.

Self-Knowledge

An ability to look at oneself is important. Often our own personal prejudices and habitual behaviours may get in the way of our ability to offer empathic understanding. Developing self-awareness and learning about one's own personal preferences/predispositions is a useful exercise, as is remembering that 'there is no view from nowhere'.

A Positive Outlook!

A genuine liking for, and interest in, people and how they work is important. It is essential that the guide enjoys the process as this will come across to the participant. (Similarly, if you don't enjoy the process, or are not on top form yourself, this will of course also come across to them.) A sunny

and confident outlook helps, as this tends to generate a similar response in the participant. A sense of humour is vital. Sessions (or parts of them) can occasionally be tough going and the guide needs to be able to retain a sense of perspective for him/herself as well as the participant.

Perceptiveness

Guides need to be sensitive to, and able to read, situations and individuals perceptively. As a guide, you are likely to come across a range of individuals with a broad spectrum of values, beliefs and attitudes that are often operating below the surface or as a subtext to what is being articulated.

Common themes that may be observed are:

- Approval seeking – where self esteem stems for a large part from what others think
- Self-worth based on own success/competence which may therefore be accompanied by a fear of failure or need for perfectionism
- Holding on to a sense of injustice about external factors that can't be changed
- Avoiding risk/failure rather than giving something a try
- Fear of change/the new

(See Ellis and Harper's work on irrational beliefs in *A New Guide to Rational Living* (Wilshire Book Company) for further information.)

'The guide politely refused to be deflected by waffle in order to make me give more truthful answers to her questions. It allowed individual aspects to be seen with greater clarity.'

Courage

A willingness to challenge participants when appropriate/necessary may be required.

'My interview was most useful: it brought me up short by exposing aspects of myself which should have been self-evident to me, and was the verbal equivalent of a very polite kick up the backside.'

Patience

Allowing space for the participant to reflect is important. The guide should be comfortable with silence and not have the need to fill it for the sake of it. The guide needs to allow the participant to uncover, reveal or decide what they most want or need for themselves – not decide it for them before they reach that point for themselves.

Flexibility

Guides need to be adaptable enough to deal appropriately with a range of very different individuals. This may require use of a range of methods or approaches within sessions depending upon the participant.

'Rather than practical tools, we talked about self-belief and confidence, formulating an affirmation that merged the 'me' as a potential poet with the 'me' of the rest of my life. That may sound obvious, but sometimes it's the obvious we miss.'

Clarity

Clarity of thought, plus a good memory for detail, are helpful attributes. Often, participants will reveal large amounts of information in a fairly jumbled haphazard fashion. The guide needs to be able to retain, unpick and untangle the different threads in order to gain a clear picture on behalf of themselves and the participant. They need to be fairly organised in their thinking and in their reporting back.

‘The interviewer was very quick to identify important areas and issues – to get to what is foundational – and importantly to offer practical advice about how to deal with these issues.’

Focus

The participant is the centre point around which the session revolves, yet the PDP guide should still have command over the process itself in order to ensure that it remains focused. The participant may go off on a number of tangents, some of which may be relevant, some not. The guide needs to be confident enough to allow for this, yet also know when to rein in the content to ensure that the session remains a focused professional development planning process. For some sessions, this may require the guide to remain very motivated and retain an unobtrusive yet steely determination!

‘It was very useful to talk openly about my goals and ambitions to a professional who was able to sort through them with me and make some sense of it all. She also had very good practical advice on what steps to take to move forward.’

Sensitivity

An awareness and understanding of mental and physical health issues and how they may affect some people is important. The guide also needs to be aware that changes within professional life are often accompanied by a time of great personal change. A session can touch on areas that may be very raw for one reason or another and may trigger emotional outbursts on the odd occasion. As well as the availability of cups of tea at the start of an interview, it is also a good idea to have access to a box of tissues!

‘It was surprising, honest, valuable and very practical and encouraging. It allowed me to talk about very painful and difficult obstacles in my development.’

Confident of Role

The guide needs to be confident within their role as it relates to the context of the wider professional development scene. Depending upon differing situations or PDP services, one guide may have a sound general knowledge of the literature/new writing sector as a whole, while another may have a particular sub-sector specialism, and yet another may have a broad knowledge of the wider creative sector with their specialist area relating to learning and professional development.

Whatever the background of the guide, it is important to know where the boundaries lie within the context of the PDP service that is being provided. It may become apparent that the participant may benefit from a period of mentoring or from their work undergoing a professional critique and it may so happen that, with another hat on, the guide is well placed to deliver one or both of these services. However, the PDP process is about a separate and unique planning process, not about

the delivery of a mentoring relationship or a professional critique, although it may be appropriate to set up referrals for these within a PDP session.

'It was particularly useful to talk to somebody about my writing who had not worked in the business and therefore did not force her own ideas of what had worked for her upon me, but who (unlike family and friends) was able to take a detached, objective view of the issues I was facing.'

Appropriately Informed

Contrary to the belief of some, a PDP guide does not need to be an expert within the participant's field but they do need to rapidly develop expertise pertaining to the individual within the course of the session. The guide cannot be expected to know everything relating to the profession of the participant but they do need to be highly skilled in interview techniques in order to gain a good general understanding of the individual, as well as of the professional landscape in which they are operating. Knowing how, where and when to refer is key. A good guide should be able to signpost the participant on effectively to current, relevant and appropriate sources of support and should be confident about not having to know everything or provide all the answers themselves or within the session itself.

'I was (initially) a little disappointed that [the guide] wasn't a professional writer herself and had not had direct experience in the areas I was interested in (writing for theatre and television). However, she did help me find where/how I could find out more and she did help me direct my efforts. She was also very encouraging.'

Guiding and Advising Styles

A guide will develop his or her own particular style of guiding. Their approach will stem from a range of factors such as their own level or range of experience and knowledge, their own self-image, character and how 'other-person-centred' they are. Some guides may slip comfortably into a 'softer' listening style whilst others will adopt a more 'dynamic' probing approach, using clarification and focusing as a means to drive the process towards a conclusion. (However, being non-judgemental and accepting of the participant's perceptions, feelings and needs must underpin any approach that is adopted.)

Two common styles to be wary of are the 'Control Freak' and 'Lord/Lady Bountiful' – roles that may at times be undertaken by guides when finding it difficult to keep themselves out of the process. Many individuals who are drawn to guiding may do so out of a desire to help others or in order to pass on specific advice or hard-won expertise. Some guides may only feel comfortable if they are seen to be providing answers and need to be wary of how their self-esteem may be wrapped up within this role of 'expert' or 'benefactor'. It is important to recognise that eagerly jumping in with a 'what I would do is' or a 'you need to' can be overly prescriptive and can have the effect of taking the power from the hands of the participant. There is a useful section on guiding and advising styles in *Consulting for Real People*, Cockman, Evans and Reynolds (ISBN 0077093348 and 978-0077093341).

Further Training for Guides

Guides may come from a range of backgrounds and experience of life-coaching, counselling, advising, mentoring or NLP methods are all helpful. Individuals may find training within any of these areas to be of benefit. Guides may also wish to consider undertaking Disability Equality Training and training in Cultural Diversity Awareness. Here is some information about courses in Information Advice and Guidance, Counselling, Coaching and Mentoring, which may be of particular interest.

The National Open College Network (NOCN) accredits a number of courses in Information Advice and Guidance including the Level One Award in Information Advice and Guidance Awareness; the Intermediate Award in Developing Information Advice and Guidance Skills; and the Advanced Certificate in Information Advice and Guidance. Visit www.nocn.org.uk for a listing of NOCN qualifications and information about providers.

The NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Counselling Skills provides an introduction to the skills of listening, questioning and empathising within the context of one to one interviews. This 40-hour course is offered by many local FE/HE colleges and other providers. NCFE-accredited courses in counselling are also available at Level 3 and Level 4 (Diploma). Further details from www.ncfe.org.uk

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (www.bacp.co.uk) publishes a training directory and has information on accredited diploma-level counselling courses on its site. In Scotland, the equivalent course is the SQA Intermediate 2 Introduction to Counselling course which is again offered by many local FE/HE colleges and other providers. It is possible to progress from this to the COSCA Certificate in Counselling. COSCA is the professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland (www.cosca.org.uk) and its site has information on accredited courses.

The Coaching & Mentoring Network (www.coachingnetwork.org.uk) has an extensive listing of organisations involved in training and accreditation in the fields of coaching and mentoring on its site.

See Appendix 3 for information on other useful organisations and websites.

It's very useful for guides if they can experience a PDP session themselves. It may also be possible to sit in on a session or listen to an audio recording of a session but obviously the agreement of the guide and participant involved will need to be gained.

The most effective means of learning about PDP Guiding, however, stems from getting stuck in and learning from experience! Organising a practice session or two with a 'guinea pig' writer or literature professional is a good way to get started and gain confidence.

5

Core Skills

Active Listening

Active listening is at the core of PDP. This term underlines the fact that effective listening is far from a passive process. It involves more than hearing a stream of consciousness from the participant. This active process demands that we first grasp what the speaker means, and then communicate our understanding back to them.

Example:

Participant: 'I do enjoy doing the workshops in schools and it's good because it provides me an income of sorts ... but it's not moving me on. All the time I'm running around preparing writing activities for kids I'm thinking, what about the play – this isn't getting the play re-drafted – when are you going to sit down and sort out your own stuff?'

Guide: 'It sounds like there's some tension between the different strands of work that you do and although you enjoy it, you might be wanting to shift that balance away from the educational work. Is that it?'

The skills of 'active listening' are very different from the way we listen in everyday conversation. It means not only developing new skills but also possibly unlearning some old ones. It is about really concentrating on all that is being said, not on what you want to say next or what you want to hear.

An important element of listening well within a PDP situation is listening for long enough and not making decisions before or on behalf of the listener (resulting in a 'premature evaluation!'). Active listening also requires a whole body response and it is not just about what one hears. The ability to empathise with another is enhanced by an ever-alert attentiveness to other signals such as facial expressions, mirrored body language etc. and it is important to be aware of one's own non-verbal communication.

The combination of skills that are useful in the practice of active listening are paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, summarising, questioning, focusing and challenging. You may well be employing many or all of these techniques, yet it can help to heighten awareness of your use of these skills and their potential effect.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is the skill to verbally communicate to the participant that we have not only heard but have also understood. It involves attentive listening and also picking up non-verbal clues or body language, then selecting one's own words to describe the participant's experience. It is not simply repeating but it communicates that you have understood what you have heard, reflecting back the content and feeling of what the participant has related.

Example:

Participant: 'And there's the ongoing saga of my application for a travelling fellowship. It's been on the backburner for ages – I know that I should bite the bullet this year and send it off and see what happens, but that just feels so huge ... I'm not even sure how I feel about doing it any more ...'

Guide: 'So the idea of undertaking a travelling fellowship has been a long term one and although you feel that you should take some action towards applying for it, you have been reluctant to for a number of reasons, am I right?'

Reflecting Feelings

Whilst the focus in paraphrasing is on reflecting back the content of what has been said, the guide must also be able to hear the feeling of what the speaker is saying to make the reflection meaningful. **CONTENT+ FEELINGS = MEANING.**

Reflecting feelings requires an empathic response. It provides the opportunity to check that we have heard correctly or, if not, it provides the opportunity to clarify our understanding. Reflecting feelings conveys acceptance and understanding or acknowledgement of the participant.

Summarising

Information is often related in a random way. Summarising provides the opportunity to pull the various elements together into a more coherent fashion. Although similar to paraphrasing, it does require putting larger chunks of information together, when someone has talked for a length of time.

Summarising requires the ability to combine the attitudes of empathy and acceptance with the skills of paraphrasing and reflection, in order to construct an accurate and empathic summary of the main feelings, thoughts and themes of the participant's story. The purpose of summarising is to aid further exploration of troubling issues and to assist in reaching new insights. It is especially important when summarising a lot of received information to conclude with a question such as 'have I got that right?' or 'does that sum it up for you?' Otherwise you may be going off on your own agenda.

Example:

Guide: 'What I'm hearing, is that you feel that you need to seek opportunities to get your work published – but you are unsure how to go about it and on a deeper level you are unsure whether you are ready to expose your work to rejection, is that right?'

Summarising can help the participant to:

- Have their feelings, thoughts and experiences validated and clarified
- Check whether they have left out anything important
- Identify themes or contradictions

Summarising can help the guide to:

- Check out the accuracy of their understanding
- Check that they have not missed anything the person has said
- Bring different phases of the session to a close

The Use of Questions

Questioning can have the effect of clarifying a situation for the participant and guide. The guide may be asking questions from a range of positions - from ignorance, confusion or risk. (The guide may not have knowledge of the situation being described, they may have become confused or been given some conflicting or contradictory information by the participant, or they may be wanting to use questioning to challenge them.)

'I was impressed by how a strategically placed question or comment could open up in my own head new perspectives on what I could do to help myself. (I felt a bit of an eejit really!')

The guide should be sensitive about their motivation to question a participant and ensure that questioning is used purposefully to move the process on. The skilled guide will use a wide range of questions insightfully in order to get to the heart of the participant's situation.

'She went right to the heart and I'm grateful she did. Not therapy – practicality. Where? How? When?'

Types of Questions

Open Questions: Those beginning with who/ what/ where/ when/ which/ how/ why that require more than yes/no answers. They can help us to gain information whilst encouraging dialogue and inviting the other to expand on what they have just said. (NB ‘Why’ as an opening word in a sentence is best avoided if at all possible. ‘Why?’ can be subconsciously received as implied judgement, may sound blaming and tends to invite justificatory, defensive responses.)

Closed questions: Tend to invite short yes/no type answers. They are used to ask for specific pieces of information and useful to check understanding or close a subject/conversation. e.g. ‘Do you feel that rounds things up?’ They often begin with did/ are/ do you/ is it/ can you/ would you/ have you?

Encouraging Questions: Asking linked and supplementary questions to encourage others to expand and talk at length on important topics is a good strategy. ‘Can you tell me more about ...?’

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Questions: Appreciative Inquiry focuses us on positive aspects of our lives and suggests that we look for what works based on past experience. It is the opposite of problem-solving in that it employs a positive solution-based approach to experience rather than looking at the negative aspects in terms of difficulties/barriers. Some examples:

‘Tell me about a real highpoint in your career’

‘Go back to a time when you really felt you had power over your work. What were you doing then?’

Take Care! When asking questions, beware:

- Asking multiple questions requiring more than one answer in the same question
- Answering your own questions such as ‘was that difficult for you? I bet it was.’
- Asking leading questions
- Excess haste – be sure to allow time when necessary for the participant to absorb what they have been asked so they may debate or formulate a response internally prior to their vocalising an answer

Focusing

Initially many people may be vague or may present you with an issue that is not actually central to what they want to address. To offer a listening ear can sometimes be enough to help the person explore and sort out the key issues for themselves. However, many need help to become more specific. Focusing is most effective after some exploration has been made and draws upon issues that may have arisen earlier in the conversation. It can help to tease out strands of a conversation and untangle the threads. Focusing can also help the participant to face a situation fully and take responsibility for it.

Example:

'I feel better about my work now'

Focusing responses:

'Can you give a reason for that?'

'What has changed?'

'How have things changed?'

'In what way do you feel better about it?'

'Do you mean your work as a whole or a certain strand of work?'

Challenging

This is a process used sensitively and perceptively to help others confront their own attitudes/belief systems. The aim of introducing challenge in a situation is to enable the other person to see themselves and their situation from a new perspective. Generally a guide will sense when it is appropriate to offer a challenge, after a certain rapport and trust has been established, taking into account the ability of the other to benefit from a 'confrontation'.

It is important that we do not challenge others out of our own needs or frustrations (such as feeling time-pressured or impatient with how the interview is proceeding) and are introducing challenge non-aggressively for positive reasons. When introducing challenge it is important to make 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements ('what is beginning to strike **me**' or 'what **I'm** hearing is', rather than '**you** just said') and needs to be offered in the form of an invitation rather than an accusation.

Examples:

'It strikes me that the project that you are focused on the least is the one that actually is most important to you. Might that be because you are afraid to put it on the line in case it is rejected?'

'It seems to me that the one thing that you have been skirting around is ...'

Challenge is not about undermining or contradicting a participant's behaviour or attitudes. Neither is it about blame or judgement.

Language Use

As a guide, developing a greater awareness of the ways in which YOU use language can prove insightful. Within a communication, you are endeavouring to enable the participant to become more precise in approach and positive about making changes.

Some words are particularly loaded and worth listening out for:

- ‘MUST’, ‘HAVE TO’, ‘SHOULD’ and ‘OUGHT’
These words are all strong in that they make demands of the self and of others. Try to formulate requests rather than demands. (WOULD LIKE/CHOOSE TO)
- ‘CAN’T’ implies an impossibility – focus instead upon the ‘can’ and what is possible
- Be wary of over-using the word ‘BUT’ – try instead replacing it with ‘AND’. This changes the quality of thought and makes it more affirming/positive, adding to a statement rather than creating division/negativity.
- As stated earlier a straight ‘WHY’ can be challenging or accusatory. Replacing with phrases such as ‘How did that happen?’, ‘What led to that occurring?’ or ‘For what reason did/have/were you...’ may lead to a better quality of insight and communication.

Changing the way in which we use language can have a significant effect on the way we relate to experiences. The endeavour, as a guide, is to encourage the participant to perceive a situation more clearly. Therefore, it may be appropriate to challenge some of the participant’s use of language in order to encourage them to become more precise. Attitudes are habitual and the guide may want to encourage the participant to look with fresh eyes, whilst going more deeply into the situation and steering them away from making generalisations.

Examples:

‘I’m always really disorganised’

Always?

‘Everybody says I should just give it up’

Everybody?

‘I must finish that’

What would happen if you didn’t.....?

‘I want to be a better...’

Better than what? On a scale of 1-10 where are you now?

‘I can’t take any more time off’

What stops you? What would happen if you did?

‘I’m just hopeless really’

At what? In what way?

‘I really ought to...’

According to whom? What would happen if you didn’t?

‘I’m just not very good at it’

Who says? How do you know?

You may need to find more out about what’s been left out: **What specifically? How specifically?**

(The above examples draw on training materials devised by Rivca Rubin and on materials devised by Bernie Moss Associates for the All Ways Learning training day on listening, questioning, challenging, *Developing Guiding Skills*).

Checking

Getting into the habit of checking that the participant has said all that is necessary can be really helpful. Just as it is the thing that is mentioned in an offhand way upon exiting the doctor's surgery can be the real ailment, it is surprising how many times this practice of checking back may reveal what is at the heart of the matter within a PDP session.

Is there anything else? Is that it? Has that covered everything?

Some Listening Tips

- Avoid interrupting or finishing off sentences for others
- Beware of prejudices that interfere with good listening e.g. irritating voice or habit
- Resist distractions – such as following up interesting but irrelevant subjects
- Never underestimate the power of silence

6

The Professional Development Planning Process

Process Phases

There are four distinct phases within the PDP process:

1 Preparation

The phase prior to the meeting. (See Section 9 for a detailed breakdown of this phase)

- Defining PDP service (Aim/focus of service; Target audience; Who to deliver; Accessibility to interviews and management of demand; Open access or Selection; Where/when; Ongoing/one-off service; Duration of interview; Access to ongoing support)
- Informing others/Promoting PDP service to ensure individuals have clear expectations
- Selection process for PDP sessions undertaken (if appropriate)
- Arranging session time and venue (ensuring the space/venue is accessible/appropriate)
- Gathering any pre-session information (as required)

2 Beginning

The start of the session

- Checking expectations/setting boundaries
- Contracting the process
- Agreeing ground rules
- Developing a relationship/rapport

3 Middle

The 'working' phase – the content

- Gathering the story/portrait and developing understanding of situation
- Exploring issues/options/actions
- Establishing goals/targets
- Planning/Timetabling actions

4 Endings

Closure – what happens post-interview

- Written reporting (if appropriate)
- Referrals (if appropriate)
- Follow-up phone calls/emails/meetings
- Evaluation

The Session Framework

The session itself (the beginning and middle as described in the Process Phases overleaf) can similarly be structured into seven stages.

Summary of Session Framework

Duration (Mins)	Phase of Session	
5	Stage 1 – Beginning	Tea/Coffee, Establish Relationship/Rapport, Clarification of Expectations/Session Structure, Contracting
10	Stage 2 – Past Journey	Key points in journey to date (Highs/Lows) (*See note)
10 - 15	Stage 3 – Present Situation	Untangling strands/pressing issues, Time/Income balance
15	Stage 4 – Preferred Scenario	3-Year Vision, Elicit goals/outcomes, Prioritise How different from current situation – what has changed?
15	Stage 5 – Barriers/The Gap	Hurdles? What's missing? Constraints? What can be changed?
15	Stage 6 – Action Planning	What could support journey to preferred point? Who could assist? What strategies can be employed to work to preferred scenario?
10 - 15	Stage 7 – Conclusion	Recap, Agree actions, Closure of session

The duration of each stage is calculated for an overall session length of 80-90 minutes. Timings are only given as a rough guide.

* It should be noted that on occasions (i.e. if the guide is required to complete a certain number of sessions within a day at a specific event) it might be necessary to cut down the length of sessions. At such times, it may be appropriate to curtail (or, if really pushed, cut) this 'Past Journey' phase and move more rapidly onto the current situation.

Stage 1: Beginning Phase

- **Relationship/Rapport** – Ensuring the participant is comfortable and at ease. It is pleasant to have tea/coffee/refreshments available at the start of the interview.
- **Expectations** – Beginning a PDP session involves checking firstly that the individual understands what the process is. For example: ‘a focused and structured space to reflect with the benefit of an outside/impartial eye; an opportunity for you to articulate your current position with a view to gaining clarity regarding future steps; a space to plan some actions concerning career path/direction; the guide not there as fairy godmother but to assist in a planning process.’ Some guides may find it helpful at the outset to agree with the participant what they want to achieve by the end of the session. This can help the participant to focus and provides a marker in terms of evaluation at the end of a session.
- **Session structure** – It is helpful at the start to outline the brief structure of the interview i.e. we may begin looking at the past journey, move onto the present situation and then look towards the future; the session will encompass an exploration of barriers/goals and alternative routes/options/supports available.
- **Contracting/Ground Rules** – At the start of the session it is good practice to outline the proposed duration of the session and that there should be no avoidable distractions within the interview time i.e. phones off. This contracting phase also includes briefly clarifying what happens after the interview i.e. informing the individual as to whether there will be a written report, any follow-up contact or referrals. It is also good to establish at this stage how/whether the process will be evaluated and to let the participant know of any further requirements such as completion of any funding related paperwork if/as necessary.
- **Data Protection** – The guide should also outline a statement relating to confidentiality of the session and ascertain whether the participant minds notes being made (if you plan to take notes). It is a data protection requirement to outline what will happen to any personal information stored after the interview. The Data Protection Act requires that you should tell individuals what you will use their personal information for and any personal information that is collected must be used fairly and lawfully and in line with its original purpose of collection. You should explain any ways you may use the information they might not expect, for example, if you were to pass their contact details to other organisations. Information should be kept for no longer than is necessary and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that any data is kept secure. Individuals have the right to receive a copy of any personal information about them and have it corrected if it is factually inaccurate. (Business Link (www.businesslink.gov.uk) provide guidance on data protection and best practice).
- **Pre-session information** – The participant may also have completed some pre-session information, which can get the PDP ball rolling prior to the meeting. This serves to focus attention on issues that are arising for the participant and also provides the guide with some notion of where the participant is coming from before the pair meet. It can also be used to speed things up. (See Appendix 1 for sample supporting paperwork). The guide will find their own way of working with this information. Some guides will want to research

information prior to the meeting and use this record as a basis for the session. Some may not wish to refer to it at all, seeing it primarily as a process for the participant. Some may use it rarely, as a tactical prop in order to probe more deeply.

Stage 2: Past Journey

- **Key Points** – It can be useful to start the interview by getting the individual to give you a brief and concise run-down of their past career journey and how it has led them to their current position. Asking for the milestones of career progress to date can help ‘cut to the chase’. In addition you may also elicit more about why these particular events are significant to the individual.
- **Rapport** – Beginning by looking at the past journey can ease the participant into the process as this introductory stage can be quite free-flowing and is a good way of furthering the development of rapport with the guide.
- **Context and Perspective** – For the guide, an examination of the past journey is useful to begin gathering a picture and gaining some understanding of the context of the participant’s current position whilst pointing towards high/low points of their career journey so far. Many participants find that this reflection and their own articulation of their past journey can provide them with a sense of perspective as it can help to put their current position into context. It can also begin to untangle/reveal the many threads or strands that run through an individual’s career path and air broad issues.

The guide does need to keep this stage quite focused and concise. (See note in Session Framework about cutting this section if pushed for time.)

Stage 3: Present Situation

- **Untangling the Strands** – Exploring the participant’s current situation and what they currently have on their plate. This stage involves gaining a better sense of what’s happening and beginning to focus down a little more. This will also provide a better sense of workload and commitment.

The participant will lead the guide but phrases the guide may use include:

‘and what else?...’

‘I am getting a sense that ...’

‘What outcome are you looking for with that?’

(These and some of the following phrases in this section draw on materials devised by Bernie Moss Associates for the All Ways Learning training day on listening, questioning, challenging, *Developing Guiding Skills*).

- **Time/Income/Value Balance** – At this stage it can be very handy to get an idea of how different strands of activity balance out in terms of time/income/value.

Phrases that may come in handy include:

'How does your time balance out between all these strands of activity – if you had to split your work time into percentages what would the balance be?'

'It sounds like developing a sustainable income from your work is currently a very pressing issue. How does your time balance relate to the income you receive from the different elements ...?'

'I found that with the help of an objective listener, I was able to separate out the various strands of my work. They are all connected – they do all help nourish myself and others and promote my writing, but I had become tangled in my thinking about them; prioritising them was enormously helpful.'

Stage 4: Preferred Scenario

- **Three Year Vision** – This phase involves finding out more about an individual's goals and the position they want to reach. It can be useful to present this as a request to provide you with an idealistic/realistic vision of where they would like to see themselves within a specified time period, say three years. (NB Three years is a good mid-way point although some individuals may prefer to work to a longer/shorter time plan. It is also quite common for personal milestones/markers to reveal themselves at this stage and it is good practice to work with what you are offered which may involve working with both the shorter and/or longer term.)
- **Grounding/Checking** – This phase is about the participant looking up and out towards the preferred scenario they have established, whilst working with tangible, realistic expectations that are grounded in possibility/probability with some relation to their present work. The guide may need to refer back to the past journey as a way of checking in with the participant as to how realistic goals are, based on current achievement, to ensure that fanciful fantasies are not being fuelled. The guide may be required to help the participant to adjust or adapt their view or perspective from this stage onwards and this is where the skill of challenging links into the process.
- **Objectives/Outcomes** – Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced, Time-bound) and it is common for participants to come up with a varying number relating to the different issues that they are facing (three to five objectives are a manageable number to consider within a session). The participant may naturally phrase the future vision instead into a series of outcomes or the guide can ask the participant to do this. It is important to ensure that outcomes are stated in the positive (not what they don't want) and that they can be controlled or initiated by the participant (i.e. the outcome relates to some internal or external factor that it is possible to change). The guide needs to work with the participant to ensure that overall goals are clear although they can be tightened up further at the end of the session.

- **Prioritisation** – Working with the participant to define or clarify the order of priority of a range of goals is a vital element within this stage of the session. At times, just this simple act of reflecting on priorities can release the participant to focus just on what is most important rather than getting tangled up in bits around the edges that have been bothering them and wasting a lot of energy.

Phrases that may come into use in this stage include:

‘Would another way of looking at this be ...?’

‘Could another possibility be ...?’

‘From an outsider’s perspective it would appear that one of your strengths is ...’

‘Which of these options is the most attractive to you?’

‘If you were to look back from that three year point, of all the things you have mentioned, which element is the dearest to you – where would you want to have seen most movement?’

‘One of the things that became crystal clear is that I have developed quite a lot of work spinning off from my writing and am in real danger of spending more time on these than on what should be at the core of my practice – my own writing. We looked together at strategies for ring-fencing my own work.’

Stage 5: Barriers/The Gap

- **What is the gap?** – Establish what is currently between the participant and their envisaged three-year position. What are the hurdles, what’s missing, what needs to be overcome in order to get to the desired point, what are the constraints? It may be necessary or appropriate to look at each of the specified outcomes in turn. Again, this is about exploring the territory with the participant and helping them to take a focused look at issues arising.
- **What can be changed?** – Barriers may be internal or external. Factors that participants take into account may relate to experience, skills, confidence, focus or commitment. More externalised considerations may relate to a lack of contacts, information, finance or facilities. It is important to distinguish between what can and cannot be changed and to concentrate on working with what can.

Stage 6: Assistance/Support/Action Planning

- **How can I get there?** – Turning the ‘Barriers’ stage around to explore the options and what could assist the participant to reach their desired destination. What are the choices? What actions could help? Who might they contact? What strategies can they put in place that would aid their journey? What has worked before?

Phrases that may come into use in this stage include:

‘It sounds like there are a number of steps there – what would you say would be the easiest first step?’ ‘When do you ideally want to have achieved this?’
‘How will you put that into practice?’
‘So what you plan to do is ...’ ‘When do you plan to do that by?’
‘Are you aware of where you can get that support?’

Feeling overwhelmed can be a huge obstacle and can cause procrastination. Breaking things down so that the participant is clear about the very first micro-step they can easily take can be a huge stride towards a much larger goal (e.g. ‘simply’ identifying the relevant phone number can go a long way towards the participant feeling equipped to subsequently make the call.) If action is being avoided it may be necessary to break it down into even smaller steps.

- **Pinning down actions** – This stage is about helping the participant to draw together and pin down what actions need to be taken to begin working towards the desired position. This may well include reviewing professional development options (mentoring/training course/skill-sharing etc.) whilst being aware of personal/preferred learning styles.

Stage 7: Concluding (Goals-Action-Closure)

- **Goals and Actions** – A return to the vision/goals and ensuring that there is a clear journey plan towards the desired point. It is important that the objectives or outcomes that are agreed at this stage are well-formulated. The action plan would preferably include timings and an agreement of or commitment to the first steps. If appropriate, the guide may complete a form in conjunction with the participant that records the issues covered, actions to be taken and resources/support required (or this may be completed post interview – see Section 9 and Appendix 1). It may also be useful to have a copy of literaturetraining’s DIY guide to PDP, *Getting to where you want to be*, as this covers drawing up a plan of action in detail.
- **Closure** – This phase of bringing the session to a close is also about recapping what happens next within the PDP process. Will the participant receive a written report? Will there be any further contact? Will the guide make any referrals/broker any contacts on their behalf? Has the guide mentioned further sources of support and do they have all the necessary contact details? Are there any tools that could assist them further?

(A range of toolkit materials have been developed that can be used by practitioners to assist their PDP process. Exercises such as undertaking a SWOT analysis, conducting a Skills Audit and developing strategies to improve Time Management can be used prior to, following or even instead of a PDP session, depending on the individual situation.)

This may seem like an awful lot to get through in one session but it is possible! Put simply, the session is about exploring the current situation, defining a preferred scenario, then looking at a plan of how to get there. Each session is unique but there are common threads. In every case, the destination is unknown at the outset but the session framework is structured to help reveal the current situation and plan a journey from that point. It is not difficult if both parties are fully involved and immersed within the task in hand and don't become distracted. The guide does, however, need to keep an eye on the clock. At times, the pace may slow, or a session may begin to get bogged down in one particular area, in which case the guide needs to have the confidence to sensitively move things on, keeping an eye on the bigger picture, in order to progress through all the stages.

Bringing the session to an end can take a certain amount of confidence and when starting out, it may be useful if the guide has some techniques at the ready. If it has been agreed at the outset that a session is to last 90 minutes, it can help to inform the participant after an hour or so of how much time is still remaining and how much of the process is still left to cover as this can sharpen focus. This could also be used when you have ten minutes remaining. A concluding phrase such as 'that feels as if we've covered all we need to at this stage – would you agree?' may also be helpful.

REMEMBER! Begin with an ending in sight and end with a beginning in view – and don't stray too far from the path!!

7

Troubleshooting

Common difficulties before, within and after sessions

Before sessions:

Timing/Appropriateness

- It may not be the right time for a PDP session for some participants – even if they have actively sought one. There may be uncertainties/upheavals in other areas of their life that may make it difficult to look at future steps in career terms at this point. By their nature, sessions share attributes with counselling and may attract individuals seeking direction outside of their professional life. In these circumstances, the guide should be aware of the limits/boundaries of his/her role and advise if another setting would be more appropriate. Some participants may be vulnerable or at a stage which makes this kind of interaction difficult (perhaps because of mental or physical health issues). The Pre-Session Form will probably alert the guide to this and they should feel able to advise that a session would be better pursued at a later stage when other aspects are more settled.

Within sessions:

Lack of perception/self-knowledge

- On occasions, the participant may have unrealistic expectations relating to personal goals or the time that it may take to achieve them. This often stems from isolation, a lack of engagement with others and the wider context of their work or a lack of knowledge of where they sit within the professional landscape.
- The PDP process may reveal a number of personal/internal barriers. It may become clear that the participant is unwilling, or unable, to shift their perception or change a particular behaviour. It should be remembered that the PDP process is only one interaction within a career that may have spanned many years. Although a session can have a mighty effect on those who are ready, some will not be ready to face the challenges that reveal themselves.

Over-emphasis on production/work itself

- Often creative practitioners will be very engaged in their ‘craft’ or practice – this is the bit they enjoy and they may only want to think about the development of this particular area. However, in many cases, it’s a lack of skill in an entirely different aspect of their professional practice that is standing in their way and a more holistic approach to development is required. (Similarly a lack of emphasis on the work itself can also be problematic!)

Lack of understanding of the PDP process and its parameters

- Some individuals will be looking for a Good Fairy with a magic wand who will 'cure' everything for them and to whom they can devolve all responsibility rather than a PDP guide.

Organisation/employer vs. participant

- If the participant is working for an organisation, it is possible for conflict to occur if the participant and the employer/organisation perceive development priorities differently – and the organisation is paying for development opportunities! The process of PDP focuses on the participant's needs and therefore it is appropriate to explore strategies to deal with the above potential conflict within the session.

'It was useful to talk about my own personal life/work journey in a way that's not linked to 'outcomes' for the organisation I work for, but more in terms of my own journey, my goals, ambitions, emotions associated with it.'

After sessions:

Raised expectations relating to development needs

- The process of identifying development needs can raise expectations. Ideally, any PDP service needs to form an integral part of a wider professional development programme and be firmly embedded within its sector, so that participants can be offered relevant follow-up support/be signposted to other services etc..
- Not every 'gap' is a realistic individual development need – gaps may be filled in other ways e.g. by paying others to do a particular task. And meeting needs can be a long process – a measured, achievable and realistic plan of action is the best approach. Trying to meet all the needs at the same time may not be the best plan!

Common Difficulties as a Guide – Approaches to Avoid!

- **'The Fairy Godmother Approach'** – The guide is there to ask insightful questions and hold a clean mirror up for the participant to look into so that they can explore their situation for themselves. Wanting to 'fix' things for them – often by providing unasked-for advice or solutions or telling them what you would/did do in their position – takes the power away from the participant and does not serve them well. The magic wand needs to be theirs, not yours – the process is about helping them to find their own answers.
- **Having 'their' insight** – In some interviews you may witness an individual's 'light bulb moment' when a penny drops for them! You may well see it coming – and you need to allow them to have that moment and not have it for them.
- **Seeking the spotlight** – Throughout the interview the light is on them – you are most definitely the supporting actor and they are the lead. Keep the focus on them and stay out of the picture. The interview is not about you. Hold the mirror and keep out of the reflection

- **'The Analyst's Couch approach'** – Avoid entering into analysis (why do you feel like this? who made you react like that? when did you notice that starting?) Exploring who/what is to blame can distract from looking at practical steps towards taking action and will take up valuable time. The guide is neither a counsellor nor a life coach – although at times skills common to these roles may be employed.
- **Assuming you know what's best**

8

Signposting and Information

Generic/Specific/Combined Approach

Whether the PDP guide delivering the session is a sector-specialist or generalist, they need to have a good overview of a wide range of available information and advice sources. They do not necessarily need to know all the answers to specific queries but it helps if they either know someone who does or at least have a good idea as to where to start looking. It is also helpful if this overview relates to both PDP processes as well as sector information.

‘As for decisions, the guide made me realise that I don’t have to make them on my own; that people who seem self-sufficiently successful are usually those that make the most of the help and support of others.’

Information Needs

Participants who undertake PDP sessions vary greatly in how well informed they are. Some individuals undergoing a PDP process may be very well networked and are accustomed to giving out advice and information professionally, whereas others may be just starting out in a career. Any information that is given either within or as a result of a PDP session clearly needs to be significant and relevant to the participant interviewed. Some participants may be looking for information and advice about specific matters as part of a session and need to be referred appropriately to follow-up support sources.

‘I do have lots of information sheets and contacts, and sometimes just need to be told which ones to focus on. In general life, there is too much information available and what I need is the help/energy to focus – which you have provided.’

Sector Information

Information dates rapidly. Keeping abreast of changes within the sector, ensuring contact details are fully up to date etc. can be time-consuming but is of significant importance when delivering information. (literaturetraining maintains an online directory of literature training and professional development opportunities in the UK at www.literaturetraining.com This includes information on courses, workshops, mentoring, events, jobs, commissions, residencies, competitions, websites, organisations, networks, training providers, books, magazines, and funding for professional development. It also issues a fortnightly e-bulletin highlighting some of the new opportunities being added to the site. Its info sheet entitled National Resources for Writers and Literature Professionals in the UK is a useful digest of the range of resources that exist and is available as a free download from the site and in print format.)

It may also be necessary to keep on top of more localised or specific sub-genre information as relevant to the PDP service. This may be in the form of developing knowledge of regional or specialist networks, gatherings or groups and may involve making use of the expertise/knowledge of others. Don't be afraid to ask for help, information or support from anyone you think may know!!!

A certain amount of 'intelligence gathering' also goes on within PDP sessions themselves and may even result in contact being brokered between participants if and as appropriate.

9

Establishing a Professional Development Planning Service

Factors to consider

Although it is possible for PDP sessions to occur in isolation, it is clearly of far greater benefit if sessions can be delivered as part of a wider professional development programme. In order for a professional development planning service to be established, there are a number of factors that need to be considered. (NB There are no right or wrong answers to the questions raised – rather it is about developing a service that will best fit each differing set of circumstances.)

- **Resourcing the service/Making it sustainable**

A key question is how the service will be resourced and sustained. In most cases within the creative sector, individual PDP sessions delivered by publicly funded organisations are free and supported by outside funding (although some organisations may offer limited access to PDP sessions as part of a tiered ‘membership package’). Services that are offered free of charge are not always fully valued so charging a returnable deposit can be a good way to guarantee attendance. Circumstances differ according to when and where the service is established but some funding support for PDP within the creative sector has come in the past from the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Learning and Skills Councils and/or charitable trusts and foundations – usually via a patchwork approach. Sustainability currently seems to be connected to forging good relationships with mainstream funders and providers and making a convincing case for specialist CPD in economic terms.

Freelancers wanting to set up or deliver a PDP service may find this works best if it’s done in conjunction with an appropriate support organisation. A sample delivery budget is included in Appendix 1.

- **How does the provision of a professional development planning service fit with the key aims/activities of a hosting organisation?**

Does it add value? How does the provision of a PDP service fit with existing professional development services such as the provision of specialist information and advice, mentoring programmes, critique services etc.? It is important to recognise and articulate what is different about offering individual PDP sessions as opposed to other CPD opportunities and be able to advocate for such a service.

- **Who should this service be targeted towards?**

PDP sessions can be of benefit to individuals at any stage in their career but they are likely to have most impact on those who are already contemplating their professional development or career path, often due to being at a point of change or shift. A PDP service may also clearly benefit those in the early stages of their career.

- **Recruitment**

What steps are necessary to ensure that the service reaches those who are most likely to benefit i.e. the targeted audience? PDP sessions represent a significant investment in particular individuals and are 'costly' in terms of resources (admin, staff time, follow up etc.). Will participants 'self select' (first come-first served), be invited or be selected? How will selection/invitation take place and by whom? Selecting applicants can be time-consuming and lead to bad feeling yet a 'first come-first served' approach may mean that those who are most likely to benefit are unable to access the service. Inviting particular participants also has its hazards in that there is a subtle difference between a participant taking action themselves in applying for a session as opposed to being put forward by someone else, with the session perhaps being presented to them as something that 'could be good for you'. Making an application implies that the participant recognises that PDP is right for them at that point.

- **Promotion**

It is clearly vital to promote PDP sessions carefully and clearly in order to attract those who are most likely to benefit from such a service. This kind of service is unfamiliar to the sector and individuals need to know what they may expect from a PDP session, particularly so as not to confuse them with other CPD opportunities such as an advice/critique session or mentoring.

Various names have been used – Development Needs Analysis sessions (DNAs), Career Development Surgeries, Creative and Professional Development Consultation Sessions, Professional Development Planning Surgeries/Sessions. Names do have a tendency to be a bit over-long and high-falutin' and can suggest a particular bias/leaning. They can also put some people off! It is great if you can come up with a shortish name that best describes the service that the organisation wants to provide at the start! (Once a service becomes established, practitioners ring to ask for one of those one-to-one things you do!) Please see Appendix 1 for a sample info sheet.

- **Management of demand for sessions**

If the service is to be ongoing, how will demand be managed? x number of session slots within a specific time period? Application process? Operating an application process can help to identify who is most likely to benefit from a session but this can lead to high expectations of the service from participants that will need to be managed. Selection? Do sessions incur a charge and may this be a form of managing demand? Experience reveals that demand for PDP services can grow rapidly – particularly when word of mouth kicks in. Many providers find that managing demand is a real issue and do not formally promote (or even mention) their PDP sessions as demand increases. Equality of access then becomes an issue.

- **Who should deliver this service?**

To what extent does the guide need to have specialist knowledge? Could they be a well-informed generalist or just someone with good guiding skills? If they are a sub-genre specialist, they may be accustomed to giving (and being asked for) advice rather than providing guidance/professional development planning. On the other hand, someone employed for their guiding skills will require back-up in the form of comprehensive referral/signposting resources. The background of the guide – for instance, if they come from a life coaching background – will shape the service that is delivered as will the qualities of the guide.

What are the implications of a staff member delivering sessions opposed to a freelancer? Some practitioners may be wary of opening fully and honestly within a PDP session (particularly about their weaknesses/doubts) if an employee of a support organisation delivers it – especially if another role of that organisation is as an agent/potential employer.

- **Supervision/Support for Guides**

Whether the guide is a member of staff or freelancer, it is important that they pay attention to, and take responsibility for, their own psychological and emotional wellbeing and have access to adequate supervision and support from a more experienced guide in order to address any issues which might arise in the course of the work. literaturetraining has published some guidance on supervision and how it applies to PDP. This covers what it is, how you get it, what it costs, issues that can arise, confidentiality, peer support etc. It is available as a free download from the Professional Development Planning section of www.literaturetraining.com

- **When and How? Sporadic concentrated approach or ongoing and regular?**

How is it most appropriate to deliver sessions? Would it be possible to deliver sessions as a core strand within an organisation's menu of activities? Or would PDP sessions fit best within events that occur sporadically i.e. on offer within national conferences, festivals, regional events, learning and employment fairs, short-term professional development programmes? What about providing a phone PDP service? (This has yet to be explored as far as we know.)

- **Where?**

It is important to ensure that the interview space/venue is accessible, appropriate and safe. Sensible precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of the guide and the organisation may be required to observe a 'lone worker' policy.

- **How long/How many?**

How long should interviews last? One-off PDP sessions can last between one to two hours and most are at least 90 minutes. A session's length may also depend on whether any reporting is completed within the session or after it. In practical terms, a session's length is most often determined by capacity. Some participants may benefit from two or more sessions if their circumstances are particularly complex.

If sessions occur within specific events, how many sessions is it reasonable to consider undertaking in one day? Running consecutive sessions can be quite an intense and tiring experience and it is best for the guide to be aware of their energy levels and ensure adequate breaks. (It is possible to deliver up to six pithy one-hour sessions in a day but three to four longer ones may be a more satisfactory number for all involved, especially when a guide is starting out. Again, this is variable depending on the format and length of sessions.)

- **Access to information/resources**

Ideally, PDP sessions need to be part of a wider professional development programme to be most effective. Sessions can raise expectations and lead to demand for other development-related opportunities such as networking, mentoring or training. It is important to know how participants can go about meeting such needs. Allied to this is a need for a knowledge of the sector and how/where to best signpost participants. It is important to avoid participants being bounced around support organisations like ping pong balls.

- **Admin/Management**

There is a resources issue connected to the ongoing management of a PDP service. The service needs to be promoted. Selection procedures may need to be established. Sessions need to be booked and confirmed with details of venue/directions. Resources such as specific information/advice need to be provided/signposted towards. Reporting may need to take place. The process needs to be evaluated. If the service is a one-off rather than on-going, it is important to allow enough time and be aware of the workload implications of delivering the service and managing the procedures of recruitment, selection, follow-up and evaluation.

- **Reporting**

Reporting procedures need to be inbuilt in order for participants to have some form of record of the session/PDP process. This may be completed with the participant within the session or be produced afterwards either as a report by the guide or as an action plan provided by the participant. If the report is completed within the session, it is good practice for both participant and guide to countersign copies to evidence agreement of what has been written. If a report is sent following the session, the participant should be given the opportunity to amend/make additions to the record. (See the sample report form in Appendix 1.)

- **Recording**

An audio record of the session could be a valuable ongoing resource for the participant but the future usage of this recording would need to be agreed beforehand and there are resource implications. Having an audio record of sessions could also be a valuable training resource, both for the guide involved and for training aspiring guides, but again, ongoing usage/sharing of these recordings would need to be agreed beforehand. Recording may also subtly affect a session in that the level of intimacy shared when PDP is at its most effective can be great. A recording can signify the presence of an observer/outsider and may constrain the participant from fully disclosing information.

- **Follow Up**

The situation regarding follow-up contact needs to be defined. Will the guide get back in touch with the participant and if so, when and how? What form will the follow-up take – just sending on a report and relevant contacts/signposting info or is the PDP process ongoing? (This may vary depending upon the set-up of the service and whether the sessions are part of an organisation's core business, delivered by a member of staff, or whether the guide has been drafted in for a specific PDP event/project.) Is the guide scheduled to make any follow-up contact at a later stage to check on progress? If so, when and how? Phone calls can become quite involved and demanding of resources – email may be more manageable. Can the participant contact the guide again? Some form of follow-up contact with the guide is undoubtedly valuable and in some circumstances providing follow-up support may be crucial. Immediate contact post-session via a written report/record followed by an email at around six weeks seems to work well. All decisions about reporting and follow-up evidently have implications in terms of resources.

- **Professional Standards/ Quality Assurance**

EMQC (www.emqc.co.uk) is responsible for matrix – a national quality standard framework for any organisation that delivers information, advice and guidance on learning and work. See more details at www.matrixstandard.com. On a practical level, going through the accreditation process is a bit time-consuming (rather like undergoing OFSTED or Investors in People) and it doesn't come cheap. However, it can provide a beneficial health check and provides assurance

as to whether an organisation is providing a good service, on par with other sectors, nationally. matrix appears to be the most appropriate national quality assurance for those organisations that deliver information advice and guidance as a major part of their core services.

- **Professional Indemnity Insurance**

It is worth considering taking out professional indemnity insurance if you are an organisation delivering a PDP service or a freelancer acting as a PDP guide. This protects you against claims from clients who believe they have lost money because you gave them bad advice or negligent service. Lawyers, accountants and financial advisers are all required to have professional development insurance and other professionals such as consultants are increasingly opting for such cover as well. This is a specialist area of insurance so expert advice should be sought. Contact the British Insurance Brokers' Association (www.biba.org.uk) for details of suitably experienced brokers. An information sheet on insurance for PDP will be available on the literaturetraining site in autumn 2008.

- **Evaluation**

It is important to capture evidence of the impact of providing PDP services on an individual and sector basis, preferably both in the short and longer term (say immediately after the session and then at one or two different time intervals after six, nine, twelve or eighteen months). In a climate of short-term and increasingly target-driven funding, gathering and collating evidence like this can then be used to advocate for continued PDP provision. Please see Appendix 1 for sample forms. (literaturetraining has published a guide to evaluating one-to-one professional development for writers and literature professionals covering PDP, mentoring etc. – it is available as a free download from www.literaturetraining.com)

'After the session I was left feeling a sense of achievement, purpose and possibility.'

Please note: The aim of this handbook is to help to support professional development planning within the literature sector and in particular, the development of a network of PDP providers. When you come to establish your own PDP service or deliver PDP sessions yourself, we would be grateful if you could credit the work of literaturetraining and Jude Page in some way e.g. 'In developing this service, we would like to acknowledge the work on professional development planning undertaken by literaturetraining and in particular the handbook *Professional Development Planning* by Jude Page (literaturetraining, 2007) which is available to download from www.literaturetraining.com.'

Appendices

1 PDP Sessions – Sample Paperwork and Budget

- A Information Sheet
- B Pre-Session Form
- C Session Record
- D Session Report
- E Evaluation Form (for use after session)
- F Sample Follow-up Email (for use after 6 – 8 weeks)
- G Follow-up Evaluation Form (for use after 6 – 18 months)
- H Budgeting for a PDP Package

Please note: These examples of sample paperwork (A-G) can be reproduced and used as they stand or can be adapted as appropriate to the context. They are included as illustrations to give as full an insight as possible into the PDP process and are not intended to be definitive. Feel free to use them as a starting point if creating your own versions. We would just ask that however you use them, you credit literaturetraining as follows: 'This form draws on original materials devised by Jude Page for the handbook *Professional Development Planning* (literaturetraining, 2007) which is available to download from www.literaturetraining.com'.

2 Background Context

- A The World of Knowledge
- B The Learning Cycle, Styles and Preferences
- C Learning Methods and Routes
- D Learning Practices/Research

3 Useful Links and References

4 Bibliography

5 literaturetraining partners

Appendix 1

PDP Sessions – Sample Paperwork and Budget

A Sample Information Sheet

Getting to where you want to be:

One-to-one professional development planning sessions

In association with [name of agency]

Date:

Venue:

Would you like the opportunity to reflect on your career as a writer/new writing and literature professional and the direction that you would like to take it in, with the aid of a skilled professional development guide?

We are offering [insert relevant info here - such as, six London writers at any stage in their career, writing in all genres] the opportunity to take part in a one-to-one professional development planning session organised by [the agency].

What is it all about?

When did you last spend an hour with someone completely impartial, focusing solely on you, your career and your own professional development? A one-to-one professional development planning session offers you just this.

The aim of the session is to give you the opportunity to think in broad, holistic terms about your creative and professional development. During the session you'll have the opportunity to:

- Discuss what you'd like to achieve and when
- Explore what motivates you
- Look at existing skills/strengths and identify areas you wish to develop
- Consider resources that could help you to achieve your goals
- Identify possible obstacles and explore strategies to overcome them
- Begin to create a plan of action to achieve your goals

The session is designed to enable you to plan for your future development and therefore isn't about giving you critical feedback on your writing or providing you with specific information and advice about agents, publishers etc. (although you are likely to be signposted towards relevant information and advice sources as a result of a session).

Before the session, you will be asked to complete and return a short preparatory questionnaire. This can help to kick-start the process and allow you to begin thinking about any particular creative/professional development areas that you're currently interested in and would like to investigate further. This questionnaire is entirely confidential and will be seen only by the guide.

The guide

[insert biographical information]

Feedback from writers who've taken part in previous professional development planning sessions run by literaturetraining

'It was really good to get an 'outsider's' take on things. It's given me lots of food for thought.'

'Very useful indeed. Helped me to get a feel for the bigger picture and the kinds of practical steps I could take.'

'Well-prepared and focused. It felt good to have an hour devoted to forward planning for me.'

'It's very hard to find someone who can listen and assess and guide about career/creative development and this was a great opportunity.'

'Made me ask myself some searching questions'

How to apply

There are [number of] sessions available. These are free of charge. If you would like to apply for a session, please send your cv, together with a brief letter, outlining why you would like to have a session and what you would expect to get from it, and indicating your preferred day and session times (please give first and second choice of time), to: [the agency]

Application deadline:

We'll get back in touch the following week to let you know if you have been allocated a session. If you have any queries, please contact [name].

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B Sample Pre-Session Form

Name:

Q1 How would you describe your practice/what you do?

Q2 What would you say are the key milestones of your professional journey so far?

Q3 What skills and strengths do you already have? (Think of previous achievements, experience)

Q4 How would you like your career/work to develop? (You might like to think in terms of three years in the future)

Q5 Is there anything stopping you from achieving your goals? (Think in terms of your experience, skills, time, energy, confidence etc.)

Q6 What types of external support / resources might help you to reach your goals? (e.g. contacts, information, finance, facilities etc.)

Q7 Are there any specific professional development areas that currently interest you that you would like to investigate further? Please give brief details.

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C Sample Session Record (for completion within / after a session)

Confidential

One to One PDP Session at [name of agency]

Name: Date:

Key area/s of practice:

Issues covered:

Three-Year Goal/s:

Objectives (Prioritise and list up to 4 - include target dates for achievement)	Actions towards objectives (include timescale to complete actions)
1)	a) b) c) etc.
2)	a) b) c) etc.
3)	a) b) c) etc.
4)	a) b) c) etc.

Support / resource needs:

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D Sample Session Report

Confidential

Name: Date:

Key area/s of practice: Writer (plays, short and long fiction, articles); HE/FE drama lecturer; theatre director

Issues covered: Securing more time and energy to devote to writing and developing a career as a writer

Three Year Goal/s: To be a published/produced, and eventually full-time, writer

Objectives (Prioritise and list up to 4)	Actions to achieve objectives
1) Make changes to current job situation so have more time and energy to write	a) Explore possibility of reducing current job to four days a week b) Keep watching brief on possible job options e.g. other jobs in HE/FE, theatre (education etc.), literature development
2) Use short stories as a ways of raising profile as a writer	a) Research magazines, competitions etc. and send out existing five stories (one a month) b) Write new stories
3) Write a full-length stage play in 12 – 18 months	a) Seek workshop/course to help kickstart writing process b) Seek opportunities for readings of all/part of play c) Look for networking opportunities e.g. writers' days
4) Have a finished draft of a novel ready to send out to agents in three years' time	a) Research workshops/courses taking place either at weekends or in the summer in the South or London or further afield

Support / resource needs:

Industry contacts
 Feedback on writing
 Writing workshops
 Funding

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E Sample Evaluation Form (for use after the session)

Before the Session

- Q1 Do you think that [name of service] was an appropriate description of this session?
- Q2 Were you clear what to expect from the information you received prior to the session?
- Q3 Did you find it helpful to complete the preparatory questionnaire?
- Q4 a) Were the arrangements for the session satisfactory? b) Was the room appropriate?

The Session

- Q5 How useful did you find the session?
(5 = very useful, 1 = not useful) 5 4 3 2 1
- Q6 Please explain in what ways you found it useful or not useful.
- Q7 Was there anything the session did not cover that you expected it would, or that you feel would have been useful to you?
- Q8 How effective was the guide in helping you to reflect on how best you can move forward professionally to achieve your goals?
 Very Effective Effective Quite Effective Not Very Effective
- Q9 What actions do you feel that you can now take as a result of taking part in the session?
- Q10 Was it helpful to complete a record of the session with the guide? (or have a written record sent on after the session? – as appropriate)
- Q11 (If relevant) Do you think that the information resources sheet given out at the end of the session will be useful?
- Q12 If you were provided with information during or after the session, was it useful/relevant?
- Q13 Would you recommend a session of this kind to other writers / literature professionals?
- Q14 Any further comments?

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F Sample Follow-up Email (for use after 6 – 8 weeks)

Response 1 (at 6 - 8 weeks)

As I mentioned when we met in [date] I'm just getting in touch with all those who had a PDP session to act as a gentle memory jogger. I hope that you found the session useful. It's been around eight weeks since we met and I trust that things have been proceeding favourably for you over these weeks. So ... how are you doing in relation to any actions/developments that were discussed/recorded in your report? Any movements? Any setbacks?

Top priority –

[Insert question(s) here relating to their session report]

Please note that you do not need to answer these questions (or even reply). The exercise is really just about you reflecting back and asking yourself these questions - other things may have occurred or you might have moved on in different ways. And if you haven't yet taken specific actions on the areas you mentioned, don't waste any energy on guilt for not having done so yet – you will have had your reasons.

Best wishes

Response 2 (Following reply to 6 - 8 week email follow-up)

Thanks for your prompt reply. Good to hear from you. That all sounds really positive and all good news about [insert specifics] et al. I trust that all continues in the same vein. Onwards and upwards!

With very best wishes

G Sample Follow-Up Evaluation Form (for use 6 – 18 months after session)

Date/location of session: (*to be filled in before form is sent out*)

Name (optional):

Q1 How much impact, if any, do you feel that the session has had on your moving forward professionally?

(5 = a lot, 1 = not much) 5 4 3 2 1

Q2 Can you say a little about what kind of impact, whether positive or negative. And if you rated the session as having had little impact, can you suggest any reasons for this?

Q3 What would you say that you gained from taking part in the session?

(*Please tick as many of the following statements that apply:*)

- A valuable opportunity to spend some time reflecting on my work and what I want to achieve
- Greater clarity about the direction/s I want to take with my work and my priorities
- Increased sense of self-confidence and belief in my work
- An objective perspective on my situation
- A clearer understanding of the obstacles that do or could get in the way of my goals and the strategies I could use to get around them
- Help with identifying who and/or what resources could support me
- Information about resources that I didn't know about before
- Fresh ways of thinking about how I could move forward professionally
- Ideas for small, practical steps to achieve my goals that I can take straightaway
- The empowering realisation that I already know many of the answers already
- A more proactive approach to taking my work forward

Q4 Do you have any other comments?

Q5 How useful was the written record of the session?

(5 = very useful, 1 = not useful) 5 4 3 2 1

Q6 Have you taken any actions relating to your professional development as a result of the session?

Yes No If yes, please give further details, if possible:

Q7 You should have received a follow-up email about six weeks after the session.

A) Was this follow-up useful? Yes No

B) Was six weeks about the right time? Yes No Any further comments?

Q8 Do you have any suggestions for improvements to this xxx service?

Q9 Are there any current professional development matters that we can help you with?

Yes No If yes, please give details

Q10 Any further comments?

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H Sample Budget for a PDP Package

These notes have been written to assist a freelance guide to put together a budget for a package of sessions to be delivered in partnership with a host organisation. They are just to provide a rough guide as there are many possible variables including length of session, number of sessions to be undertaken, location of session, level of experience of guide and the nature of their specialist expertise/knowledge for signposting/referral purposes.

Overall, it is advisable for a guide to allow around five hours' worth of work per PDP session. The approximate breakdown for this would be:

Hours	Activity
0.75	Prior contact with host/participant and reading of Pre-Session Form
2	The Session
1.5	Follow up research/Writing up and sending on Session Record
0.75	6-8 week Follow- up Email

With this scenario, the responsibilities of the Host Organisation would be:

- Initial marketing and recruitment of applicants
- Sort applications
- Contact applicants
- Provide guide with participant contact details
- Make session arrangements – including timings and location
- Meet and Greet – be on hand on the day to provide teas/coffees, collect evaluation forms etc.
- Share specialist knowledge/expertise with guide as necessary depending on participants' requirements.
- Collate evaluations
- Pursue and collate evaluation at a later stage (6 – 18 months after session)

Additional Allowances:

Lead in:

If there is a selection process for sessions and the guide is to be involved, then this needs to be factored in. (As an example, add another two hours to go through applications for three sessions.)

Follow up

The host may require further contact with the guide regarding how the sessions went and what came out of them. This may be as an informal chat, a summary email or a written report and therefore, some additional time may need to be allowed.

Cost of supervision and professional indemnity insurance

It is important for PDP guides to have access to adequate supervision and support from a more experienced guide in order to address any issues which might arise in the course of the work.

Rates (based on those for counselling supervision) will be around £35/40 an hour. It is worth considering taking out professional indemnity insurance if you are an organisation delivering a PDP service or a freelancer acting as a PDP guide. Professional indemnity insurance is bespoke so a quote must be sought from an appropriately experienced broker. The COSCA site (www.cosca.org.uk) has information on insurance for counsellors or contact the British Insurance Brokers' Association (www.biba.org.uk).

Guiding Rates

These will depend upon the experience of the guide and/or the size of the budget available. Work around a ballpark figure of £300 - £450 per day. (A very experienced guide could charge £500 per day.)

Timings

If developing a package of sessions, you should ensure that you allow enough time between sessions and don't programme too many in one day, particularly when starting out. A maximum of four ninety-minute sessions in one day would be a good limit.

Appendix 2

Background Context

A The World of Knowledge

This outlines four scenarios relating to the acquisition of knowledge:

1 Unconscious Competence – Things that you don't know that you know This is the kind of knowledge that we take for granted or have forgotten that we have learnt e.g. a competent, experienced driver will change gear when necessary without having to consciously think about how to do it unlike a learner driver. Individuals may not easily be able to recognise these knowledge or skill areas. If stood on a globe or world of knowledge, this would be the area of knowledge behind where we stand.

2 Conscious Competence – Things that you know you know

Knowledge that is readily available to you e.g. you know how to put together a funding application. If stood on a globe or world of knowledge, it would be what you can see to the horizon.

3 Conscious Incompetence – Things that you know that you don't know

For example, you know that you require some kind of check prior to leading workshops as a writer in schools but don't know what exactly or how to get it or who to ask about it. If stood on a globe of knowledge, this would be what is beyond the horizon.

4 Unconscious Incompetence – Things that you don't know that you don't know

Things that we don't even know the existence of so often don't know to ask someone about them e.g. there is a poetry competition coming up that you didn't know the existence of with a deadline for entries next week. On a globe, this would be the other side of the world.

B The Learning Cycle and Learning Styles/Preferences

Knowing Your Own Learning Style

If you have to master a new piece of equipment or construct a piece of furniture from a DIY store, how do you choose to tackle it?

Do you:

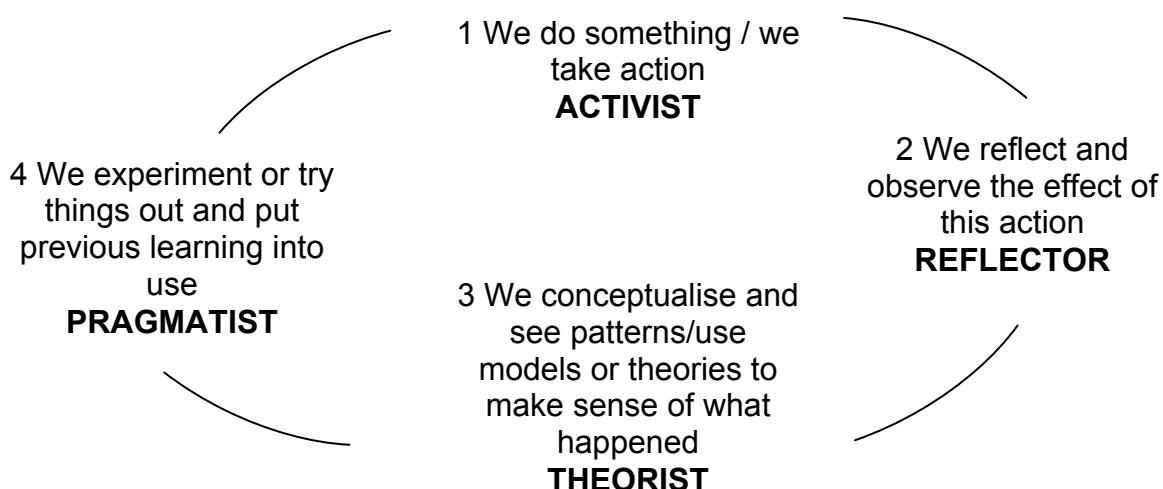
- A) Read the instructions?
- B) Use trial and error / Bash things randomly?
- C) Ask someone to show you?
- D) A combination of the above?

These are pointers that can help you to identify your own learning style. (Most of us have elements of more than one).

The Learning Cycle

People have different preferences when it comes to learning. In the seventies David Kolb and colleagues developed the idea of a four stage learning cycle, which mirrors our natural learning process. He felt that for learning to be effective, it was necessary to move through all four stages as seen below in the numbered text. (See David Kolb's site www.learningfromexperience.com)

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford went on to use Kolb's cycle to study learning styles and drew the conclusion that there are four basic styles (Activist, Reflector, Theorist, Pragmatist) and that many people predominantly use one way of learning and are uncomfortable using other ways.



Knowing one's own preferences – and knowing that other people may have different preferences – is valuable knowledge if taking responsibility for learning. For further information on learning styles, visit the About Your Learning section on the Campaign for Learning site (www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk). This has more information on learning styles taken from the Honey and Mumford Learning Styles Questionnaire, a full online version of which is available from www.peterhoney.com on a pay-as-you-go basis for £10. Your results include a full report with suggestions about how to become a more effective learner.

Useful links:

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

Campaign for Learning was created with the sole purpose of championing the cause for lifelong learning, and is a good starting-off point for finding out more about learning..

www.allwayslearning.org.uk

Very informative and wide-ranging website, specifically related to learning and professional development for people managing the arts, with good links and references

C Learning Methods and Routes

Professional development does not just mean training days or courses but covers a wide range of activities. A variety of learning styles, preferences and processes imply that it is advantageous if a range of routes or methods can be offered according to the preference of the learner (i.e. attendance at a short practical course opposed to reading a text book). When taking up learning opportunities, practical considerations of timing, location, availability and price are also important factors.

Listed below are a number of learning or development methods and approaches:

Self-Directed

Reading reports /Professional journals/ Books
Using the Internet
Time-Out / Reflection Time
Sabbaticals

One to One

Distance learning with a tutor
Mentoring
Supervision
Work shadowing

Peer/Group Based

Skill-Sharing
Conversations with colleagues/peers
Formal/Informal meetings
Work placements
Job swaps
Action learning sets
Being a member of a network/forum

Training/Development Events

Attending conferences/events
Interactive workshops
Seminars
College courses – Full/Part-time
Short specialist courses – Residential/Non-residential

D Learning Based Practice/Research

Neuro Linguistic Programming (or NLP)

Richard Bandler and John Grinder initially created NLP in the early 1970s and the field continues to evolve. Neuro Linguistic Programming involves the study of human experiences, communication, thinking, language and behaviour and noticing conscious and unconscious behavioural patterns. A wide range of methods and models are used to offer an understanding of how people think, learn, behave and change. In more detail, the initials signify:

Neuro: The way you use your senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell to translate experiences into thought processes consciously and unconsciously.

Linguistic: Refers to how you use language to make sense of your experience and how you communicate both to yourself and others. Your language patterns signify how you think.

Programming: The impact of the patterned ways in which you think, feel and behave on your experiences and ability to learn.

Writers on NLP maintain that we develop preferences in our habitual thinking patterns – we may, for example, respond more significantly to visual, audio or sensory experiences. Such preferences could help to explain why some people prefer pictures, diagrams or demonstrations as opposed to talks or lectures, whilst yet others prefer group exercises or role-play. (<http://www.anlp.org> for more on NLP)

Multiple Intelligences

More recent research into how our brains work and how we learn has developed new ideas about 'intelligence'. In 1983, Howard Gardner introduced his Theory of Multiple Intelligences providing an alternative to the established understanding of intelligence. He espouses that every individual has a unique combination of nine different kinds of intelligence that reflect different ways of interacting with the world. For more on multiple intelligences, see <http://www.multi-intell.com/whatismiq.htm>

Other related links and references:

www.mindtools.com Alternative personality/learner indicator tests plus Belbin Team Roles

www.teamtechnology.co.uk Information on Myers Briggs Type Indicators

www.kaisen-training.com/how/brain_friendly_learning.html Brain-friendly learning

www.queendom.com/tests/iq/emotional_iq_r2_access.html Online resource full of a wide variety of psychological tests including access to a free emotional intelligence test

<http://www.businessballs.com> A large resource of accessible learning-based research, games, exercises, quizzes, surveys etc.

www.ruby3.dircon.co.uk/Training%20Files/Theory%20Pages/kolb.htm All about learning theories

Appendix 3

Useful Links and References

Self-Assessment Toolkits

literaturetraining has commissioned the author of this handbook to write *Getting to where you want to be*, a DIY guide to professional development planning for writers and literature professionals which is available online and in print as a free resource. www.literaturetraining.com

All Ways Learning, an organisation supporting the learning and professional development of people managing the arts in the South East of England, has a Professional Development Planning toolkit aimed at arts managers which is available online and in print www.allwayslearning.org.uk

a-n, The Artists Information Company, has developed *The Artist's Development Toolkit*, a very comprehensive interactive online toolkit for visual artists and students, which is available via their website www.a-n.co.uk

A professional development toolkit targeted towards self-employed freelance practitioners, and a training needs analysis toolkit aimed at micro-medium sized arts and cultural organisations, are available from the Northern Cultural Skills Partnership www.ncsp.co.uk

Useful Individuals and Organisations

Libby Anson

Professional and creative development guide and lecturer who has been coaching artists, designers and writers for over ten years

M: 07939 243 579

E: libbyanson@aol.com

Bernie Moss Associates

Executive Coaching, Team Development, Management Development, Personal Development, HR Consultancy

E: Bernie@bernie-moss.co.uk

Rivca Rubin Individual and Organisational Development

Runs theCreativeCoach, a 12 day certificated training programme in performance, management and life coaching specifically designed for people working in the arts and cultural sectors. Also runs a range of short courses including The Leadership Dynamic, Communicating with Clarity and Your Creative Drive.

www.rivcarubin.com

The Association for Coaching

One of the leading professional bodies for coaches and organisations involved in executive, business, personal, speciality and team coaching. Site includes list of recommended reading.

www.associationforcoaching.com

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

The UK's largest counselling and psychotherapy organisation with over 24,000 members. Offers training information, individual accreditation and further continuing professional development.

www.bacp.co.uk

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

The UK's leading professional body for those involved in the management and development of people. Offers Certificate and Advanced Certificate courses in Coaching and Mentoring.

www.cipd.co.uk

The Coaching & Mentoring Network

Extensive site with information on organisations involved in training and accreditation, links to other professional bodies, books section etc..

www.coachingnetwork.org.uk

COSCA

The professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland. Site has listing of COSCA-validated counselling courses, plus information on accreditation, insurance etc..

www.cosca.org.uk

Cultural Leadership Programme

Two-year Treasury funded investment in excellence in leadership across the creative and cultural industries. Website has information section on coaching, mentoring and facilitation.

www.culturalleadership.org.uk

EMQC

Responsible for the assessment and accreditation of organisations to the matrix quality standard of delivering information, advice and guidance on learning and work

www.emqc.co.uk

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council

Independent, non-profit making organisation that exists to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe.

www.emccouncil.org

International Coach Federation

Leading organisation dedicated to advancing the coaching profession with more than 11,000 members in 82 countries. Offers coaching credentials that are recognised worldwide.

www.coachfederation.org

The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

Leading awarding body for leadership and management qualifications.

www.i-l-m.com

The National Open College Network

Site has listing of NOCN accredited-awards and information about providers.

www.nocn.org.uk

NCFE

National awarding body – site has information on accredited counselling courses

www.ncfe.org.uk

Professional Guild of NLP

Established to promote quality NLP training and to encourage further developments in neuro linguistic programming.

www.professionalguildofnlp.com

Appendix 4

Bibliography

Coaching For Performance, John Whitmore (Nicholas Brealey Publishing)

Consulting for Real People, Peter Cockman, Bill Evans & Peter Reynolds (McGraw-Hill)

A Manager's Guide to Self Development, Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (McGraw-Hill)

The Manager as Coach and Mentor, Eric Parsloe (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

A New Guide to Rational Living, Ellis & Harper (Wilshire Book Company)

The Skilled Helper – A Problem-Management and Opportunity-Development Approach to Helping, Gerard Egan (Wadsworth Publishing)

Social Skills in Interpersonal Communication, Hargie, Saunders & Dickson (Routledge)

Go to SAM's Books, the specialist book service for all those involved in arts management, for these and other related titles www.sam-arts.demon.co.uk

Appendix 5

literaturetraining partners

The National Association of Writers in Education (lead partner)

The one organisation supporting writers and writing of all genres in all educational settings throughout the UK

www.nawe.co.uk

Academi

The Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors

www.academi.org

Apples & Snakes

England's leading organisers of performance poetry – stretching the boundaries of poetry in performance and education

www.applesandsnakes.org

Lapidus

Membership organisation promoting the benefits of the literary arts for personal development, health and wellbeing

www.lapidus.org.uk

The National Association for Literature Development

The professional body for all involved in developing writers, readers and literature audiences

www.nald.org

renaissance one

A leading organisation for the curation and production of literature and spoken word tours and events

www.renaissanceone.com

Scottish Book Trust

Scotland's national agency for reading and writing

www.scottishbooktrust.com

Survivors' Poetry

Promotes the poetry of survivors of mental distress

www.survivorspoetry.com

writernet

Provides dramatic writers with the tools to build better careers and redefine the culture in which they work

www.writernet.org.uk