Concentrating on affective needs
– in culturally relevant personal tutoring

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Introduction

We take *personal tutoring* to mean an academic activity in which a teacher engages, usually individually, with students - to enable them to learn and develop to the best of their ability. In this paper, we restrict ourselves to personal tutoring in these terms, and do not encompass academic advising.

We offer a somewhat evidence-related summary of our practice, which is not yet sufficiently established or widespread to lend itself to having been researched. Our approach has emerged from efforts (Cowan, 2006a; Chiu, 2009) which led us to believe that we had a rationale and approach for personal tutoring which was proving effective for our students. A key element in that approach has been the establishment and subsequent value to each student of a relationship which the student regards as personal, with all the potential of a tutor in a personal relationship to empathise with and respond to individual needs. A key challenge for student and tutors in both our situations has been the reluctance of students to speak with peers or tutors regarding issues which are central to their affective learning needs.

The writers' collegial collaboration in the virtual learning environment (VLE) as researcher and critical friend (Cowan & Chiu, 2009a) led to a relationship in which each has found value from contrasting their approaches to personal tutoring while identifying their many common principles (Cowan & Chiu, 2009b). That process features in the accounts which follow, relating to three current contexts.

Rationale and consequent approach

As personal tutors, we have worked in settings where an overall aim of the programme was to promote student-directed and student-managed activity and learning and development. Most of the needs to which we have had to respond as personal tutors have been personal. They have been such that the affective component and the cognitive dimension in students' learning are of at least comparable importance. Many of our students are hindered by lack of vision to judge what is (and is not) within their capability, by a lack of self-confidence rather than ability, by apprehension about the level of their competence, by reluctance to take risks with potentially demanding options, and by inability to be frank about their qualities, even with themselves. All of these needs are fundamentally affective. Yet such affective needs can receive scant attention in tutoring which concentrates on course content and on intended learning outcomes.

We have found that personal tutoring which leads to positive outcomes and feedback from students can follow a style which incorporates Rogers' three features (Rogers, 1961, 1969, 1980) - unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. For individual provision on such a basis to be cost-effective, it has of

course been necessary to concentrate on intense, personally meaningful, but somewhat infrequent, personal contacts.

Setting 1 (Undergraduates learning from part-time employment, in Edinburgh and Hong Kong)

John has had 25 years experience in facilitatively commenting on students' and colleagues' reflective logs (Cowan 1987, 2004). These logs have been written according to various remits. The original innovation featured the requirement for students to think and write in "stream of consciousness" style (Moon, 2004) about their emerging answer to the question "*What have I learnt about learning or thought about thinking from today's skills workshops, which should make me more effective next week than I was last week?"* (Cowan, 1987). John moved on in due course to facilitating students' thoughtful and constructive analyses of a forthcoming process demand in an Enquiry Skills module (Weedon & Cowan, 2001, 2002): "*What will I have to do next, and how should I tackle that?"*. He also assisted colleagues who were wrestling with self-determined questions regarding their personal development (Cowan & Westwood, 2006): "*What is a challenge which currently confronts me, and how should I deal with it?*"

One of his recent engagements has been as a virtual personal tutor for undergraduates in Hong Kong and Edinburgh. Both groups comprised students who were studying a module in which they aspired to develop employability skills in the context of their part-time employment, whatever that happened to be. Each week, a student should select an incident from the previous week, involving self or a workmate or classmate, from which they hoped to learn – either from mistakes or successes. They should summarise in their log the key features of the incident, how they felt about it at the time, and what they had learnt from it, or could learn from it, which they could put to good use in the future. In due course they progressed to being frank with themselves in their reflective writing regarding their weaknesses, apprehensions and needs – none of which they were willing to volunteer in any detail in workshop discussions with peers, for example.

Common areas of need, in recent specific and highly individual examples, have been:

- Poor self-questioning (Hong Kong and Edinburgh): Students' analyses of critical incidents did not identify or explore all the options, or made no mention of the implications of decisions or recommendations, or lacked objectivity or evidence in reaching conclusions, or did not see the need to test out a conclusion.
- Low self-efficacy (Edinburgh): The log writer, for example, had identified what appeared to be dishonesty on the part of an employee for whom they were responsible, but doubted their ability to confront the alleged offender effectively, in a manner which they had identified as suitable.
- Inaccurate self-appraisal (Edinburgh): The logs dwelt upon contributions to group work within the programme about which the writer was scathingly self-critical, despite openly expressed praise by the class for that particular presentation.

- Lack of confidence (Edinburgh): The log featured (in a sense) a *non*-incident, in which the writer was to have been given the opportunity to step upwards in terms of work responsibility, had felt unable to face the challenge, and had phoned in sick. So how should he handle the following week at work?
- Risk aversion (Edinburgh): The writer had been reprimanded on the basis of a false accusation, by a powerful personality with whom she was employed. She saw the way to confront this, but feared and shirked difficult consequences if she did so.
- Embarrassment (Edinburgh): The log writer eventually came to identify a problem in terms of personal skills of which she had been aware for some time, but had not liked to face in the critical incident analyses.
- Worries about writing style (Hong Kong): a writer devoted one or two paragraphs to apologies to the facilitating tutor, for writing in a convoluted style – when it had been made clear to students that the critical incident analyses were for their own benefit, and were not subject to assessment as were their other writings.
- Reluctance to be frank with self (or tutor?) (Hong Kong and Edinburgh): The incidents described in the logs featured sharp thinking, effective reasoning, clear presentation of a proposal to a senior, and positive results. However the writers' analyses merely highlighted minor scope for self-improvement, and disregarded or perhaps were unaware of the inherent strengths.

Many such needs are only mentioned, or hinted at, in remarks contained in the cover notes with which the reflective journal is sent as an attachment. And they seldom feature in feedback, as summarised in Appendices 1 and 2. John tends to respond to affective needs which are actually mentioned by addressing them in the cover note with which he returns the journal with facilitative comments. In such cases, he addresses the affective needs in specific feedforward, being the offering of constructive, formative feedback. This concept was first advanced and its relevance and usefulness stressed by Sadler (1983), and later revisited by Torrance (1993).

John describes his role as a personal development tutor in both of these similar curricular contexts as being:

- first and foremost, to concentrate on affective needs, and to discern these accurately, even when they are not made explicit by learners;
- in so doing, to live out Rogers' principles;
- to refrain from directing or managing student development;
- to encourage and help students to believe in themselves, and to develop well-founded confidence in their competence;
- to facilitate tasks in which students increasingly and objectively make their own decisions, monitor their own progress and make their own judgements, especially self-judgements;
- to establish a relationship in which both share in progressing learning and development for the student;
- to lead to a situation in which the tutor should no longer be needed;

- to provide acceptable and effective feedforward in regard to affective needs, separate from the comments on the reflective journals;
- to achieve all of the above through establishing a trusting personal relationship with students.

However he has noted several marked differences between his dealings with students in Edinburgh, and those in Hong Kong, although all were following virtually the same module task and demands. All have a great deal to learn about being objective in their reflections, and being logical in their conclusions and decisions for action. But students in Edinburgh often report incidents in which they have been at fault, and when they have been illogically and ill-advisedly outspoken. Edinburgh-based students (who may be from overseas, usually from Europe) seem very ready to find fault with authority, or with their line managers or colleagues. Hong Kong students, in accordance with CHC principles and upbringing, are reluctant to criticise or confront others in public, and especially not to disagree with seniors or even peers. In their logs, they devote time and space to deducing what they think their managers and teachers expect of them, and report their own faults. In reports of successes, Edinburgh students often take full credit for successes (sometimes with questionable justification); Hong Kong students often describe fulfilling management's expectations of them.

A recent request from John for open-ended feedback from the Edinburgh-based students on his tutorial commitment with them, led to the advice and reactions in Appendix 1. Asterisks indicate points which were also raised in a less thorough canvassing of reactions from Hong Kong students. Readers may wish to make their own judgements of the individuality shown in the wide range of open responses, and in the proportion declaring or revealing affective needs for support.

Such feedback, and especially the exhortations to refrain from changes in style, persuaded John that the style which he had developed over the years contained effective features, of value for student learning and development. He was much encouraged, for example, to be told in a response to the open-ended question: *"Is there anything else you want to tell us?",* that:

> *"It has been a good experience for me having the luxury of someone paying attention and steering me in the right direction in my log making. Unlike some educational experiences where there is a sense of going through the system, you convey a real interest in the individual student and an interest in the methodology and the content of the learning."*

An aside

John and Jean hope to collaborate shortly in a research project in which John will contribute as a Western facilitator in an Eastern module focused on Western-style critical thinking and challenging. John has already followed the tutorial style described above with Hong Kong students, who provided positive feedback on his personal tuition. However, although his style in that case remained much the same in principle as in Edinburgh, the students' needs, priorities, values and attitudes in engaging with them, were often outwith his previous experience. John had by that time undertaken some hasty personal development in studying a relevant and useful

text (Watkins & Biggs, 2001). This had enabled him to adjust with at least minimal adequacy to the cultural demands and expectations which his comments should satisfy. He therefore believes and hopes that the general approach he subsequently practiced in his commenting style is transferable to an East Asian CHC setting. But he will continue to seek much refinement of detail in his responses, to adjust to the different cultural context.

Context 2 (Edinburgh postgraduates of Business Studies, including international students)

For four years prior to the time of writing, John has been a personal development tutor for groups, more properly named learning communities, in a post-graduate MSc (HRM) programme in Edinburgh Napier University (Francis & Cowan, 2007). Many of the students are from outwith the United Kingdom; some come from European countries, and some from the East. In parallel with their degree studies, the students prepare their applications for graduate membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). This involves them in systematically planning self-directed and self-managed personal development over a year, self-monitoring their progress, and assembling evidence-based claims regarding their development.

John contributes at the beginning of the academic year to the initial scene-setting workshop for the entire class. He then meets on three occasions during the year with the two communities for which he is personal development tutor, to review progress and consider general problems and challenges. As they seek to select and formulate SMART goals, to plan for evidence collection, to analyse records of progress and to formulate claims, John facilitates in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) their very individual planning and assembling of their evidence. In the later stages, his students work collaboratively and socio-constructively, offering constructive suggestions to a peer. They are charged to suggest to the peer how to improve their forward plans, their arrangements to assemble their indications of performance, and the formulation of their evidence-based claims, and to carefully consider the feedforward which they are given.

Interestingly, once the nature of the challenge has been assimilated, John has found that Eastern students contribute particularly searchingly and effectively, as peers charged to provide formative evaluations. John, as a reviewer for a widely read educational journal, has recently encountered a number of papers submitted by Eastern writers and describing similarly effective constructive interaction between peers, in an Eastern setting. He therefore confidently expects that this aspect of his approach will be transferable to a CHC setting.

When meeting with communities or with the entire class, John tries to offer general advice and suggestions about methodology, especially with regard to evidencing the more demanding outcomes, and standards. In commenting on individual plans, difficulties and claims of progress, he facilitatively indicates where he sees that there is scope or need for improvement (normally without offering direction, but sometimes offering several specific suggestions, from which options the individual would require to choose). This models the style expected in subsequent collaborative peer exchanges.

In this setting, there are some general needs which emerge fairly consistently, whatever the student's origin:

- Inability to cope with the demands of defining criteria in terms of performance indicators against which data can be assembled;
- Overmuch self-sufficiency; most plans rely only on the writer to take charge of the arrangements for their own self-development. The (apparently awesome) possibility of consulting experts, either in a text or on a web-site, and especially in person, is generally disregarded without explanation – or, perhaps, without consideration?
- Distinguishing confidence from competence: students often aspire to become more confident in certain tasks, and are only persuaded with difficulty that it may be more effective to develop their competence, even if still having (in private) limited confidence;
- Distinguishing time management from prioritising. It is very common for students to concentrate on striving to manage their time effectively in order to meet all possible commitments. That is so, even when the evidence of their logs shows this to be impossible, without first prioritising and then discarding some items;
- Avoidance of task. It is not uncommon for anguished students, for whom gaining this additional qualification is undoubtedly important, to default on submissions and eventually admit to not having felt able to start on some programme tasks.

The situations in which these behaviours emerge, and the difficulties with which students wrestle, are naturally highly individual, which is why they seem to merit, and benefit from, personal attention.

From the outset, John has been strongly convinced that, in such situations, the fundamental needs calling for his attention and support are again not cognitive, but are affective. Many such needs are openly declared in personal communications. They may even feature in personal development plans, and if so are often expressed as "*I want to be more confident when I .... cope with disagreement in a group/or contribute effectively to seminars/or live up to expectations in my share of a group project presentation"*. Or *"This problem makes me feel very stressed."* To these and the above list of examples, John adds his encounters with needs of which the students may be unaware, or which they are reluctant to declare. It is common, for example, to encounter the powerfully embarrassed hesitancy of those students who doubt their ability, in various respects. They are in great danger of surrendering to what they see as impossible pressures and demands, or of working to restricted goals, because they lack the confidence to aim higher. Such concerns are seldom voiced face-to-face in the group of peers, and only diffidently emerge, with gentle and sustained prompting, in personal communications with the tutor. Here again John volunteers feedforward in his return cover notes and responses to specific requests for advice (of which there are a few), as in the first setting.

In this context John summed up what he saw as being the main tasks of the personal development tutor, as to:

- Ensure that the requirements of CIPD are understood by students;
- Encourage their early engagement with these requirements;

- Support students in iteratively and collaboratively planning, monitoring and reviewing their CPD, and hence in progressing successfully to their final submission;
- Prompt students to constructively question their plans and claims, and hence to find for themselves scope and means of improvement;
- Work towards a situation in which the students, on graduation, will have no further need of a personal development tutor in their handling of their continuing personal and professional development;
- As in Setting 1, to achieve all of the above through establishing a trusting personal relationship with his students.

John sought the assistance of students in ranking, and if necessary enlarging that list, together with feedback on his style and methods of dealing with their needs. Towards the end of the first semester in the current year, he asked for anonymous feedback from the part-time students on this programme. He obtained the responses in Appendix 2. Inevitably he had less than a full return, in view of the difficulty of eliciting feedback from part-time students. However the 80% returns which he received appear to endorse the personal nature of the needs and of the relationship within which students receive support which they clearly need and value. However neither the questions asked nor the responses focused explicitly on affective needs and responses ot them.

Context 3 (Developing Western critical thinking in English classes in Taiwan):

Jean has tutored classes in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Taiwan for 7 years (Chiu, 2001; 2002). In this context, which involves the fourth and fifth year of her students' studies, her teaching priority has been to develop their ability for overt critical thinking (Chiu, 2006). However, in this Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) context, she had already encountered acute problems. These arise from the commitment of CHC students to maintain a discrete silence, to avoid conflict and challenge or even disagreement, and to refrain from criticising authorities, or even peers, in public (Chiu, 2007a; 2007b). Her students find it difficult to cross the affective and cultural "security veil" (Merryfield, 2003) between the comfortable and familiar zone of "harmony and silence", and the challenging and uncomfortable zone of critical participation (Chiu, 2009).

Jean's approach (Chiu, 2008) to online and face-to-face facilitation of the development and use of critical thinking is subtly different, in three important ways, from most of the approaches to be found in western literature (Rogers, 1961. 1969. 1980; Brookfield, 1990; Garrison, 1991; King & Kitchener, 1994; Pithers & Soden, 2000; Walker, 2004). It concentrates heavily on the presumed affective needs of her learners, rather than beginning with the cognitive demands of critical thinking. It sets out, from the outset, to vest leadership and initiative with the students; and it tries to balance the conflicting demands of promoting critical thinking with freeing CHC students to express such thoughts. In adapting the western social-constructivist model for adoption in Taiwan, she found she had to follow published advice (M.C. Wu & Chao, 2002; M.C. Wu & Liang, 2002) in modifying or deconstructing the culturally based inhibitions associated with the adoption of the western approach.

Jean's chosen approach followed the culturally appropriate online practices which have been described as "shepherd leadership" by McCormick and Davenport

(2004). Like a pastoral shepherd of sheep in the field, the tutorial shepherd leader builds up an affectionate relationship with her flock, each of whom she knows on an individual basis. She provides an exemplar of behaviour, and leads by so doing. Like a shepherd of sheep, Jean as the tutor shepherd strives from an early stage to encourage some of her flock to take up leadership in their turn, then serving as an example to other students. She also devotes special, caring, effort to the lost or silent members of her flock.

Jean sought feedback from students on the aspects of facilitation which had influenced their online participation in a blended experience. She did so through two focus groups (Cowan and Chiu, 2009b) in addition to content analysis and recognition of individual messages of acknowledgement from students. That aggregate feedback concentrated attention on the affective support from shepherd leadership on encouraging quiet students' public verbalisation; it mentioned positively, or implied, these effective aspects of her style:

- Knowing and using the students' names from an early stage;
- Knowing and understanding her students' likes and dislikes, their acquaintance with issues and their interests;
- Providing affective support in the form of meaningful and sincere encouragement;
- Providing cognitive modelling: exemplifying the application of critical thinking skills,, identifying problem points and relating these to relevant background material;
- Recognising and pointing out unstated or unjustified assumptions, and distinguishing facts from opinions;
- Seeking the existence of credible evidence within statements;
- Expecting students to follow logical reasoning to reach conclusions;
- Talking with students informally after class;
- Smiling and welcoming students who come with something to discuss;
- Praising online contributions, sometimes in private e-mails;
- Inviting groups to post their "bright ideas" online, and enthusing thereon in response;
- Fostering a relationship with emerging student leaders;
- Fire fighting, in a culturally acceptable manner, when online "flaming" (Joinson, 2003) occurs, gives offence, and causes embarrassment for the offender;
- Encouraging quiet or passive students to participate.

As Chinese educator Ho (2001) and Watkins and Biggs (2001) have pointed out, Chinese teachers do not normally express personality and humour in formal class settings, but reserve such building of teacher/student relationships for informal settings, in contacts after class. Jean summarises the main features of her warm and personal approach "out of class", as important aspects of the interpersonal relationships which link her with her students.

First, the shepherding relationship started when Jean called students by their English and Chinese given names. Students perceived the familiarity as having gone beyond the mere use of English names. This had helped them to disregard their

prioritising of the maintenance of harmony. The consequent intimacy served as a sound foundation for subsequent online participation.

Second, she found that fostering a supportive relationship with student leaders was an effective technique to prompt more online contributions to be posted by them, and then for other group members to follow their example. Student Eucalyptus (a pseudonym for her English name) explained the dynamics in these terms:

> "Participating in online discussions with close friends...provides higher motivation for us to get online in the first place. It also helps us to remind one another in our small group to discuss a critical issue on E-course."

Student Sunflower was another experienced online contributor, and a model of critical thinking in class. Here is her account of shifting from being an "outsider" to becoming a committed online participant:

> "… I wouldn't be so participative if without you. I usually feel like an outsider. Because of all those nice emails you sent, I had the courage and confidence to post my opinions and disagree with others on the E-course board."

She continued as a very active student, responding to the researcher's online prompts.

Moreover, after learning and using the students' names, and establishing relationships as described, the researcher often gained some new and previously quiet participants for the discussion. She did so by breaking the silence during informal face-to-face meetings - by smiling (again a significant non-verbal communication), and by e-mailing to show her care for them as individuals, and her valuing of them.

Shepherd leadership was found effective in turning "silent girls" to "active participants", in the cases of Rose and Lavender. In the second focus group (Chiu, 2009), Rose initially sought implicit affective support signals from the researcher. Rose was indeed a striking example of one who progressed from being a quiet observer for eleven weeks in the face-to-face environment, to becoming a very active member in the final stage, on line. With the researcher's affective support, she started to post her viewpoints, and on one occasion even challenged a senior student.

Nevertheless, the western style of critical thinking may erode CHC students' affections in cases of disagreement and confrontation. While being effective in persuading CHC students to step out of their "comfort zone," it is not a social-cultural norm for them to exercise the western style of verbalising critical thinking and critiquing in public. For much the same reason, CHC teachers are not comfortable in taking students' challenges on themselves, unless they themselves have first-hand experience with western partners of engaging in critical dialogues (Watkins and Biggs, 2001). Nor are CHC students readily able to take others' challenges and critiques, and still continue in a normal student-student relationship,

with the “harmonious atmosphere in public” which is emphasised by the CHC context. Therefore, developing a tutoring system to fit in and transform CHC students’ adaptation to open-up critical conversation is an important issue for teachers across cultural boundaries.

Summary

In our three accounts we have tried to present persuasively the importance of affective needs in personal tutoring. We have done so through a range of data, testimony and examples, with the fairly simple conclusions:

1. Most learners in even moderately demanding learning situations have important, and often concealed, affective needs for support;
2. Many of these needs are individual in either their nature or their origin, or both;
3. These affective needs call for personal treatment from the aptly named personal tutor;
4. An essential feature of the effective resolution of affective learning needs is a strong, meaningful and trusting tutor/student relationship;
5. It is far from simple at the present time to obtain and provide advice or research evidence as to how to make that relationship as effective as possible;
6. Tentative initiatives in this area can usefully be informed by the information provided from efforts to ingather formative feedback.

Appendix 1: Feedback responses from Setting 1

Total enquiries = 25; Number of responses = 24 (96%)

*** indicates similar (informal) feedback from Hong Kong students' survey**

Question		
1. Did you find my comments acceptable?	24: Yes	0: No
2. Did you find my comments useful? Did they assist you in making any improvements in your logs, or to sharpen your reflections?	24: Yes	0: No
* Very polite	1	
* Encouraging – and I needed encouragement (or equivalent)	5	
* Helped me to improve the clarity of my log	3	
Made me want to do the next set of logs	2	
Usefully prompt turn-round	3	
* Helped me notice points that had escaped me at the time of the event	2	
Useful in improving my logs	3	
Expanded more positive sides	1	
* Questioning made me think more deeply and more constructively	4	
Questions took away my blinkers	1	
Without the comments, I would not have got beyond log 1	3	
Very helpful; can't think of more to say than that	1	
Comments imperative for us to progress on our reflection skills	2	
Useful in sharpening my reflections, especially analysis	3	
Helped me to see what to polish up	1	
* Helped me to feel more secure	3	
Balanced, objective and clearly written	1	
* Encouraged me to go with my own style rather than fitting into a (difficult for me) formula	1	
Gave me direction, as I wasn't clear what was expected	2	
* Conveys a real interest in the individual student	1	
General – the advice carried through to the rest of the logs	3	
Understanding	2	
3. Did I do anything which put you off or had a negative effect?	2: Yes[1]	22: No
4. What advice would you give me, for next time, to be more effective for the next group than I was for you?	24: Don't change	

[1] One student felt a comment implied that she had been stupid – and communicated 3 months later (and after final marks had been declared) to say she had over-reacted. Another, whose work had been of high quality, complained that the tutor's feedback was "too soft".

Appendix 2: Questionnaire returns in Setting 2 (N = 8)

My Personal Development Tutoring for you

My main tasks as your personal development tutor were judged by you to be:

Order	Range of returns	Item
1	1-4	Ensure that you understand the requirements of CIPD
2	1-5	Support you in iteratively planning, monitoring and reviewing your CPD, and hence in progressing successfully to your final submission
3	2-5	Prompt you to question your plans and claims constructively, and hence to find for yourself scope and means of improvement
4	2-6	Encourage your early engagement with these requirements
5	3-6	Help you to show yourself to be the best that you can be
6	5-6	Work towards a situation in which, on graduation, you will have no further need of a personal development tutor.
Extra		I student included "feedback on how to improve performance" which seemed to overlap with 5th item above

Answers to the open questions:

1. **What is the most useful assistance you have had from me so far, as your personal development tutor?**

   Feedback on my SMART objectives s and plan. (4)
   Help on how to be persuasive about claims. (2)
   Useful information at group meeting.
   Thinking about rewording SMART objectives to make them achievable.
   Explanation to help me understand CIPD requirements.
   Constructive criticism which made me re-assess my plan.
   "Knowledge that you're always at the end of the phone an e-mail for support."
   Encouragement to discuss my confidence issue with you – very useful.
   Helping me to differentiate between confidence and development.
   Guiding me in the right direction.
   Help to construct my plan.
   Useful summary document of points to remember.

2. **Do you have important needs in regard to this part of the CIPD with which you still require assistance from me? If so, what are they?**

None. (4)
Guidance on what will make a good plan.
To ensure that the feedback received satisfies the criteria of development (sic).
Continued support and guidance on the same lines as so far.
Help to ensure I remain on track and log my CPD correctly and in line with CIPD requirements.
Anything I had was clarified in the group meeting. (2)
My job has changed since I first submitted my plan. I will need help to change it
[Help was provided individually in respect of these feedback notes]

3. **How would you describe the main features of my style in interacting with you as your personal development tutor?** (All returns first listed here)

I found your approach very helpful as I don't feel apprehensive about asking anything. I think your enthusiasm to support improves my confidence in submitting this.
Very supportive and encouraging.
Constructive comments.
Very approachable and helpful.
Relaxed, approachable, clear.
Flexible, informal, but very clear.
Constructive and very thorough. Makes sure things are well understood.
Prompt, encouraging, supportive and relevant.

4. **What changes can I usefully make in the remainder of the time we work together, to enable me to be more effective for you?**

None. (6)
I am happy with the time we have had working together.
Continue to be there when needed.
I have been very happy with the support offered to date, and am unable to suggest any changes required at present.

5. **Is there any other feedback or (especially) advice you would like to give me at this time?**

None. (5)
I think you have been very helpful and understanding.
I am happy with the support as well as grateful.
Good communicator, good constructive comments.
You were very helpful in relation to scheduling our first meeting. You were able to schedule this for a time that was suitable for our whole group so that it did not interfere or require additional time off work.

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