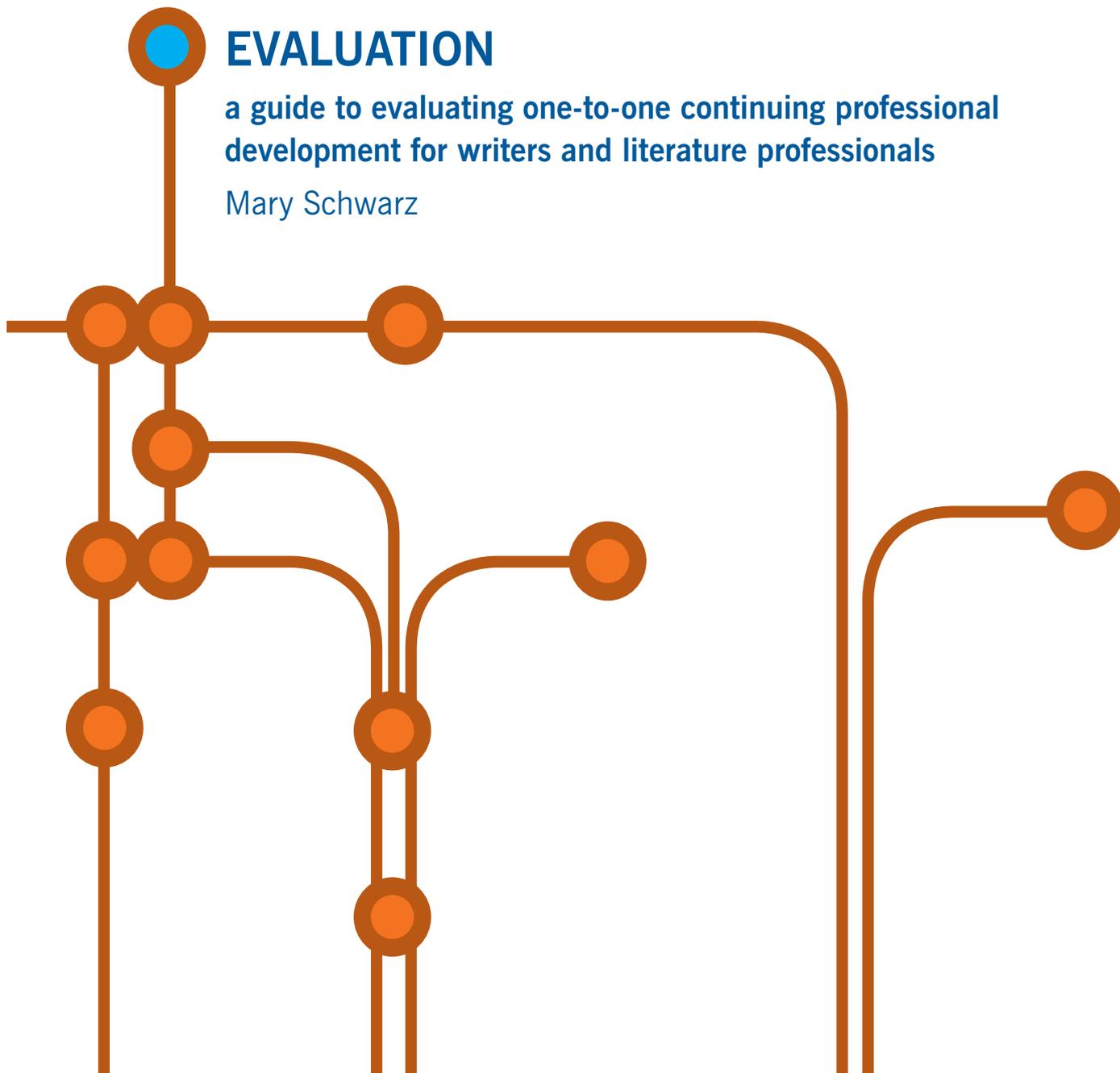




EVALUATION

a guide to evaluating one-to-one continuing professional
development for writers and literature professionals

Mary Schwarz



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literaturetraining
PO Box 23595
Leith EH6 7YX

0131 553 2210
www.literaturetraining.com

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Mary Schwarz

About the author

Mary Schwarz

Mary Schwarz has worked as an arts and cultural manager for over twenty years, holding posts in a regional arts funding agency, local authority and higher education institution. She has a previous background as an English teacher. Her current freelance consultancy practice includes managing, delivering and evaluating continuing professional development programmes.

About literaturetraining

literaturetraining is a wing of NAWE, run in conjunction with its other partner literature organisations Academi, Apples & Snakes, Lapidus, NALD, renaissance one, Scottish Book Trust, Survivors' Poetry and writernet, with a specific remit for providing information and advice on professional development for writers and literature professionals.

Drawing on the expertise and experience of its partners, its links with networks such as The Playwrights Network curated by writernet, 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.

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www.nawe.co.uk

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The Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors

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Lapidus

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

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The National Association for Literature Development

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

www.nald.org

renaissance one

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1

Introduction

This practical guide is aimed at those who provide, or are considering providing, one-to-one continuing professional development (cpd) to writers and literature professionals, including those involved in writer and audience development in the literature field. By one-to-one cpd, we mean provision such as professional development planning, mentoring and coaching. As a cpd provider, you may be a literature development officer, work for a literature organisation, or be a writer yourself.

In our research for this guide we found that whilst there is a growing number of publications on how to set up different kinds of one-to-one cpd schemes in our field and very interesting evaluations of programmes that have taken place, there seems to be little focused, detailed guidance on *how* to evaluate such provision. We saw this as an opportunity to share some understandings about evaluation principles, practices and techniques, with the aims to explore how evaluation can:

- deepen learning
- enhance the delivery of provision
- evidence impact.

Our approach has been to draw from a range of sources, including guidance on the evaluation of:

- one-to-one cpd programmes in literature development and other fields
- training and learning programmes in other fields
- arts education and participatory arts projects
- community development projects

and, of course, our own experiences of professional practice across the fields of one-to-one cpd provision, literature development and evaluation.

We hope you will find ideas in this guide that you can adopt and adapt to fit the particular provision you offer. This may be a formal programme for many practitioners or one-off support; you may be undertaking or co-ordinating an internal evaluation or contracting an external evaluator. We think it's important to have a strategy for evaluation and to draw from a wide range of evaluation methodologies and techniques. We hope you will find this guide prompts effective planning and an informed choice of practice. A range of evaluation techniques is provided so you can pick and choose what suits you - don't feel you have to use them all! You may want to try out different techniques over a period of time. As additional support, you'll also find appendices with a question resource bank (with examples of questionnaires), glossary and bibliography.

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Definitions and terms

For the purposes of this guide, the following definitions are used:

Professional development planning (PDP)

‘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.’

Jude Page, *Professional Development Planning* (literaturetraining, 2007)

In this context, we refer to guided PDP, where another individual assists the professional development planning process.

Mentoring

‘Mentoring is a process through which someone with expertise and experience in your field of work chooses to support you in a time of transition.’

Martin Goodman and Sara Maitland, *The Write Guide: Mentoring* (New Writing North, 2007)

Coaching

‘Coaching is a means of bringing about individual performance improvement so that each individual might move towards his or her full potential. Whilst coaching shares many characteristics and requisite skills with interventions such as mentoring and counselling, it differs in its emphasis on raising awareness and consequently not requiring experience/ expertise in the underlying issue.’

Matt Somers, *The Coaching & Mentoring Network* (2001)

At least two people are involved in these types of cpd provision and if it is a service for several people, there is often a third - the person organising a programme. Sometimes there might be a steering or management group as well. In the interests of directness and brevity, we bring professional development planning, mentoring and coaching together under the title of ‘one-to-one cpd provision’ and use the term **programme manager** for those who organise (e.g. the co-ordinator of a mentoring programme); **provider** for those who deliver (e.g. a coach); and **participant** for those who are the beneficiaries of the provision (e.g. the person engaged in guided professional development planning).

3

Evaluation: what it is and can be

What do we mean by the term evaluation?

Here are a couple of definitions:

‘Evaluation is the collecting of different points of view about your work, analysing them and drawing conclusions in order to measure how successful it has been.’

Vivienne Freakley and Rachel Sutton in *Essential Guide to Business in the Performing Arts* (1996).

‘Evaluation is the process of calculating worth.’

François Matarasso in *Defining Values: evaluating arts programmes* (1996).

Annabel Jackson, in her *Evaluation Toolkit for the Voluntary and Community Arts in Northern Ireland* (2004), answers the question of what we mean by evaluation, by saying it is:

- the art of asking interesting and provocative questions
- about evidence
- about causation (why did something happen)
- about different perspectives
- about reflection
- about learning.

From outside the arts sector, the Charities Evaluation Service states:

‘Evaluation... is about using [monitoring and other] information to make changes and improvements.’

These ideas of value, learning and making changes inform our suggested approaches to evaluating one-to-one cpd provision. We think that evaluation can deepen learning both *within* and *about* the cpd process, as well as document the ‘results’ of learning in terms of its outcomes and impacts. In other words, it’s not just about answering the question, ‘Did the provision make a difference?’ but tackling the additional questions of, ‘How did it make a difference and how can we share and apply the learning from that?’ In this way, evaluation is a learning process itself and can be an effective tool for change for all parties involved.

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Why do it?

There are three main reasons why you might evaluate one-to-one cpd provision, for: accountability and satisfying funders; advocacy; and for learning and development.

Accountability and satisfying funders

Funders and other stakeholders will more often than not want to know that their investment - whether money or time - has been used appropriately and effectively. They may want specific evidence that the provision has met its aims, been delivered on time and on budget, and that achievements can be demonstrated. Their expectations may be clearly expressed in terms of the reporting they expect from you, which will be a key determinant in how you plan and implement your evaluation.

Advocacy

Gathering information about the positive impacts of your cpd provision and presenting successes in an engaging way can advocate the work to new potential participants as well as funders. Evaluation can broaden both the reach of what you do - and also people's perception of it.

Learning and development

Evaluation can help you:

- clarify your aims
- improve processes
- identify successes and failures
- demonstrate and improve outcomes
- learn and plan for future provision.

For programme managers and providers, evaluation can help you assess how well you are doing so you can do it better next time (continuous quality improvement) and for participants, it can deepen the learning processes in which they are engaged. Many funders and stakeholders are also interested in evaluation for learning and development.

This guide focuses mainly on evaluation for learning and development to improve practice. Improving practice can apply to the:

- learning processes themselves (learning how to learn better)
- application of learning into work (developing your writing, your coaching skills etc.)
- management of learning opportunities (enhancing what you offer, how you offer it).

We aim to encourage you to think about evaluation as a prompt for new thinking and new ways of working, and not just about answering the questions you want to ask to find out what has happened.

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Planning and implementation: an overview

It's very important to develop a specific strategy for evaluation as part of planning one-to-one cpd provision, so it is an integral, rather than bolt-on, element of the work. This also means you can incorporate evaluation costs into funding applications, as appropriate, and establish timescales and what you need to manage the evaluation process early on in the process. This will often mean a particular allocation of your time; it may also mean the allocation of time of a steering or management group, or indeed the establishment of a specific group to oversee the evaluation. Having a strategy also means you have a clear framework of expectations from which you can secure the agreement of those to be involved in the evaluation.

To help you develop a strategy, it's useful to consider the following key questions, once you are clear about the main reason for your evaluation, as above. These questions are adapted and developed from the '5WH' model used in *Mentoring: A Guide to Effective Evaluation* (Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, 1999) and guidance available on <http://www.kaizen-training.com>.

Why am I undertaking the evaluation?

What do you want to find out or achieve through the evaluation? Being clear about your desired outcome(s) will provide the starting point for the evaluation; having specific objectives and measures of success will help you decide what evidence you need to collect, when, where, how and by whom. Remember it's acceptable to focus on selected specific issues rather than try to cover every possible aspect of provision.

What evidence do I need to collect?

There are some key considerations here:

- do you need to gather the views of stakeholders or others as well as programme managers, providers and participants?
- will the data you capture be both quantitative (numbers of participants/ sessions/ completions etc.) and qualitative (development of knowledge/ skills/ attributes)? The latter can be quite challenging e.g. just how do you measure growth in self-belief? We have some suggestions later...
- will you cover all activities and/or all people involved?
- will you look at some or all aspects of provision e.g. design, delivery, learning experience, outputs and outcomes/impact?

- can you build in ways of evaluating unexpected outcomes as well as checking against your measures of success, whether your aims and objectives have been met?

‘One way of focusing on the ‘what’ question is to consider the three aspects of **inputs**, **outputs** and **outcomes**. **Inputs** generally refer to the resources (time and money in particular) spent to make the [event] happen - and evaluation can help you understand how efficiently and effectively this was done. **Outputs** refer to the ‘deliverables’, such as the number of activities and attendances, which can be measured against what was planned. **Outcomes** refer to the impacts and effects... where quality matters as well as quantity.’

Mary Schwarz in *Design, deliver, evaluate: how to create effective professional development events* (All Ways Learning, 2008)

Donald Kirkpatrick has developed a four-level model of evaluating training and learning that is widely used and considered as an ‘industry standard’ in training and human resource development work. It is usefully adaptable to one-to-one cpd in our field. Whilst Kirkpatrick started developing his model in the 1950s, he has continually refined it and his most recent book on the subject (2006) is listed in the bibliography. The four levels of the evaluation model essentially measure the following (with reference to our specific context given in italics):

- Level 1** **Reaction of the learner** - what they thought and felt about the training
(enjoyment of the learning and the particular way/process in which it was supported e.g. through being coached)

- Level 2** **Learning** - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability
(transfer of learning, for instance, acquiring new writing skills or new knowledge of literature networks, contacts etc. from a mentoring input, or an increase in self-awareness of strengths and development needs through facilitated PDP)

- Level 3** **Behaviour** - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation
(application of learning, for example, writing in a new genre; undertaking training to meet recognised development needs; managing your work/practice better)

- Level 4** **Results** - the effects on the business or environment
(effect on performance: the tangible impacts of doing something new or differently because of the cpd experience e.g. improved writer-in-residence practice leading to greater involvement/range of writing from participants; getting published; setting up a new project/partnership; gaining promotion; success with fundraising).

How will I collect evidence?

Will you use:

- questionnaires
- interviews
- learning journals
- case studies
- creative approaches?

Whilst we are concerned here with one-to-one cpd, if provision is through a formal scheme or programme with a number of participants, there's also the possibility of including collection of evaluation evidence through participatory group techniques. Always make sure the methods you choose fit with your values and working practices, help you follow equal opportunities good practice and are manageable, given your time and cost resources. It's really important evaluation is integral, not intrusive, to the one-to-one cpd experience. Combining different methods, which cover both qualitative and quantitative techniques (see **Glossary**), is advisable to give you a rounded picture. See the next section **Evaluation techniques** for lots of ideas.

Where will the evidence be collected?

Will this be wherever the cpd provision is being held, as an integral part of the process of reflective learning within a session, or will you expect participants to spend time writing up their reflections afterwards, back at home or in their workplace, as appropriate? Will you be collecting evidence from work colleagues or professional contacts?

When will the evidence be collected?

- do you want to gather some baseline data before the provision starts?
- will you hold periodic reviews?
- will you gather information near or at the end - or even some time after - the provision?

If it's possible to collect evidence at all these stages, you will be able to measure 'distance travelled' - how far learning has enabled a participant to develop and put that learning into practice - and the longer term impact of provision, most effectively. Experience shows us that the full impacts of one-to-one cpd take a long time to manifest themselves fully. In the case of professional development planning, desired outcomes and impacts may in any case be planned for several years hence!

Who will collect the evidence?

If you're a 'one-person band' or working for a small organisation, evaluation may be a case of 'do it yourself'. However, if you're working within a larger organisation, you may have the option of using an external evaluator. Even if this option isn't open to you, we hope you'll find the following analysis of the 'pros and cons' of external and internal evaluators of interest, as it gives another set of perspectives on the role.

To help you decide whether to use an external or internal evaluator, it's helpful to bear in mind the following benefits which have been adapted from Felicity Woolf's *Partnerships for Learning: a guide to evaluating arts education projects* (Arts Council England, 1999), Annabel Jackson's *Evaluation Toolkit for the Voluntary and Community Arts in Northern Ireland* (AJA, 2004) and Jane Thompson's *Paul Hamlyn Foundation Evaluation Resource Pack* (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2007):

External evaluators can:

- carry greater credibility, especially with funders, because of their specific expertise and independence
- bring a different, objective perspective, contributing knowledge of good practice elsewhere
- provide specialist skills e.g. in questionnaire design
- raise questions people in the organisation may be unable to
- act as critical friends and offer learning support to programme managers.

Internal evaluators can:

- draw on first-hand knowledge of the context, culture and working practices of the organisation/programme
- work from an existing commitment to provision
- engender trust easily
- enable learning about evaluation techniques and the results of the evaluation to become embedded in the organisation/programme
- enhance the commitment to putting into practice any recommendations for future provision.

The primary disadvantages of using an external evaluator (bar the potential higher cost, which is an important resource issue) is that it sometimes means a loss of integration and ownership of the evaluation, and can be intrusive. Whilst an external evaluator will be committed to doing a good piece of work, once they've made their recommendations, they leave and don't have responsibility for following through. On the other hand, an internal evaluator can be, or be seen to be, biased and partial, unable to be sufficiently self-critical on behalf of the organisation or programme. Sometimes pressures of other duties and tasks can impact negatively.

The 'downsides' in both cases can be mitigated, primarily through clarity of the evaluation brief, appropriate choice of evaluator (if you have a choice!) and the evaluator briefing (even if this is a question of making sure for yourself that you are really clear about what you are going to do in a 'do it yourself' situation!). Checking there are shared expectations of the evaluation between the commissioner/steering group and the person/s carrying it out, with a clear strategy to ensure all parties concerned have an input and a variety of methodologies is used, all assist in robust management of the evaluation, whether it's undertaken by an internal or external person. Even if the work is to be undertaken 'in-house', it's worth looking at a very useful guide to writing an evaluation brief which you can find at <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/downloads/include-10-16.pdf>.

The multi-perspective evaluation, that also includes those able to observe or experience the impact of cpd on participants in their work, can provide a very rich understanding of the processes and impacts. In this respect, self-evaluation - especially by participants - is very important, and places some evidence-gathering responsibilities outside of the evaluator, although they have a key role in providing the framework and suggested techniques in which this can happen.

The '3Rs' of evaluation

Alongside the '5WH' approach, we also recommend you remember the '3Rs' of evaluation: resourcing, (w)riting and reporting.

Resourcing

It's important you're realistic about the resourcing available - in terms of money, expertise and time - for your evaluation. For example, the decision whether to use an internal evaluator or appoint an external one, is highly dependent on this. If you're running a programme and are expecting the evaluator to undertake some participatory group evaluation, bringing together all the participants, you'll need to budget for a venue, refreshments (always advisable!) and possibly travel costs. You may also want to consider holding an evaluation event to launch the dissemination of the evaluation report. This may just be a celebration and thanks to all involved, or it may be the opportunity to hold a more 'public' event, if you want to advocate the provision to a wider audience - with the resultant cost implications!

(W)riting

Letting people know the rationale for the evaluation and the methodologies to be used is very important to help ensure 'buy in' to the process - so a brief written explanation that can be sent to and/or used with people participating is really helpful. You probably have mentor/mentee or coach/coachee agreements or contracts, and writing into these what is expected in terms of evaluation input is very useful. Writing to thank people for their participation in the evaluation is also good practice.

Reporting

In simple terms, reporting on the evaluation findings should provide a picture of what has happened (and why/how) and form the basis for making any recommendations for future provision. Annabel Jackson (*Evaluation Toolkit for the Voluntary and Community Arts in Northern Ireland*, 2004) usefully reminds us that a good evaluation should be:

- meaningful (with a clear purpose)
- accurate (based on sound information)
- fair (balanced and respectful in its coverage)
- useful (relevant and timely)
- practical (cost effective and non-disruptive).

Other key principles to bear in mind in reporting are confidentiality and anonymity: usually, a commitment to both is made, and whereas the inclusion of direct quotations provides powerful evidence, these should normally not be attributed. Determining to whom an evaluation report is addressed, what they want and/or need to know and what you want to tell them, are also key issues. You may also want to disseminate the evaluation findings more widely than the main audience - either in terms of the whole document, a summary or an external version that excludes sensitive issues only appropriate to an internal (management) version.

More detailed suggestions about report writing are given in **Section 7 Reflecting and reporting**.

6

Evaluation techniques

In one sense, all evaluation is about asking questions about what has happened and what has been experienced - and then analysing, reflecting on and making judgements on the evidence gathered. However, there are different types of question to ask, different ways of asking them, and different times to do so!

It's important to match question content and questioning technique and timing with the type of provision you're offering. For instance, in coaching and mentoring, a relationship is established to support a developmental process over a particular (sometimes quite lengthy) period of time, whereas with professional development planning, someone may have just a couple of sessions with the guide and spend more time after the one-to-one relationship has ended in pursuing self-directed development. So you can start to see where there may be more or less emphasis on evaluating the one-to-one relationship itself and where it may be essential to undertake follow-up questioning some time after the provision has finished, to find out fully about the impact!

We start this section with some advice about questions, questionnaires and interviews. We then look at journal writing as another individual-based contribution to evaluation and also consider the use of case studies. Next we describe some techniques suited to group evaluation situations. These include some physical and visual techniques, the latter of which can also be used on an individual basis, adapted for use within a questionnaire format or within one-to-one sessions, often as prompts for further evaluative discussion.

It's also worth noting that you're likely to pick up all sorts of informal feedback along the way as well, for example, when sending people their PDP session records - so be alert to gathering these unplanned contributions as well!

Questions

There are basically two types of question: open and closed. Open questions give people the freedom to say what they want, in their own words, and need flexible 'space' (whether in talking/listening time or on paper/screen) for their responses. Open questions are very good for gathering opinions, experiences and feelings and may take some time to analyse.

Closed questions limit and predetermine the responses that can be given and are usually one of three types:

- needing one of only two or three possible responses e.g. *yes/no/don't know*
- opinion rating/scoring e.g. *agree strongly/agree/agree slightly/disagree slightly/disagree/disagree strongly* or using a scale 6 to 1, where 6 represents a lot (e.g. learned a lot), and 1 represents nothing (e.g. learned nothing)

- multiple choice with given categories e.g. the most significant thing I gained from mentoring was: *confidence/ contacts/ specific writing skills/ career management skills.*

In terms of format, it's usually easiest to use tick boxes for these types of question, but format will depend to some extent on whether you are using a paper or online questionnaire. If you have specialist market research software, then there will be a range of styles from which to choose.

Closed questions are usually quicker to answer and analyse than open questions and are best for collecting facts and figures e.g. '60% of mentees said their most significant gain from mentoring was confidence.'

Often you can put together a closed and an open question, like this:

*How useful was the professional development planning session?
(6 = very useful, 1 = not useful)*

6	5	4	3	2	1
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Please describe what you gained from the session.

And Questionnaires

Written questionnaires (whether paper based or on line) are commonly used in evaluation, and the following points are useful to bear in mind when using this method:

- Think through carefully what evidence you want to (and can best) gather from a questionnaire, and how you want to use that evidence
- Keep the questionnaire as short as possible
- Give a clear description of the evaluation at the start of the questionnaire and explain how information will be used, including issues of confidentiality and anonymity
- Detail approximately how long the questionnaire will take to complete, to whom and when it should be returned, and thank the respondent for their participation. Give the return information and thanks again at the end
- Present the questionnaire in a clear, accessible format and layout, using plain language, avoiding jargon and spelling out acronyms
- Use clear and consistent numbering or lettering systems, so people can 'navigate' easily

- Explain clearly how questions should be answered e.g. tick or cross in a box, underline, write in etc.
- Devise questions from the point of view of the respondent and ensure they are 'neutral' i.e. not 'loaded' or anticipating a particular answer (e.g. 'Why was the mentoring so successful?')
- Avoid 'double barrelled' questions that are actually two questions in one! (e.g. 'What did you learn and how?')
- Ask straightforward questions first, more sensitive ones, or those requiring a longer answer, later, aiming for a logical sequence; group related questions (and types of question), using headings if helpful, and try to balance quantitative and qualitative questions
- When using an opinion rating or scoring question, use an even number of possible answers, as otherwise people tend to plump for the middle description/number and responses are less focused and differentiated
- Order the content of fixed response questions as logically as possible
- Leave demographic questions till the end, and present these sensitively (and of course, you may have collected this sort of information at an earlier stage)
- Try to ensure questionnaires can be completed within 'provision' time, if possible, otherwise it's often difficult to get a good response rate - although stamped addressed envelopes or the use of a FREEPOST address (and systematic chasing!) often helps. If appropriate to the situation, offering a free prize draw with a relevant prize does genuinely boost response rates!
- Always pilot your questionnaire to iron out any problems with format, clarity of meaning, equal opportunities/cultural bias, ease and appropriateness of response.

Interviews

Questionnaires ensure everyone (or every *type* of respondent) is asked the same things, and **interview** questions are best based on the same principle. Interviews, however, can be more flexible and offer more opportunity for asking more probing questions and eliciting richer responses, providing an effective two-way exchange between evaluator and evaluation participant is established.

Some points to note when undertaking face-to-face interviews:

- Ensure that good interviewing skills will be used (e.g. being able to put the respondent at ease; listening carefully; keeping an accurate record of what is said) and that the interview will take place in a comfortable place without any interruptions

- Think through carefully what evidence you want to (and can best) gather from an interview, and how you want to use that evidence
- Keep the number of questions as short as possible and use the principles above - as appropriate to the different format
- Give a clear description of the evaluation at the beginning of the interview and explain how information will be recorded and used, including issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Bear in mind that taking notes while someone is speaking can be distracting; taking notes afterwards may mean inaccuracies creep in; recording an interview requires the respondent's agreement, and means allowing for transcription afterwards (or possibly repeated listening!). With these challenges, choose the method with which you feel most comfortable and able to mitigate in-built difficulties
- Say how long the interview will take (although hopefully you will have already been able to convey this when setting up the session)
- Check back your record of the interview with the respondent, if possible.

When undertaking telephone interviews, many of the points above apply. Telephone interviews can be more cost-effective, and often people feel more prepared to speak out critically in this situation, although the evaluator/interviewer may find it harder to establish rapport - and certainly can't rely on reading body language to gauge more nuanced responses!

Case studies

Case studies are effective for describing and analysing the journey of a particular person undertaking one-to-one cpd and can bring the 'story' (qualitative) side of evaluation very much alive, alongside the 'stats' (quantitative) side. It's advisable to use a defined structure or key headings/questions that can be used when interviewing for material, whether this is from the participant themselves, their cpd provider or a colleague. Checking for accuracy and being clear about confidentiality/anonymity issues are particularly important for case studies. You could also ask people to complete a written form to create the material for the case study. An example of a case study of someone undertaking professional development planning is given in **Appendix II**.

Suggested areas to cover in a case study:

- situation, experience and feelings about professional practice/work before one-to-one cpd began
- reasons for, and expectations of, undertaking one-to-one cpd
- experience of the process and relationship with guide/coach/mentor
- learning and other gains
- impact on practice/work
- actions taken as a result of the cpd.

Journal writing

Learning journals are becoming an increasingly recognised tool in developing reflective practice within professional development. They can offer a very useful way of encouraging those participating in one-to-one cpd to use writing (and also visual images) as a tool for self-evaluation of learning, which in turn has the potential to deepen that learning in the process.

Learning journals - which may also be called diaries, think books, work books or logs - can take many different forms, and of course verbal reflections may be captured in audio recording rather than the written word on the page or computer. Maximising the critical self-enquiry and reflection possible within learning journals may need some support and guidance. In terms of using material for the wider evaluation purposes, you need to negotiate with participants to ensure they only offer what they want from this essentially internal process.

Learning journals offer the opportunity to build from a recording of learning experiences to incorporate critical thinking, greater understanding of the individual's learning process, giving shape and meaning to experience, making connections, owning learning more profoundly and so on: essentially a process of 'writing to learn'.

If you're interested in exploring learning journals further, the books by Jennifer Moon listed in the bibliography are a comprehensive resource.

Group and creative evaluation techniques

Group evaluation

If you're running a one-to-one cpd scheme or programme, you may be able to bring people together for group evaluation activities, whether as separate groups of providers and participants, or even as a mixed group. Whichever techniques you choose to use, the framing and facilitation of any session needs especial attention in respect of issues of diversity and confidentiality, given that it's likely that participants will have been on intensely personal learning journeys within the closeness of a one-to-one relationship. This often provides a different dynamic from everyone taking part in the same 'taught' training programme (even though, of course, what is experienced and received from such provision is individualised).

Think through carefully how much you want to focus on finding out what people thought about the management of the programme, and how much on what difference it made to them; be clear what is expected, or not, in terms of personal disclosure in this group context and how this will be respected.

On the more conventional end of the continuum, holding a discussion-based **group review meeting** mid-way through a programme and again at the end is a useful way of generating evaluative feedback. It's important to ensure the environment (room, furniture, refreshments etc.) reflects the value you place on people's contributions, and that the usual good practice facilitation skills are used to ensure everyone feels able to have their say and be listened to.

It's often helpful to prepare some key questions or issues in advance (depending on what you want to achieve out of this particular evaluation method) so you can keep the discussion focused, whilst being flexible in accommodating the unexpected but significant!

Creative techniques

On the more creative end of the continuum, there are many exercises you can use to get people reflecting and sharing those reflections, and below we describe a few of these. Many are also suitable for individual evaluation use, given some adaptations, as we suggest below.

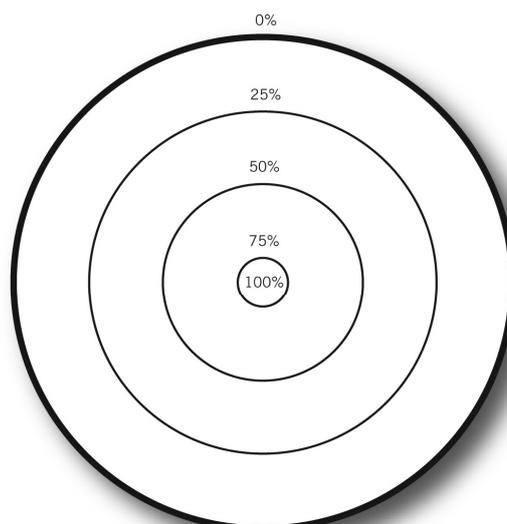
a) Mapping the learning journey

The key events in the learning journey are written along the centre of a roll of newsprint or lining paper (e.g. making the application to the mentor scheme, the interview, being matched with a mentor, the sessions etc.). This can either be done in advance, or by someone in the group - with everyone's help in reminding them what happened, when! Participants are then invited to post their comments about their experiences and learning over the journey. This could be done with marker pens, perhaps different colours, perhaps with 'highlights' above and 'lowlights' below the particular events - or with post-it notes. Shared discussion generated in the process adds evaluative material to what actually gets placed on the learning journey map.

This technique is useful for individuals too. For example, a mentee illustrating their learning journey as a map can be a rewarding exercise in self-reflection and could also be shared with their mentor, as part of discussing and reviewing changes over the period of mentoring.

b) Archery target

Each objective of the cpd programme is written up on a flipchart with a simple dartboard bull's eye drawn beneath (i.e. concentric circles). Each person is asked to make a mark (in pen or with a sticker etc.) accordingly to how well or how poorly they think the objective has been achieved. This can be a stimulus for further discussion.



In terms of individual use, the 'target' could be a self-identified aim and a simple diagram incorporated into a questionnaire.

c) Diverge, converge

Three key questions are asked, such as:
 What were the strengths of the programme?
 What were the weaknesses of the programme?
 What would you recommend for the future?

Each person has three small blocks of different coloured post-it notes. On one (agreed!) colour, they 'answer' the first question as many times as they like (i.e. one 'strength' per post-it note); on another colour they answer the second question; then on the last colour, the third. The post-it notes are then stuck on flipchart paper, one (at least!) headed sheet per question. Then the group is divided into three small groups, each taking one of the flipcharts. They can then review and group the answers, discussing and reporting back to the whole group on key issues arising.

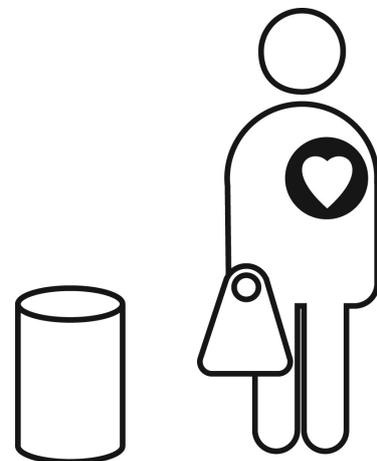
d) Moving answers

This is technique that can be used if you feel confident about participants' ability and willingness to participate in some physical activity (and the space is adequate!). A qualitative statement is made about the provision (e.g. the most significant outcome was ...). In one version of this technique, each corner of the room is designated a response such as: strongly agree, partly agree, partly disagree, strongly disagree - and the centre of the room is designated the 'not sure' area. Participants are asked to choose their corner and discuss their views with others there, noting three key points to feed back to the whole group. In another version, participants are asked to form a line across the room representing where they are on an 'agreement' line - where one end is 'strongly agree' and the other is 'strongly disagree'. They can then pair off to share views and report back one agreed shared main point.

e) Head, heart, carrier bag and dustbin

This technique also requires sensitivity about mobility, and can be 'prepared' in advance and adapted for tables or walls as appropriate.

Either as the whole group, or in smaller groups, depending on numbers, get participants to tape together six sheets of flipchart paper (three by two); ask a volunteer to lie down on the paper on the floor and another volunteer to draw round their shape with a marker pen. Ask them also to draw a large carrier bag onto one hand, and a dustbin in a spare corner.



Then, either with post-it notes, coloured markers or cut-outs of images, words and phrases from a stock of newspapers and magazines, ask participants to 'decorate' the person, which represents the collective experience of the one-to-one cpd provision, with particular reference to:

The head: what they've learnt

The heart/torso area: what they've felt and experienced

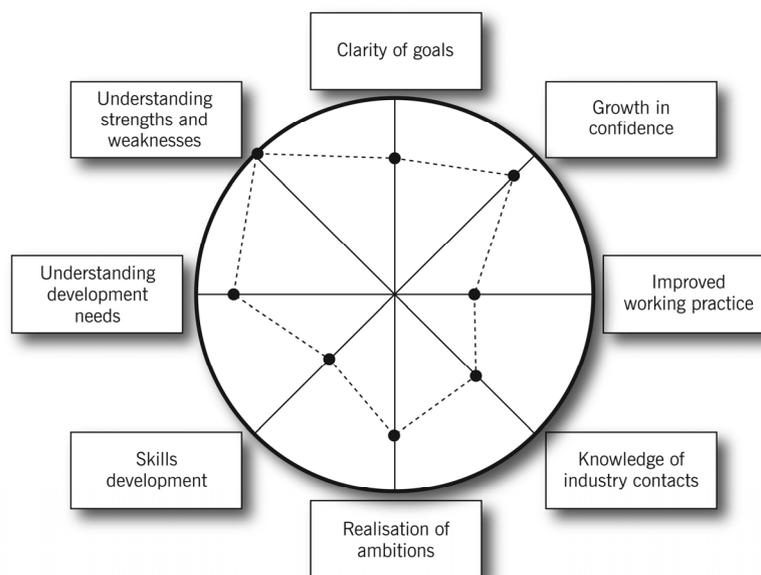
The carrier bag: what they're going to take away with them from the provision

The dustbin: what they want to forget, what was not so good about what happened/they experienced.

An 'individual' version of this could be used on a smaller scale, with a pre-drawn figure - and possibly a restriction to felt pens!

f) Evaluation wheel

This is a more visual approach than questionnaires that can be used when focusing on evaluating whether certain objectives or outcomes have been met. Each participant is asked to draw a wheel with the same number of spokes as aspects to be evaluated (e.g. knowledge of industry contacts, growth in confidence, skill development etc) and each spoke named accordingly round the edge of the wheel. The spokes represent a scale with zero at the centre, and 10 at the edge and are each marked to show this.



The participant then assesses to what degree they feel they have achieved the objective or outcome, makes a dot on the appropriate point of the scaled spoke and draws a line between the crosses to create a graph. Graphs can be used as discussion prompts and to compare experiences between people. If the objectives are related to programme management, for example, then the results from the three different groups of people involved can be compared and analysed.

The evaluation wheel can also be used on an individual basis and, as with some of the other techniques, could be shared with a coach or mentor, providing material for further review.

g) The summative power of three

Using a set of three oral questions, answered around a group with one word or one sentence replies, can often produce powerful evaluative comments. This technique can be especially useful in drawing a group evaluation session to a close. Examples of such questions are:

- What part of the [PDP/mentoring/coaching] programme worked for you?
- What part of the [PDP/mentoring/coaching] programme didn't work for you?
- What one suggestion would you make for the programme in the future?

What was the most striking (or unexpected) thing that you learned from [PDP mentoring/coaching]?

What did you most appreciate from [PDP/mentoring/coaching]?

What would you have liked that you weren't given (or didn't experience) in the [PDP/mentoring/coaching]?

What was a 'plus' about (your experience of) the [PDP/mentoring/coaching]?

What was a 'minus' about (your experience of) the [PDP/mentoring/coaching]?

What was 'interesting' about (your experience of) the [PDP/mentoring/coaching]?

These could also be used as summing up questions in an individual interview or questionnaire.

A note on Observation

This is an evaluation technique not well suited to one-to-one cpd, as it would in most cases be too invasive a method. If chosen, prior agreement of the provider and participant should be sought and the evaluator used needs to be highly skilled in this technique.

7

Reflecting and reporting

What next?

With all this evidence gathered from different sources in different ways - what next?

It's important to become absolutely familiar with all the evaluation data before starting to analyse and synthesise to produce the findings. The Evaluation Trust has a useful checklist of questions to use when reviewing and first analysing the data (www.evaluationtrust.org/tools/toolkit), from which the following list is adapted:

- What is this telling me?
- What are the key points?
- What is the range of issues raised?
- How does what people say vary across the participant group and between programme managers/providers/participants?
- Are there any patterns or themes emerging?
- What could be the explanations for why things happen or why they are done in the way they are?
- What needs changing and can be changed?

Indexing points, colour coding themes, mindmapping and drawing diagrams and charts are all ways of starting to make connections and order material, ready for writing a report, if this is the chosen way of producing summative documentation.

The process above may create the report headings which should also, of course, be led by the evaluation aims. A common contents list will cover:

Executive Summary

Background/context to the cpd provision

Evaluation aims and methodology

Findings (don't forget this includes unexpected outcomes as well as what/how aims and objectives were met)

Conclusions and recommendations

Appendices: to include, as appropriate, questionnaires/interview formats, collated results, names of consultees, programme timelines and budget, other reports consulted etc.

Effective report writing

Here are some guidelines for effective report writing:

- Make the report as short as possible
- Focus on analysis and interpretation
- Explain methodology (including sampling and/or response rates), techniques and any conflicts of interest
- Describe facts concisely - just what the reader needs to know to understand the context
- Depersonalise criticisms and attend to actions and outcomes
- Include supporting material in appendices (e.g. questionnaires, collated results)
- Have a one page executive summary
- Avoid long sentences and long paragraphs
- Use active rather than passive verbs
- Beware of jargon and explain 'technical' terms
- Break up text with dot point lists or summaries
- Incorporate direct quotations (non-attributable to the individual)
- Link quantitative and qualitative data
- Make sure recommendations are practical and possible given the context/resources
- Use a drafting protocol to ensure ongoing communication about emerging issues and an accuracy/fairness check before the final report is presented for sign-off.

Reports can be enlivened with the use of visuals such as graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, photographs, highlighted quotations or case studies etc.

8

Conclusion

We hope this guide has taken you on a useful learning journey in considering some of the principles, practices and techniques of evaluation, from which you can devise and implement an evaluation strategy that is an integral part of your one-to-one cpd provision.

Someone once described evaluation as 'slitting the nightingale's throat to find out what makes it sing'. Whilst we're aware of negative perceptions like this, we see evaluation firmly as a tool for learning and change. The approaches we suggest have been designed to develop understanding whilst maintaining the integrity of what you offer, enabling the beneficiaries of your work and you to 'keep singing' - that is, in our context, write and support writing - even better in the future.

Appendices

- I Question resource bank and sample questionnaires
 - a) Question resource bank
 - b) Sample questionnaires
 - (i) Deepening learning and evaluating its application
 - (ii) Measuring 'distance travelled'
 - (iii) Programme management
 - (iv) Other questionnaire templates
- II Case study example
- III Glossary
- IV Bibliography

Appendix I

Question resource bank and sample questionnaires

Here you will find material to help you to think about evaluation question topics and to devise your own questionnaires, if this is one of your chosen techniques. This section includes:

- a question bank from which you can select what's useful and appropriate for you
- some sample questionnaires
- direct links to some additional questionnaire templates.

a) Question bank

With thanks and acknowledgements to ArtsMatrix (www.artsmatrix.org.uk) and Creative Skills (www.creativeskills.org.uk) for sharing their evaluation forms.

Start and finish points: these are used for baseline attitudinal surveys undertaken before the one-to-one cpd takes place, which can then be repeated when the cpd has finished and even at a follow-on point after that. This enables you to gather the 'distance travelled' outcomes of the provision. The suggested question format would be '*How confident do you feel as a writer/literature professional?*' followed by a scale rating from 1 to 6, where 6 is the highest.

Some example questions:

- *How well do you know your strengths and weaknesses?*
- *How well do you know how to access learning and development support?*
- *How knowledgeable are you about literature industry networks and contacts?*
- *How effective are your general working practices e.g. time management?*
- *How clear are you about your career/work goals?*
- *To what extent are you realising your writing/writing support ambitions?*

Gathering impacts: identifying tangible, and often economic, impacts is often a funding requirement, to assess 'value for money' or 'return on investment' and to evidence if targets have been met. Even if it's not a requirement, it's really interesting to gather this sort of information as evidence of learning being applied in, and to, work/practice, that adds robustness to the anecdotal, '*It made such a big difference to me.*' There's always a caveat that there are often multiple influences affecting an impact, rather than a single, direct causation from one input, so this should be considered and explained if necessary.

The following are impacts that could be evaluated - and a financial value can be placed on many of them, if necessary.

Following the one-to-one cpd, did you do any of the following?

- *Gain/change employment*
- *Get published*
- *Develop and reach new audiences*

- *Write in a new genre*
- *Increase earned or non-earned income (obtaining grants, sponsorship)*
- *Secure more work/other related work e.g. teaching, writer in residence*
- *Participate in further development/training*
- *Work more effectively*
- *Identify and follow up new contacts.*

Programme management: don't forget that all three parties involved - programme manager, provider and participant - can be asked about the management of the one-to-one cpd provision. These are all the aspects (as relevant to your situation) from the advertising of the opportunity (e.g. whether to become a mentor or a mentee) right through to any follow-up after direct contact between provider and participant has finished. Often the programme manager themselves gets missed out - and some time spent on self-evaluation is a good preparation for the planning of future provision. This area of evaluation can be about learning as well as 'customer satisfaction'.

You could devise questions as applicable around:

- *Application process*
- *Interview/matching/selection process*
- *Contract*
- *Briefings/communications/provision of information*
- *Venues used*
- *Number/duration of sessions*
- *Frequency of sessions/overall period of contact*
- *Ongoing contact/support from programme manager/provider.*

The provider/participant relationship: this can cover some of the practical aspects such as contact and contactability (particularly if there is not a set number of sessions and/or very 'light'/no programme management) as well as the nature and impact of the relationship. Both parties can be asked, '*What did you want to get out of the relationship?*' and '*Have these things been met?*' Mentors and coaches are not always expected to self-evaluate their performance, but this can both introduce another learning element for them, as well as provide useful management and development information.

Deepening and evaluating learning: asking questions of participants for the purposes of evaluation can often provide an opportunity for them to make deeper sense of their learning - reflection can help embed ownership of new knowledge and skills, and enhance a commitment to taking action to apply new learning.

Suggested question topics:

- *Relevance of sessions to professional development*
- *Achievement of personal aims/expectations from sessions/overall goals*
- *Acquisition of new skills/knowledge/attitudes*
- *Confirmation of previous learning*
- *Lack of opportunity to learn what needed/expected*
- *Understanding of strengths, weaknesses and barriers to development and growth.*

b) Sample questionnaires

These sample questionnaires are offered in the spirit of ‘help for busy people’! We can’t provide a template for every need, as we’re covering three different types of one-to-one cpd provision and you’ll all be offering this provision in different ways and of course have different aspects that you want to evaluate. So we offer you three templates that together represent a range of formats and three main aims/topics of evaluation: to deepen learning and evaluate its application, to measure ‘distance travelled’ and to enhance management. We’ve kept them short and general, as a kind of ‘starter for ten’, as you might want to ‘mix and match’ (provided you maintain some logicity/consistency of approach) and will certainly want to add specific areas in which you’re particularly interested.

i) Deepening learning and evaluating its application

Questions like the ones below are useful for prompting self-reflection, in particular in relation to goals set within a professional development plan or within the mentoring/coaching context, and to capturing particular impacts.

Form to include: Provision name and introductory paragraph explaining purpose of evaluation, how long the form will take to complete, how to, deadline and how/where to reply. Confidentiality/anonymity statement. Thanks. Room for name (optional).

- a) To what extent have your main learning and development goals in taking part in the [one-to-one cpd] been met?

(6=exceeded, 1=not at all)

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please describe what you gained from the [one-to-one-cpd].

- b) To what extent do you feel you were given support in the areas you needed most?

(6=exceeded, 1=not at all)

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

Please describe in what ways support was given.

c) Were there any unexpected areas of learning for you?

YES/NO

If YES, please describe.

d) Please summarise what you feel you can now do, or do differently, as a result of the *[one-to-one cpd]*.

e) Please describe any particular achievements that you attribute, at least in part, to the effect of the *[one-to-one cpd]*. This could include gaining/changing employment; getting published; developing and reaching new audiences; writing in a new genre; increasing income; securing more work/other related work; initiating new projects etc. If possible, please put a financial value to the achievement e.g. £x project funding raised; £y commission secured.

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this evaluation. Your feedback is much appreciated and we hope the self-reflection has been useful to you. Please return this form to/by etc.

ii) Measuring ‘distance travelled’

This is particularly suitable for use at the beginning and end of mentoring or coaching provision, helping you evaluate the impact of provision in a quantitative way. You can draw up charts to show progression on both an individual and group basis once you have the ‘before’ and ‘after’ information and analyse in which areas there was greatest ‘distance travelled’ (see just one example of how to represent this visually below). You may want to use a numbering or coding system rather than ask for names - you do need some way of ‘matching’ the two charts for each individual!

Form to include: Provision name and introductory paragraph explaining purpose of evaluation, how long the chart will take to complete, how to, deadline and how/where to reply. Explanation re follow-up questionnaire at end/six months later etc as appropriate. Confidentiality/anonymity statement. Thanks. Room for name (optional) or use numbering/coding system.

Please place a cross (x) as appropriate on the scale 1 to 10 below, where 10 is the highest.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How confident do you feel as a writer/literature development worker?										
How well do you know your strengths and weaknesses?										
How well do you know how to access learning and development support?										
How effective are your general working practices e.g. time management?										
How clear are you about your work/career goals?										
To what extent are you meeting your writing/writing support ambitions?										

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this chart. Your feedback will help us evaluate the impact of the [one-to-one cpd] on both an individual and whole group beneficiary basis. Please return this form to/by etc.

Example response for an individual (SP= start point, FP = finish point)

PERSON I	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How confident do you feel as a writer/literature development worker?				SP			FP			
How well do you know your strengths and weaknesses?			SP			FP				
How well do you know how to access learning and development support?					SP	FP				
How effective are your general working practices e.g. time management?						SP	FP			
How clear are you about your work/career goals?				SP					FP	
To what extent are you meeting your writing/writing support ambitions?			SP				FP			

iii) Programme management

The main thing to remember with this area of evaluation is to ask the same (or directly equivalent) question of all parties - participant, provider and programme manager - to achieve a real 'triangulation', where three perspectives give a holistic picture. If you're the provider or managing the provision yourself, don't miss out asking yourself the questions!

For all forms: Provision name and introductory paragraph explaining purpose of evaluation, how long the form will take to complete, how to, deadline and how/where to reply.
Confidentiality/anonymity statement. Thanks. Room for name (optional).

A Participants

1 Application and matching process

a) Please say how you heard about this *[one-to-one cpd]* opportunity.

b) Was the information about the *[one-to-one cpd]* and application process clear?

YES

NO

Comments:

c) Was the interview conducted fairly and helpfully?

YES

NO

Comments:

d) Was the matching process with your *[pdp guide/mentor/coach]* undertaken fairly and helpfully?

YES

NO

Comments:

2 Administration

a) Were all communications with you clear and timely?

YES

NO

Comments:

b) Were venues used suitable?

YES

NO

Comments:

3 Working with your [pdp guide/mentor/coach]

a) Did your [pdp guide/mentor/coach] attend all agreed sessions?

YES

NO

Comments:

b) How would you rate the number of sessions you had?

Just right

Not enough

Too many

Comments:

c) How would you rate the length of the sessions?

Just right

Too short

Too long

Comments:

d) How effective was your *[pdp guide/mentor/coach]* in helping you identify and meet your aims?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Quite effective
- Not effective

Comments:

4 Management

a) How would you rate the overall management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Poor

b) What were the strengths of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

c) What were the weaknesses of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

d) What would you recommend as improvements in management for any future provision?

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this evaluation. Your feedback is much appreciated and we hope the self-reflection has been useful to you. Please return this form to/by etc.

B Providers (NB questions have not been formatted to save space)

1 Application and matching process

- a) Please say how you heard about this *[one-to-one cpd]* opportunity.
- b) Was the information about the *[one-to-one cpd]* and the application process clear?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:
- c) Was the interview conducted fairly and helpfully?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:
- d) Was the matching process with your *[pdp participant/mentee/coachee]* undertaken fairly and helpfully?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:

2 Administration

- a) Were all communications with you clear and timely?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:
- b) Were venues used suitable?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:

3 Working with your *[pdp participant/mentee/coachee]*

- a) Did your *[pdp participant/mentee/coachee]* attend all agreed sessions?
- YES
- NO
- Comments:
- b) How would you rate the number of sessions you had?
- Just right
- Not enough
- Too many
- Comments:
- c) How would you rate the length of the sessions?
- Just right
- Too short
- Too long
- Comments:
- d) How effective do you think you were in helping your *[pdp participant/mentee/coachee]* identify and meet their aims?
- Very effective
- Effective
- Quite effective

- Not effective

Comments:

- e) Did you receive professional supervision?

- YES

- NO

If YES, please describe what you gained from it.

4 Management

- a) How would you rate the overall management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

- Excellent

- Good

- Adequate

- Poor

Comments:

- b) What were the strengths of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

- c) What were the weaknesses of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

- d) What would you recommend as improvements in management for any future provision?

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this evaluation. Your feedback is much appreciated and we hope the self-reflection has been useful to you. Please return this form to/by etc.

C Programme managers (NB questions have not been formatted to save space)

1 Application and matching process

- a) Please say how you advertised this *[one-to-one cpd]* opportunity.

- b) Please comment on the effectiveness of your advertising.

- c) Please comment on any notable points about the interview processes.

- d) Please comment on any notable points about the matching processes.

2 Administration

- a) Were there any barriers to achieving clear and timely communication?

- YES

- NO

Comments:

- b) Were venues used suitable?

- YES

- NO

Comments:

3 Supporting the one-to-one cpd provider/participant relationship

- a) Did your *[providers/participants]* attend all agreed sessions?

- YES

- NO

If NO, what did you do?

Did this make a difference? Please explain.

- b) How would you rate the number of sessions planned?

- Just right
- Not enough
- Too many

Comments:

c) How would you rate the length of the sessions?

- Just right
- Too short
- Too long

Comments:

d) How effective do you think you were in supporting *[providers/participants]*?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Quite effective
- Not effective

Comments:

4 Management

a) How would you rate your overall management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Poor

Comments:

b) What were the strengths of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

c) What were the weaknesses of the management of the *[one-to-one cpd]*?

d) What would you recommend as improvements in management for any future provision?

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this evaluation. Your feedback is much appreciated and we hope the self-reflection has been useful to you. Please return this form to/by etc.

iv) **Other questionnaire templates**

- 1 *Professional Development Planning* by Jude Page (see bibliography) includes **PDP Sample Evaluation Forms** for use immediately after a PDP session and for later follow-up. Also available at <http://www.literaturetraining.com/metadot/index.pl?id=36784&isa=Category&op=show>
- 2 *The Write Guide* by Martin Goodman and Sara Maitland (see bibliography) includes **Mentor's and Mentee's Evaluation Reports** which can also be downloaded from the New Writing North website at <http://www.newwritingnorth.com/careers/careers.php?section=414>. These could be adapted for coaching.
- 3 An example of a **Mentor (self-) Evaluation Form** can be found at <http://www.indiana.edu/~osmp/forms/mentorevaluation.html>.
- 4 Businessballs (www.businessballs.com) is a free ethical learning and development resource for people and organisations. You can download a very useful paper about the evaluation of training and learning from their website under the title 'Training Evaluation Processes' that includes a set of questionnaire templates. These are really for training ('taught') programmes, but with a key emphasis on learning, can readily be adapted for one-to-one cpd provision. There is an:
 - **Evaluation of Learning Questionnaire**
 - **Evaluation of Key Objectives Learning Questionnaire**, *for use when there are specific learning objective*
 - **Action Plan template**, *similar to material you may well be using if you are providing professional development planning*
 - four '**Reactionnaires**'. *These are carefully constructed questionnaires that differ from the 'happy sheets' that are frequently handed out after learning events of all kinds, often skewed to prompt favourable comments. They provide a useful 'content prompt' and example of how to format this particular type of questionnaire.*

Appendix II

Case study example

This is one of a number of case studies commissioned by literaturetraining in 2007 from writers and literature professionals who took part in literaturetraining PDP sessions between 2004 and 2006.

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.’

Appendix III Glossary

Baseline	what exists at the start e.g. what people know/how they feel/what they have experienced
Demographics	information on age, gender, disability, ethnicity etc.
Formative	evaluation that takes place during a programme/provision and provides feedback on learning to date, progress towards meeting aims and objectives and helps identify changes needed
Impact	the effect of the changes that the provision brings about e.g. the application of new skills to improve writing so it gets published
Inputs	time, money and other resources that go into the provision
Monitoring	the routine collection and recording of information to keep track of ongoing activities; provides regular feedback on how things are going and helps make changes along the way
Outcomes	changes that the provision brings about, such as new and/or improved skills/knowledge/attributes
Outputs	measurable evidence of the provision activities such as number of participants, sessions, attendances etc.
Quantitative data	facts and numbers, sometimes known as ‘hard’ data (although usually easy to capture!) such as participation or costs
Qualitative data	sometimes known as ‘soft’ data covering people’s views, feelings and experiences (and which, despite its alternative name, can provide robust evidence)
Self-evaluation	evaluation which is owned, controlled, and carried out by participants, primarily for their own use, but which can feed into overall provision evaluation
Summative	evaluation that takes place at the end of provision and examines achievement of aims, outcomes and impact

Appendix IV Bibliography

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Websites

Business Balls

<http://www.businessballs.com>

Ethical learning and development resource for people and organisations. Useful section on evaluation of training with sample forms (see page 38 above).

Charities Evaluation Service

<http://www.ces-vol.org.uk>

Useful generic evaluation advice and links to many other resources aimed at charities and voluntary sector projects. Includes guide to writing an evaluation brief (see page 12 above).

Evaluation Support Scotland

<http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk>

Evaluation toolkits and guides for different areas of charity and voluntary sector; useful for generic advice.

Evaluation Trust

<http://www.evaluationtrust.org>

Clear and helpful advice about evaluation principles and practices aimed at voluntary and community organisations undertaking participatory evaluation, with a toolkit from which approaches can be adapted.

Kaizen Training

<http://www.kaizen-training.com>

Helpful advice on developing and delivering an evaluation strategy, with useful techniques. Focused on training programmes and events, but transferable ideas.

The Active Reviewing Guide to dynamic experiential learning

<http://www.reviewing.co.uk>

Many tips and techniques for facilitating participatory reviewing.