

# Evaluating one-to-one sessions of academic language and learning

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Teaching individual students has been a core component of academic language and learning (ALL) work since its inception in Australia in the 1980s. In the first decades the success of one-to-one teaching was largely reported in terms of the level of usage by students, and the quality of the learning assumed by high levels of usage. A systematic approach to the evaluation of the effectiveness of one-to-one teaching has presented challenges for ALL practitioners for a number of reasons. First, ALL work is positioned and constructed in different ways in different universities and, for the most part, sits outside their mainstream teaching evaluation processes. In addition, one-to-one teaching is only one aspect of a complex, multifaceted role which usually includes resource development, teaching of groups and research. The commodification of university education and the concomitant emphasis on “customer service” has blurred the difference between teaching and service delivery adding further challenges to evaluating the one-to-one practice. The literature on evaluation from the broader context of education and on some current ALL evaluation practices and discussions among ALL practitioners have been explored for insights into evaluating one-to-one teaching. As well, a study was undertaken to identify the criteria that students use to judge the effectiveness of ALL one-to-one teaching. Based on the findings of the review and the study, a provisional framework for evaluating one-to-one practice has been developed and recommendations for its application suggested.

**Key Words:** evaluation, one-to-one teaching.

## 1. Introduction

Teaching individual students has been a core component of academic language and learning (ALL) practice since its inception in Australia approximately 30 years ago. In the early years of ALL provision in Australia there was, in many institutions, an emphasis on reporting one-to-one teaching in terms of the levels of student usage. This was linked to the need of many ALL practitioners in the first fifteen years of the profession to justify their employment to their institution. In effect this aligned the evaluation of one-to-one practice to the numbers of students attending. In the 1990s, the provision of one-to-one teaching itself came under threat in a number of institutions because of its perceived inefficiency in meeting the needs of increasing numbers of students in the context of reduced funding for higher education. Papers presented at the LAS Conferences in the mid 1990s are testimony to this. For example, in 1994, ALL practitioners responded in a conference titled, *Integrating the teaching of academic discourse into courses in the disciplines* (Chanock & Burley, 1995) with demonstrations of how far ALL practice had expanded beyond one-to-one interactions. In the following conference in 1996, *What do we learn from teaching one-to-one that informs our work with larger numbers?*

(Chanock, Burley & Davies, 1997), there were clear arguments not only for the value of one-to-one interactions in themselves, but also for the way in which they informed the work done with groups and of embedding academic literacies in courses. So, although these conferences testify to a shift in ALL practice from an approach initially tied to counselling to one which encompassed many practices for teaching academic literacies (Stevenson & Kokkinn, 2007), there was a tendency to focus on the justification of ALL practice rather than its evaluation.

Evaluation had clearly become a significant part of ALL practice by 2002 when the Victorian network of ALL practitioners produced, *Academic skills advising: Evaluation for program improvement and accountability* (Webb & McLean, 2002). The focus in this collection was largely on the evaluation of programs and developing a systematic way to evaluate one-to-one teaching was recognised as problematic. In the collection, Chanock (2002) articulates many of the problems associated with evaluating one-to-one teaching which in part explain why it has lagged behind the evaluation of ALL programs. The first difficulty is that ALL work is positioned and constructed in different ways in different universities and, for the most part, sits outside their mainstream teaching evaluation processes which means that ALL practitioners have had to develop their own evaluation processes. In addition, one-to-one teaching is only one aspect of a complex, multifaceted role that usually includes resource development, teaching of groups, and research, though the focus in this paper is on one-to-one teaching. The commodification of university education and the concomitant emphasis on “customer service” have blurred the differences between teaching and service delivery and this blurring challenges the nature of the construct being evaluated.

Individual teaching involves complex combinations of language and learning needs that are specific to the individual student and which require individual responses rather than a prepared lesson (Chanock, 2002). Finding a way to measure the effectiveness of this diverse one-to-one teaching is difficult. Attempting to assess what students have learned in possibly one session and identifying the ALL practitioner’s contribution to that learning is also a challenge. Even though evaluation of one-to-one teaching presents all these problems, there is consistent mention in the ALL literature of the importance of undertaking evaluation as a means of monitoring and improving practice and making ALL teaching visible. As Chanock (2002, p. 201) argues, it is “reasonable for colleagues, administrators and the public to want to know what we do, how we do it and why we think it is worth doing”. It is also important to understand what kind of learning takes place in one-to-one sessions to contribute to a better understanding of student learning in higher education.

In order to develop a systematic approach to achieve meaningful evaluation of one-to-one ALL practice, a framework is required. The purpose of this paper is to draw on a range of resources in order to develop a systematic approach for the evaluation of one-to-one ALL teaching and suggest a framework.

## **2. One-to-one teaching in ALL**

Across Australian universities, the specific practices related to one-to-one teaching vary. These variations are often the consequence of how particular universities define the role of academic language and learning provision within their institution. The practice of one-to-one ALL teaching varies between universities in terms of:

- the proportion of ALL practitioner work that is dedicated to it
- the location and context within which it is offered and reported on (e.g. within a university's Library, or within a Faculty, or within a dedicated ALL unit, or within a multi-professional unit alongside counsellors, disability and international student advisers)
- the duration of the sessions (from 10 minutes to 50 minutes)
- the nomenclature (appointment, tutorial, session, drop-in)
- how students access one-to-one teaching (self select or referral or both)
- how frequently students can access one-to-one teaching (unlimited or limited).

There are three main sets of “actors” involved in ALL one-to-one practice. These “actors” are the student, the ALL Adviser and, perhaps less obviously, the University within which the practice is situated. The University is largely responsible for the *construct* and *context* of the one-to-one interactions. The *construct* refers most broadly to the way a university defines and views the role of academic language and learning provision within the institution. This role may be considered primarily as remedial support for disadvantaged or under prepared students; or as the teaching of academic literacies; or as a change agent within the teaching and learning agenda of the institution; or as a combination of these. The University’s view of the role also affects where it is placed, that is, the type of unit within which it is offered and to whom it reports; and the importance given to one-to-one teaching within ALL work. The history of ALL provision in Australia has shown that these constructive factors are frequently, as Schuck, Gordon and Buchanan (2008, p. 540) have commented, “circumscribed by management agendas in which teachers are accountable for policy implementation but excluded from policy determination or participation” and a “devolution of responsibility but not power” (Bottery & Wright, 1997, as cited in Gordon & Buchanan, 2008, p. 540). This raises issues about the extent to which ALL practitioners are able to evaluate the way in which their practice is constructed within their institution, a longer term and still pressing issue for ALL practitioners.

The second aspect of ALL one-to-one sessions for which the university is usually responsible, is the *context*. This refers to the ‘environmental’ aspects of the interactions such as their location; the time allocated for the sessions; how students gain access to these interactions; and whether there are any limits to students accessing the interactions. These aspects may also be determined or heavily influenced by the university and ALL practitioners may also have little control over them and again be limited in their ability to evaluate them.

Although the focus of evaluation in ALL has been largely on programs (particularly group sessions of various kinds) rather than on the one-to-one teaching, some important groundwork has been laid by researchers such as Clerehan (1997) who analysed one-to-one sessions in terms of dialogic learning, Chanock (1997, 2000b, 2000c, 2004), Chanock and Vardi (2005) and Woodward-Kron (2007) who also investigated the nature of the interaction between the ALL practitioner and the student. Whether, as an encounter, the one-to-one session is most appropriately characterised as an information-giving, an instruction-giving, advice-giving, information exchange, or some particular combination of these, is still unclear.

This distinction can be important because there has been, in some institutions, a tendency to view individual ALL teaching as service encounters. This tendency has become more pronounced with the commodification of education, that is, with the approach to university education as a product for students who have become “consumers” of education and the universities’ “customers” (McCulloch, 2009). One of McMillan and Cheney’s (1996, as cited in McCulloch, 2009) criticisms of the consumption/service metaphors is that they construct the educational experience as a product rather than a process. In terms of ALL one-to-one sessions this can be translated as the difference between a service encounter (the delivery of an information product) or a teaching and learning encounter (the development of the learners’ abilities and understanding) (Chanock, 2000a). With evaluation this distinction can mean the difference between asking whether a service has been delivered or whether a student’s abilities have been developed (Chanock, 2000a). Responses to the former question frequently focus on student satisfaction with immediately gained information and the personal qualities of the “service provider”. However, responses to the latter focus on the quality of the learning outcomes and the degree to which the development of a student’s abilities have been stimulated.

### 3. Education literature on evaluation

The extensive literature on evaluation in higher education (e.g. Kulik & McKeachie, 1975; Ramsden & Dodds, 1989; McAlpine & Harris, 2002; Ramsden, 2003; Macdonald, 2006) and on the evaluation of teacher effectiveness offers a range of resources for a framework to evaluate one-to-one ALL teaching. Many researchers approach the subject of evaluation in education from four perspectives:

- the purpose for an evaluation
- the specific focus of the evaluation
- the participants in the evaluation
- and the methods of evaluation.

### **3.1. Purpose of evaluation**

In relation to the purpose of evaluation in education, Macdonald (2006, p. 4) draws on Chelimsky's (1997) three purposes for evaluation. These are evaluation for accountability, for development, and for knowledge. Macdonald (2006, p. 6) sees these purposes as aligned with the purposes Robson identified in 2000 as assessing the efficiency and outcomes of a program, of finding out if students' needs are met, how a program is operating, understanding how a program works, and improving a program.

### **3.2. Focus of evaluation**

In relation to the specific focus of an evaluation of teaching, McAlpine and Harris (2002, p. 9) build on Cashin's (1989) model of ways to examine teaching practice and list the appropriate foci for evaluation as the teacher's subject matter expertise; ability to conceptualize, plan and organise instruction; their delivery skills, including their instructional plans, strategies and evaluation techniques; their management skills for the instruction to move smoothly; their relationship with their students; their ability to conceptualize and carry out activities for their own personal and professional growth; and their ability to implement activities that further the quality of teaching in their unit. There is a danger if these are the only focus of an evaluation as they identify the teacher as the sole "actor" in the teaching and learning process. Kirkpatrick (1998, as cited in McAlpine & Harris, 2002) suggests that the evaluation of teaching should also include the degree to which the learner engaged with or enjoyed the learning; the learning which occurred measured by appropriate means; the learner's ability to use the learning beyond the specific circumstances in which the learning occurred; and the institutional benefit such as an enhanced learning environment.

### **3.3. Participants in evaluation**

In relation to the participants in the evaluation, a distinction needs to be made between who instigates an evaluation and who contributes to it. As mentioned previously, the instigator of the evaluation and the teacher may be different, and if the instigator and teacher have different agendas for the evaluation, this can be a source of tension. Evaluation can be set up to include inputs from a range of people including administrators, students, colleagues and teachers themselves (Kulik & McKeachie, 1975), and there is some agreement that this is beneficial (Cashin, 1990; McAlpine & Harris, 2002), something which is reiterated by ALL practitioners (Chanock, 2002).

### **3.4. Methods of evaluation**

Universities collect a range of data on students and ALL practitioners can work with the administrators in their institution to gain access to these data to enhance their understanding of students' backgrounds and study programs (for example, students' language backgrounds and academic progress) and use the existing systems to communicate with particular groups of students (for example, survey students in a particular subject). The administrative staff who work with ALL practitioners to set up one-to-one interactions and who are often the first to meet students, can also offer a valuable perspective on the effectiveness of the contextual elements of ALL one-to-one practice. Having a well-designed data base of student data is a useful requirement for successful evaluation (Maxwell, 1996).

While it is generally accepted that students' feedback on teaching is an important part of evaluation, how that feedback is collected and used is more controversial (Zabaleta, 2007). The controversy has arisen in part because Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) have been, in

many universities, the only primary data on teaching that is collected systematically (Cashin, 1990; Johnson, 2000). There has been an ongoing debate on the validity and reliability of SETs (see for example the papers by Greenwald, Marsh, & Roche, and by McKeachie in the November 1997 issue of *American Psychologist*). Kulik and McKeachie (1975) identified a number of factors that could affect students' views of teachers including students' characteristics, the teaching conditions and teacher characteristics. However, Zabaleta (2007) has concluded that "student evaluations show a complex relationship between students and teachers. The components of this relationship are yet to be properly identified" (p. 67).

Other reoccurring criticisms of SETs, related to the construction of education as a commodity, are that they are concerned with consumer satisfaction rather than teacher effectiveness (Dowell & Neal, 1983); and that they work on an assumption that "good teaching" is a single phenomenon made up of identifiable components that promote a technicist notion of teaching (Ramsden, 1989, p. 43; Johnson, 2000, p. 424). An emphasis on student evaluation of ALL one-to-one sessions is also problematic as it relies on students having realistic expectations of the session (Morrison & Nadeau, 2003). A common conclusion is that SETs should be used either as formative evaluation and/or with other methods of systematic input (Marsh, 1984; Johnson, 2000). Multiple methods have already been used by ALL practitioners to evaluate their teaching (Huijser, Kimmins, & Galligan, 2008).

Colleagues can also have a significant input into the evaluation of teaching. One approach to this is peer review, which in university education has grown both in practice and in the literature devoted to it since the mid 1990s. Peer review can be seen either as a kind of summative evaluation of effective teaching (Hutchings, 1996; *Peer Review of Teaching for Promotion Purposes*, 2008) or as "peer coaching", a "formative, collegial process whereby pairs of faculty voluntarily work together to improve or expand their approaches to teaching" (Huston & Weaver, 2007, p. 7).

Evaluations can be carried out using empirical sources. The numbers of students attending can be useful in identifying why the students attend the session (if appropriate data is collected), but do not give any insight into the effectiveness of the teaching or the outcomes of the sessions. However, Chanock (2007), Huijser, Kimmins, and Galligan (2008) and others have written extensively about the important lessons ALL practitioners can take from one-to-one teaching to inform the design and curriculum for classes and resource development. This may indicate that information on why students come to one-to-one sessions is data that ALL practitioners need to collect regularly. Students' grades can also be used, but it is difficult to link students' success with their one-to-one ALL sessions as there are many factors that influence students' success at university (Chanock, 2002).

The use of questionnaires or surveys delivered to students and other involved parties is another method that can be used for evaluation. Questionnaires have a number of disadvantages though (Burns, 2000), including difficulties in achieving an adequate response rate and problems with sampling as non-respondents may have quite different traits to those who respond. In addition, if the questionnaire is not well designed, vague, too complex or ambiguous, the data collected may not be useful. Questionnaires may also restrict the expression of respondents' views. If the questionnaire seeks these views, it may produce data that are difficult to collate and there is no opportunity to follow up. One evaluation questionnaire for students on one-to-one teaching is "Evaluation of a session with the Humanities Academic Skills Unit" used at La Trobe University in Melbourne (Chanock, 2002). The design of the questionnaire is simple with five questions on the students' expectations of the unit, the openness of the staff to the students and the students' perception of progress.

Focus groups with students and/or other involved parties have become increasingly popular for evaluation. For Krueger (1994, p. 10), the value of a focus group is that it "taps into human tendencies. Attitudes and perceptions relating to concepts, products, services or programs are developed in part by interaction with other people." So, the focus group is not a group interview, but sets out to facilitate an interaction between the participants that will produce new understanding and insights that would not be found in either an individual or group interview.

The analysis of the data derived from the focus group can take a variety of forms (Webb & Kevern, 2000). One common form is thematic analysis which involves “drawing together and comparing discussion of similar themes and examining how these related to the variation between individuals and between groups” (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, as cited in Webb & Kevern, 2000, p. 802).

The observation and analysis of teaching is another method used in the evaluation of teaching. A number of ALL practitioners have used different methods of discourse analysis to analyse either video or sound recordings of their interactions with students in one-to-one sessions. Woodward-Kron and Jamieson (2007) found that the discussion in one-to-one sessions was not just didactic, but interactive and dynamic involving explicit instruction and a variety of short and extended exchanges. Clerehan (1996) and Chanock (2000c) focused on the kinds of learning in individual sessions and showed how the dialogic nature of the teaching resulted in development of the student’s academic writing. Woodward-Kron (2007) showed that one-to-one teaching offered a place for students to clarify meanings and for the ALL practitioner to scaffold the student’s development. Clerehan (1996), Chanock (2000c) and Woodward-Kron (2007) made clear how ALL practitioners worked from knowledge of the “valued texts” of the disciplines of their students’ papers, without having a knowledge of the content areas of these papers.

Individual practitioners can also use teaching logs, reflective journals and evaluation check lists to evaluate their own teaching. Chanock (2002, 2000b) has used teaching logs and case studies, both of which she reports as being time consuming but effective. Teaching logs she found useful for identifying her own weaknesses in her teaching and case studies for reporting on the needs of students. Apart from logs, a self-evaluation checklist has been used at the University of Canberra by ALL practitioners in the Academic Skills Program (2007).

#### **4. Investigation of student criteria for one-to-one teaching**

One of the gaps or silences in the research on one-to-one ALL sessions is the student perspective, in the sense of what criteria students would specify as appropriate to evaluate a one-to-one session with an ALL practitioner. A small study in 2007 was designed to identify the criteria that a group of students at one campus of an Australian university would use to evaluate the one-to-one session. The aim of this study was to complement the findings from the literature and incorporate the student perspective in the evaluation framework.

Focus groups were chosen to collect the data because they offered a means of capturing students’ preferences through group interaction and understandings and ideas beyond individual opinion and experience (Fern, 2001). In addition, the students were able to express themselves spontaneously in open, dynamic discussions with peers about their experiences of the one-to-one teaching (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Ethics approval was obtained through the University’s Ethics Committee and over 100 students who had attended at least one one-to-one ALL session in a selected period of four weeks were invited to participate in the study. The invitation was emailed by one of the researchers as supported by the university’s ethics committee. Twenty-five students responded and this low number may have been due to the timing of the request which was in the second half of the study period when students have heavy workloads. As well, many students on the campus were enrolled in education programs and were out teaching in schools. However, of the 25 who indicated interest, twelve in total turned up for the focus groups. Although a disappointing number, the students who participated were a representative cross section of the students on the campus and all had experienced at least three one-to-one teaching sessions with ALL practitioners. A repeat of the study is indicated to confirm the findings of this pilot study.

The consultant who conducted the focus group discussions was an experienced ALL practitioner who was not employed by the university at the time. She used a set of prompt questions to generate discussion. The discussions were audio-recorded and used by the consultant for data analysis. The analysis of the data took the form of a thematic analysis which

drew together the discussion of similar themes (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, as cited in Webb & Kevern, 2000, p. 802). Four main themes were identified. These were students' expectations of the session, the level of discipline knowledge of the ALL practitioner, the relationship established between the practitioner and the student, and the "value-for-time" that the student invested in the one-to-one session.

Students' expectations were often based on how the ALL practice had been advertised or explained by their lecturers, tutors and administrative staff in the university. This opens the possibility that what the students expect from the one-to-one session may not be the same as the ALL practitioner's expectations. Students made comments such as:

*I ... went to a LA and fully expected them to say you have done this wrong ... do that, that, that and that and fix it and give it back. (Student in focus group)*

*I was very nervous about it being very new to uni life. But working with the LA I didn't walk out with all the answers. I was a bit disappointed ... It was a good experience after the nervousness. I understood better when I walked out I expected answers and what I got was a strategy to get the answers myself. (Student in focus group)*

The study showed that the students' expectations of the one-to-one session were an important part of their evaluation of it but they were able to adjust their expectations when the reasons became clear.

*I had my hopes dashed. I got over that and rewrote the essay and it was fine. It was a positive experience in the long term – adult learner – the onus is on you ... you are the one who has to do the learning ... Came through in that first experience very clearly. Very valuable experience. (Student in focus group)*

The second theme that emerged from the data was that students expected the ALL practitioner to have a high level of discipline knowledge. This did not mean that they expected them to have discipline content knowledge, but to be aware of the types of assessment they were undertaking, the discourses of their discipline and the assignment expectations.

*Once I went to another campus and the LA didn't understand what I was talking about ... (Student in focus group)*

*Important that the LAs be specific to one campus so that they can be familiar with the assignments and courses so the help could be more focussed. (Student in focus group)*

The third theme that emerged in the data was the relationship established with the ALL practitioner. They wanted the practitioner to be interested and encouraging and to foster a comfortable environment for the session.

*The LA is very nice and helpful, she doesn't demoralize me ... she encouraged me. (Student in focus group)*

*Very positive experience. She was so supportive and so interested in what I was doing ... she made me feel good as a person. (Student in focus group)*

These first three findings around expectations, the knowledge of the practitioner, and the relationship established, all align closely with the criteria that Chanock (2002) uses in her evaluation instrument.

The fourth theme that emerged strongly was that students wanted "value-for-time", that is, that the time spent both in waiting for and participating in a session was a valuable use of their time. Students expressed frustration about having to wait long periods of time for a short "drop-in" session and often felt pressured to get as much out of their limited time as they could.

*I think they are understanding and willing to help but I have to say it is quite busy all the time so I found it quite difficult to fit my time in. (Student in focus group)*

Many of the students expressed frustration about waiting and the limited time in the session.

*Having to wait ... need to hurry up because there is someone behind me.*  
(Student in focus group)

However, they also expressed that they felt the time spent with the ALL practitioner had been worth their while so the frustration was more about the *context* of a session than with the interaction with the ALL practitioner. This criterion, “value-for-time”, has not previously been identified as a significant part of students’ thinking about one-to-one teaching.

## 5. Proposed framework for evaluating one-to-one practice

The literature has shown that evaluation has been regarded as an important part of teaching by ALL practitioners and that one-to-one sessions are complex and difficult to evaluate. It is clear that a single instrument could not accommodate the complexity or the flexibility required to evaluate the teaching and learning in one-to-one sessions. However, a framework for the systematic evaluation of these sessions did begin to emerge in the idea of the four perspectives on evaluation (its purpose, focus, participants, and method) and the involvement of three “actors” (the student, the ALL practitioner and the university). The small research study carried out showed that students consider the meeting of their expectations, the relationship developed with the practitioner, the practitioner’s disciplinary knowledge and “value-for-time” as their main criteria for evaluating the one to one sessions.

Combining the four perspectives, the three “actors” and the students’ views produced a framework which is, in effect, a process or series of steps the evaluator/s move through to design an evaluation instrument. The process enables the evaluator/s to develop a clear and logical evaluation plan where the details of the evaluation are unpacked from the clarification of its purpose.

### The proposed process for ‘framing’ evaluation planning

#### Step 1: Clarify PURPOSE

When setting up the evaluation, it is essential first to identify the purpose for the evaluation. Some considerations include:

- 1.1 Is the purpose to evaluate:
  - a) the provision of the one-to-one opportunity to students?
  - b) the conduct of individual one-to-one sessions?
  - c) both of the above?
- 1.2 Is the purpose to evaluate for:
  - a) Accountability, which could include:
    - how efficient the one-to-one sessions are (efficiency would need to be defined for example in terms of time and whose time, in terms of money etc.)?
    - what the outcomes of one-to-one sessions are (again outcomes would need to be defined, for example, whether in terms of students’ learning or students’ satisfaction)?
    - whether the students’ needs are met (again thought would need to be given to who determines the needs, whether this is the students themselves or their lecturers or the ALL practitioner or a combination)?
  - b) Development, which would involve finding out:
    - how the one-to-one provision can be improved (if this is the decision from 1.1).
    - and/or how the individual one-to-one sessions can be improved.



- c) Knowledge, which would involve finding out:
- how the one-to-one provision works (if this is the decision from 1.1).
  - and/or how the individual sessions work (if this is the decision from 1.1).

### **Step 2: Determine the FOCUS/FOCI of the evaluation**

Once the purpose has been agreed, the next essential step is to identify the focus or foci of evaluation. Some considerations include:

- 2.1 The context of the one-to-one sessions (this is the environment of the one-to-one sessions including the location and duration of the session, students' access to the sessions, and any limits to their access).
- 2.2 The ALL practitioner's conduct of the one-to-one session (this includes their ALL expertise; ability to conceptualize, plan and organise instruction; their delivery skills including their instructional plans, strategies and evaluation techniques; their management skills for the instruction to move smoothly; their relationship with their students; their ability to conceptualize and carry out activities for their own personal and professional growth; and their ability to implement activities that further the quality of teaching in their unit).
- 2.3 The student's experience of the session and learning (this includes their perceived learning outcomes, whether their needs and expectations were met, their relationship to the ALL practitioner, and whether they received value-for-time in the session).
- 2.4 Some combination of these elements.

### **Step 3: Determine who should UNDERTAKE and who should PARTICIPATE in the evaluation**

Once the purpose and focus have been established, the next essential step is to identify who should undertake the evaluation and who should participate in it. Some considerations include:

- 3.1 The student (could be students who have attended one-to-one session and/or those who have not).
- 3.2 The ALL practitioner (both the practitioner teaching in the one-to-one session and/or a colleague observing).
- 3.3 University administrators (Unit managers and/or administrative officers).
- 3.4 Other (for example those who work with the same students as counsellors or disability advisers; university lecturers who refer students).
- 3.5 Combination of the above.

### **Step 4: Determine the METHOD or combination of METHODS for this evaluation**

Once the purpose, focus and participants have been agreed, the next essential step is to determine the method(s) for the evaluation. Some considerations include:

- 4.1 Student data such as numbers attending one-to-one sessions; frequency of attendance; reasons for attendance; grades for assignments.
- 4.2 Questionnaires – useful with students, staff and/or peers.
- 4.3 Individual or group interviews – useful for more in-depth feedback from students, staff and/or peers.
- 4.4 Focus groups – useful for more in-depth feedback beyond individual opinion and experience, especially with students.
- 4.5 Check lists – useful for immediate feedback on the session, especially for practitioners and/or peer reviewers.
- 4.6 Teaching logs – useful for immediate feedback but in more detail and especially for practitioners for reflection.

- 4.7 Case studies – useful for the practitioner and/or peers to explore particular issues and issues.
- 4.8 Analysis of recorded sessions – useful for an in-depth look at particular sessions, especially for the practitioner and/or as part of peer review.
- 4.9 Peer review – useful for an additional perspective on particular sessions from a peer.

### **Step 5: Draw up the instrument using appropriate statements and/or questions**

Once the evaluation plan is clear in terms of its purpose, focus, participants and method, the next step is to populate the instrument (such as the questionnaire, checklist, peer observation sheet or interview – depending on the methods chosen) with relevant statements or questions. Appendix A contains examples of three sets of statements, organised broadly under statements about context, about students, and about the ALL practitioner. It is envisaged that these statements could be used as they are or adapted to the needs of the evaluators.

## **6. Conclusion**

Given the current emphasis in higher education on measuring “outcomes” in relation to student learning, there is pressure on ALL practitioners to be able to demonstrate the impact of ALL practice on student learning. To return to Chanock’s (2002) earlier comment, it is “reasonable for colleagues, administrators and the public to want to know what we do, how we do it and why we think it is worth doing”. For ALL practitioners an important imperative is to further investigate the nature of ALL one-to-one teaching, improve practice, and provide a meaningful account of outcomes. Intelligent, well thought through evaluation plans are useful for this purpose. Using the framework suggested, ALL practitioners will be able to design evaluation plans for their particular circumstances and purposes while at the same time demonstrating why they do what they do and that the way they do it is worth doing.

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## **Appendix A – Sets of statements for evaluation**

### **List 1 - Context: location of the one-to-one; time allowed for the one-to-one; accessibility of the one-to-one session etc**

#### *Statements for students*

1. The Unit was easy to find.
2. I found out about the one-to-one sessions offered by the ALL practitioner from ...
3. The waiting area in the Unit was comfortable.
4. I felt relaxed in the waiting area.
5. I did not have to wait a long time before seeing the ALL practitioner
6. I came to a drop-in
7. I came to a short appointment
8. I felt comfortable discussing my studies in the ALL practitioner’s room.
9. There was enough time to discuss my studies with the ALL practitioner
10. I did not feel rushed in discussing my studies with the ALL practitioner.
11. It was not difficult to come to a drop-in session with an ALL practitioner.
12. It was not difficult to arrange a short appointment with an ALL practitioner.

13. I knew what to expect in a one-to-one interaction with the LA.
14. I was nervous about seeing the LA.

*Statements for the Administrative Officer*

1. The waiting area enables students to wait comfortably.
2. The students seem relaxed while waiting for an ALL practitioner.
3. The students know what to expect in a drop-in.
4. The students know what to expect in a short appointment
5. The students do not have to wait a long time before seeing the ALL practitioner.

*Statements for the ALL practitioner*

1. There is adequate time to discuss the student's study in a drop-in.
2. There is adequate time to discuss the student's study in a short appointment.
3. The student seemed comfortable discussing their studies in my room.
4. The student knew what to expect in the drop-in session.
5. The student knew what to expect in the short appointment.
6. The student was referred or recommended to come by a staff member.
7. The student self-selected to come.

**List 2 - Students: students' preparedness for, experience of and view of the outcomes of the session**

*Statements for students*

1. I had to wait to get in to see an ALL practitioner
2. I had to wait a long time in the reception to see an ALL practitioner
3. I knew what to expect in the drop-in session.
4. I knew what to expect in the short appointment.
5. I was clear about what I wanted to ask the ALL practitioner.
6. The ALL practitioner explained clearly what could be achieved in the session.
7. The ALL practitioner listened carefully to what I had to say and encouraged me to ask questions.
8. The ALL practitioner was encouraging and enthusiastic.
9. I was able to understand what the ALL practitioner told me.
10. I gained confidence as a result of the session with the ALL practitioner.
11. I learnt new skills or improved my skills as a result of the session with the ALL practitioner
12. I gained a better understanding of my studies as a result of the session with the ALL practitioner.
13. I left the session with a clear plan of action.
14. The resources the ALL practitioner showed/gave me have helped me with my studies.
15. The drop-in/appointment was worth the time spent.

*Statements for the Administrative Officer*

1. The student knew what to expect in the drop-in.
2. The student knew what to expect in the short appointment.
3. The student self-selected to come.
4. The students was referred.

*Statements for the ALL practitioner*

1. The student knew what to expect in the drop-in.
2. The student knew what to expect in the short appointment.
3. The student self-selected to come.
4. The students was referred.
5. The student was prepared for the session.

**List 3 - ALL practitioner: ALL practitioner's interaction with the student; ALL practitioner's instructional strategies; ALL practitioner's knowledge and expertise***Statements for students and/or peer reviewer*

1. The ALL practitioner listened effectively to what the student wanted to achieve in the session.
2. The ALL practitioner established a rapport with the student.
3. The ALL practitioner negotiated some outcomes for the session.
4. The ALL practitioner drew on relevant and appropriate knowledge to respond to the student's issues/questions.
5. The ALL practitioner recognised and took into account personal issues and/or disability that were affecting the student's learning.
6. The ALL practitioner's explanations were clear and logically sequenced.
7. The ALL practitioner encouraged the student to ask questions and seek clarification.
8. The ALL practitioner focussed on strategies to foster the student's independence in learning.
9. The ALL practitioner created a balance between supporting and challenging the student.
10. The ALL practitioner negotiated a clear manageable plan of action with the student.
11. The ALL practitioner used resources and materials to reinforce instruction.
12. The ALL practitioner sought feedback from the student on their understanding of the instruction.
13. The ALL practitioner sought feedback from the student on their satisfaction with the progress of the session.
14. The ALL practitioner was able to modify their approach if either the student's interest level or understanding was flagging.
15. The session focused on learning rather than editing or correcting.

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