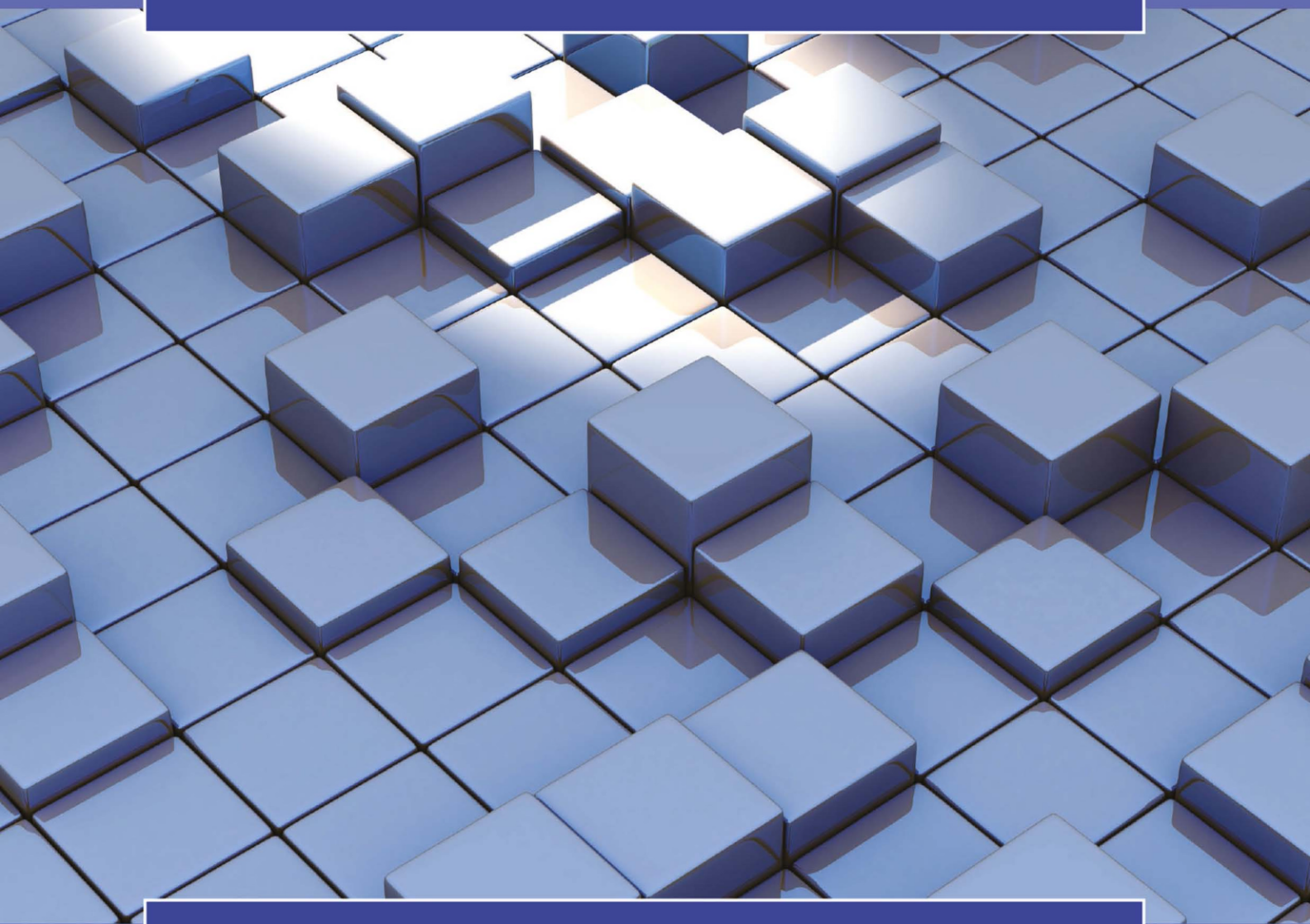
CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Career Assessment

Qualitative Approaches

Mary McMahon and Mark Watson (Eds.)



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Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERIES
Connecting Theory and Practice
Volume 7

Scope
Recent developments in the literature on career have begun to reflect a greater global reach and acknowledgement of an international/ global understanding of career. These developments have demanded a more inclusive understanding of career as it is experienced by individuals around the world. Related issues within the career literature include the relationships within the career theory literature, or theory integration and convergence, and between theory and practice. The influence of constructivism is another influence which is receiving sustained attention within the field.

The series will be cutting edge in focusing on each of these areas, and will be truly global in its authorship and application. The primary focus of the series is the **theory-practice** nexus.

Career Assessment

Qualitative Approaches

Edited by

Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

and

Mark Watson
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

WENDY PATTON

FOREWORD

This is a landmark book in the career literature as it is the first text to focus on qualitative career assessment. The editors have assembled a high calibre group of international authors, many of whom have been original developers of the unique compilation of qualitative career instruments and perspectives included in this book. It tracks the philosophical, theoretical and contextual perspectives on career assessment, and explores in depth its history, a history which has seen career assessment dominated by quantitative career assessment. Ironically, closer reading of some very early works, for example Parsons (1909), has highlighted the very early presence of qualitative assessment principles. However with the increasing acknowledgement that quantitative career assessment no longer adequately meets the increasing diversity of contexts in which career assessment needs to occur, it is timely to provide an emphasis on the emergence of qualitative career assessment to better accommodate the increasing complexities, and subjectivity, of individual career development in the twenty-first century. This point is emphasised by many of the book's authors, and is especially noted in the final reflection by Hazel Reid.
However, importantly, the book does not present the qualitative assessment approach uncritically. It focuses on key issues which the field needs to address to develop a more dominant place in the field. Of considerable importance is the need to develop an evidence base, emphasised by Stead and Davis' chapter. The book notes the importance of qualitative career assessment forging a place within the career assessment theoretical and practical literature, becoming a part of a practitioner's arsenal in engaging with clients, and developing processes which are inclusive of and sensitive to cultural contexts. Connected with this development of qualitative assessment in the field is the attendant need for practitioner training to include a focus on this approach – "qualitative career assessment needs to be seen for what it is, that is a legitimate way of engaging in the career assessment of clients and thus requiring, as with quantitative career assessment, that career practitioners be adequately prepared to use it" (McMahon & Watson, Chapter 29). What is also unique in this book is the exploration of qualitative career assessment within the lens of career development learning. In an innovative approach, the editors have introduced learning as a framework through which Part 2 of the book is structured.

Part 1 of the book provides key theoretical and philosophical foundations to qualitative assessment, highlights evidentiary support, and provides practical guidelines for integrating qualitative assessment into career counselling. It emphasises the strong base which already exists for qualitative career assessment.

Part 2 of the book provides the reader with a variety of qualitative career assessment tools, as Reid notes "a wealth of examples of 'how to do' qualitative assessment" (Chapter 30). There is increasingly a wide diversity of qualitative career assessment processes emerging in the literature and this book provides the reader with the opportunity to explore what is presently available. In many cases, the original authors of the assessment process have contributed to the chapter (for example, Amundson, Law, McIlveen, McMahon, Patton and Watson, and Parker and Arthur). A unique and very helpful feature of the editors' structure of this part is the substructure which assists readers to identify qualitative assessments and processes which feature different learning styles – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Each chapter is designed to assist the reader to reflect how each tool can be integrated into the career counselling process based on narrative and constructivist principles.

Part 3 of the book presents a series of chapters which challenge the binary quantitative/qualitative perspective when it comes to assessment and career counselling, demonstrating recent work which demonstrates the complementarity that is possible by seamlessly integrating, as suggested by Whiston and Rahardha (2005), these two seemingly different traditions. Again, the importance of Parsons' (1909) early work on holistic career assessment and counselling is evident. This part includes work by Sampson and his colleagues, emphasising theory based approaches to integrating qualitative and quantitative assessment, and the recent work by McMahon and Watson in developing the Integrated Structured Interview (ISI) process.

Part 4 of this book challenges practitioners to ensure assessment and counselling approaches are appropriate for a full range of diverse contexts. The book editors emphasise the potential of qualitative career assessment processes to be inclusive of, and sensitive to, cultural contexts. Chapters in this part focus on disability, vulnerable individuals, and non-Western cultural contexts.

Finally, Part 5 of the book proposes future challenges for the incorporation of qualitative career assessment into the career counselling theoretical, empirical and practical literature. Noting again the limited consistent attention to qualitative assessment in the literature to date, the editors emphasise the need for a systemic evidence base for the effectiveness of these processes. In 2006, Reid commented that part of the dilemma in acceptance of qualitative assessment is that practitioners are unsure about "how we do it". McMahon and Watson take this question to a new level, noting that the future of qualitative career assessment will only be strengthened if there is a strong evidence base documenting "how we know that what we do works" (Chapter 29).

This book of 30 chapters combines helpful descriptions of a broad range of qualitative assessment processes (18 in all) and 4 chapters providing suggestions for work in diverse contexts. However as mentioned, further than provide this description, the book provides a comprehensive discussion of the position of qualitative assessment within the literature, and an important challenge from the book's editors:

> In presenting this first book on qualitative career assessment, it is hoped that readers will gain more coherent and comprehensive perspectives that guide future assessment practice and research and in doing so, strengthen qualitative career assessment's position in the broader field of career counselling. (Chapter 29).

Wendy Patton
Queensland University of Technology
Australia

PREFACE

The title of this book, *Career assessment: Qualitative approaches*, was intentionally chosen by the co-editors to acknowledge career assessment's longstanding integral role in career counselling.

An aim of this book, as the first compilation on qualitative career assessment, has been to move it away from fragmented depictions as practical activities and techniques that might be used to engage and interest clients. Rather, it has been our intention in editing this book to raise the profile of qualitative career assessment as a form of assessment in its own right and not as an accessory to quantitative assessment or to career counselling. In presenting a coherent body of work on qualitative career assessment, the book demonstrates that it has historical, philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations that ground and unite this form of assessment.

The book is innovative in taking a learning perspective of qualitative career assessment. Learning has featured in the field of career development for over half a century, primarily in some career theories, but it has seldom been integrated with career assessment. Indeed, career development learning may be regarded as a goal of the self-understanding and career exploration that is made possible through qualitative career assessment.

In compiling this body of work, we have also not wanted to shy away from important challenges facing qualitative career assessment in the future. Thus, challenges related to its emerging research base, its complementarity with quantitative career assessment, and its use in diverse contexts have been acknowledged and considered.

The book is structured in five parts. Part 1, *Qualitative career assessment: Foundations*, overviews the historical, philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations of qualitative career assessment. In addition, learning is introduced as a framework through which to consider qualitative approaches to career assessment. Part 2, *Qualitative career assessment: Instruments*, collates chapters on a comprehensive range of qualitative career assessment instruments. Moreover, this section is structured according to learning styles evident in the instruments described, specifically, visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. Part 3, *Qualitative career assessment: Using Quantitative Career Assessment Qualitatively*, considers the qualitative use of quantitative career assessment, and in doing so the complementarity of quantitative and qualitative career assessment. Part 4, *Diverse Contexts*, considers qualitative approaches to career assessment in contexts other than able, western, middle class settings. Part 5, *Qualitative Career Assessment: Future Directions*, reflects on the chapters and considers suggestions for future directions.

In its focus on qualitative career assessment, this book will assume a unique and important position as the only such text to date and will therefore be seminal in the field of career assessment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the co-editors of this book it has been our pleasure to work with chapter authors from 9 different countries on the important topic of qualitative career assessment. We would like to thank them for their enthusiasm for this book and their willingness to share their ideas and expertise on qualitative career assessment. Most of all, we would like to thank them for the quality of their chapters that comprise this seminal text.

We would like to thank Wendy Patton and Hazel Reid for sharing their wisdom and insight in introducing and closing the book, no mean feat as both of these contributions involved reading the book in its entirety before writing their contributions.

Compiling a book of this nature involves considerable attention to detail and we would like to thank Rachel Grace for her professionalism and skill in formatting the book.

PART 1

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: FOUNDATIONS

Part 1 of this book, *Qualitative career assessment: Foundations*, describes the 'big picture' of qualitative career assessment by overviewing and locating it more broadly within the field of career assessment. The six chapters in this part of the book offer a response to criticism that qualitative career assessment is no more than techniques by establishing the historical origins, and the philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations of qualitative approaches to career assessment. Further, it also considers qualitative career assessment as a part of the process of both learning and of career counselling. In an innovation to the field, learning is introduced as a framework through which to view qualitative career assessment and as an organising structure for the chapters on qualitative career assessment instruments contained in Part 2.

MARK WATSON AND MARY MCMAHON

1. AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREER ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

There is a history to career assessment spanning over a century that is generally recognised as commencing with the foundational writing of Frank Parsons (1909) at the beginning of the last century. The present chapter explores how career assessment has evolved in both its quantitative and qualitative forms within career theory and career counselling. Given the focus of this book on qualitative career assessment, it seems apposite to understand the development of career assessment as a story, indeed a multi-story that provides a narrative of how the goals of career assessment have changed over time. The chapter explores several recursive influences on career assessment, such as changes in the philosophical underpinnings of career theory and career counselling as well as contextual changes in the world of work over successive decades. Finally, the future of career assessment is considered, particularly in relation to quantitative and qualitative career assessment, and the need for career practitioners to develop a guide in their selection and use of career assessment.

PHILOSOPHICAL STORIES OF CAREER ASSESSMENT

McMahon and Watson (2007) provide a systemic analysis of career research in its application to the modern and postmodern eras. In the present authors' opinion, this framework is equally applicable when considering the philosophies underpinning career assessment for over a century. McMahon and Watson describe the successive shift in emphasis over successive decades from a modern to a postmodern understanding of career development. The modernist philosophy adopts a logical-positivist perspective and consequently suggests that career development can be quantitatively measured because it is observable and thus the goal of career assessment should be predictive. This more scientific understanding of career behaviour and its assessment has led for several decades to an emphasis on the individual as the focus of career assessment. In a modernist philosophy of career development, the contexts within which individuals develop and within which they must make career choices are harder to consider in terms of measurement and certainly represent more unpredictable variables. The traditional and quantitative approach to career assessment promotes the scientific principles of universality and generalisability, thus creating what Savickas (1993) termed the "grand narrative" (p. 211).

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 3–11.

In more recent times career psychology has mirrored the philosophical shift in the broader discipline of psychology from modernism to postmodernism. This has been reflected within career assessment in an increasing de-emphasis on objectivity and the scientific rigour of test scores to a greater emphasis on subjectivity and the consideration of individuals' perspectives and the contexts in which their careers develop (Savickas, 2000; Watson & McMahon, 2004). McMahon and Watson (2007) argue that, as a consequence, there has been a resultant shift from a grand, scientific narrative towards a local narrative, a more qualitative approach in which "stories in context told by the participant is emphasised" (p. 171). In terms of career assessment, Savickas (1993) described this shift as a move from psychometry and scores to narrative approaches and stories.

The shift in the philosophical underpinnings of career assessment has been well documented; so too has the recognition that, despite this shift, the modernist philosophy still remains the dominant story in career assessment. The predominant tradition of psychometric assessment continues to reinforce the perspective that career assessment needs to be scientific, resulting in much value being placed on reliable, valid and normed interpretations of career development. Such psychometric constructs are the antithesis of a postmodern perspective of career assessment, making it more difficult from the latter perspective to establish the validity and reliability of narrative and constructivist approaches to career assessment. Several authors (e.g., McMahon & Watson, 2007) have pointed out however, that one cannot compare the criteria for career assessment based on a modernist perspective with career assessment based on a postmodern perspective. Further, McMahon and Watson note that the modernist perspective of career development has had the advantage of decades to establish itself and, indeed, to become a foundational perspective in the training of career practitioners. On reflection, one wonders whether this is strictly true for both quantitative and qualitative career assessment were explicitly suggested in Parsons' (1909) seminal book, *Choosing a career*. Perhaps it is more the case that qualitative, postmodern forms of career assessment have lost time over the last century to establish their identity given the predominant and persistent identity of quantitative, modernist career assessment (McMahon, 2008; McMahon & Patton, 2006).

THEORETICAL STORIES OF CAREER ASSESSMENT

The predominant influence of quantitative forms of career assessment can be understood, in part, from an understanding of the story of career theory development. Borow's (1982) critique over thirty years ago of what he termed instrumental outcomes of career guidance is a good starting point in this regard. Borow suggests that we consider the history of career assessment in relation to the history of psychological assessment, that there is a recursive relationship between the two fields of assessment. Importantly, Borow makes the point that the early foundations of what was termed vocational guidance were atheoretical: "The guidance of that era did not indulge itself in the luxury of theory" (p. 18). A consequence of this

lack of theory was that vocational guidance relied on the principles and assessment methods of psychology and, in particular, differential psychology with its focus on individual differences and trait measurement. This limited theoretical conceptual foundation for career assessment led Borow to critique the further development of career assessment as being "conceptually anemic and basically atheoretical" (p. 19).

In the first half of the last century the story of career theory development was largely the story of trait-factor theory development. Osborn and Zunker (2006) describe how trait-factor theory "drastically modified over the years" (p. 2) as this modernist perspective of career development increased the scope of individual characteristics and traits that could be assessed. Indeed, even within a modernistic theoretical perspective multiple stories of individual measurable traits proliferated. As career theory increasingly considered a more holistic interpretation of individual career development as well as increasingly diverse and complex definitions of work, so the number of quantitative career measures increased. In addition, however, a broader postmodern theory base emerged which called for career assessment to consider the context within which individual career development occurs and, indeed, a contextual interpretation of established quantitative assessment. Thus, the theoretical recognition of the increasing complexity of career development influences has resulted in the emergence of more qualitative, narrative forms of career assessment. As we will see in the subsection on complementary stories of career assessment, more recent theoretical developments return us full cycle to Parsons' (1909) original suggestions of the co-existence of quantitative and qualitative career assessment.

The history of career assessment development and its practical application is embedded in career theory development and, more specifically, the importance that various career theories have attached to assessment. Thus, the theoretical perspective that career practitioners adopt can largely define their philosophy of the role and significance of career assessment. Sharf (2013) offers a useful synopsis of the interrelatedness of career theory and career assessment in which he describes the extent to which career assessment has played a dominant role in the development and application of career theory. Certainly, trait-factor theory and its contemporary derivatives have made career assessment a central tenet of their theory. Indeed, Sharf argues that the success of these theories depends on their accuracy in measuring a variety of traits such as aptitudes, interests, values and personality. The embeddedness of assessment within the theoretical perspective of trait-factor theories is nowhere more evident than in Holland's (1997) person-environment fit theory where the development of career assessment such as Holland's Self-Directed Search has been in tandem with the development of his theory.

The emergence of life-span, life-space career theory (Super, 1990) introduced a different role for career assessment, that of "identifying important developmental issues that individuals must face" (Sharf, 2013, p. 462). Super (1957) in his seminal book, *The psychology of careers*, warned over half a century ago that "there is still a widespread tendency to think of vocational counseling as the giving and interpretation of tests with some reference to personal and occupational data" (p. 305). This call for a broader conceptualisation of career development has moved career assessment

away from its more precise, modernist roots towards the less predictable and more postmodern concept of developmental tasks within the developmental stages that an individual progresses through. Further challenges to more conventional, quantitative assessments of career development have arisen in recent decades with the emergence of constructivist and narrative career theories. These focus intentionally on the more subjective perspective of career development, with the emphasis on individuals' perceptions of their career development. This latest movement in career theory would place far less emphasis on quantitative career assessment with its definitional prescriptions of scores; rather these theories would encourage personal definitions of career development that call for qualitative career assessment.

CONTEXTUAL STORIES OF CAREER ASSESSMENT

The previous two sections on philosophical and theoretical stories of career assessment have both emphasised the impact of the influence of context in the history of career assessment. One way to understand why quantitative career assessment has dominated the development of career assessment for so long is to consider the prevailing contexts within and for which such assessment was developed. For a considerable time during the last century, and particularly in the first half of that century, modernist career theories and the resultant quantitative definition of career assessment that they promoted made sense. The world of work provided, for instance, a more stable and predictable context within which to understand career development. Borow's (1982) critique of earlier career theory and its instrumentation describes the philosophy of those times as one of "uncompromising pragmatism" (p. 18), a period of time in which working conditions seemed to not call for theoretical development. Career assessment in the first half of the last century needed to address not only a relatively stable and hierarchical work environment, it also focused on a more limited definition of the working population. The latter was largely westernised, predominantly Caucasian, and definitely more privileged.

Contexts change and evolve and career assessment needs to respond to such changing realities. Nowhere is this more evident than in the personal career development of the recognised founder of career psychology, Frank Parsons. In the short life span of 53 years, Parsons changed career direction several times, with some of the changes being more radical than others but all of them reflecting on changing contexts within his life. From being educated as a civil engineer, Parsons successively became a labourer, a teacher, a lawyer, a lecturer, a social commentator and reformer, and an author of 12 books and 125 articles. Thus as working conditions became more fluid over the last century, and as the working population became increasingly diverse both in terms of culture and gender, there has been a sustained pressure for a pragmatic re-assessment of the nature of career assessment. McMahon and Watson (2007) make the important point that a modernist perspective and career theories grounded on such a philosophy have become "less congruent for the present time" (p. 177). A postmodern perspective would recognise that the world of work is in constant change and that there are a wide

variety of complex interacting variables that impact on individual career development. For instance, for several decades now there has been an increasing recognition both in career theory and research that individuals need to develop their careers within complex changing social, environmental, familial and, indeed, global contexts. All this calls for a less singular story, a less psychometric definition for career assessment and suggests that a multistoried approach is called for.

The limitations of a quantitative definition of career assessment in the evolving contexts within which career development takes place have become a persistent concern in more recent times. Lamprecht (2002), for instance, argues that the interpretation of quantitative career assessment remains largely decontextualised. This is mainly due to the fact that quantitative career measures are used more as a static, point-in-time intervention in the career counselling process. As such they essentially provide us with a psychometric definition, a singular story that means little without being contextually embedded within the contexts of a client's career development. A qualitative interpretation of quantitative assessment would address Savickas' (1993) call for career assessment to move from scores to stories. It is this increasing need for a more holistic understanding of career development and career assessment that has led to attempts to go beyond assessment scores towards stories within which such scores could be contextually understood. This movement is discussed in the next subsection of this chapter.

COMPLEMENTARY STORIES OF CAREER ASSESSMENT

McMahon and Patton (2006) describe the development of career assessment as having always been a multistoried history but a history that has been singularly dominated by the story of quantitative career assessment. Importantly, McMahon (2008) suggests that the dominance of a quantitative approach to career assessment has "silenced or overshadowed a possible alternative story" (p. 589) of qualitative career assessment. Other authors have emphasised that the assessment movement that grew out of Parsons' (1909) seminal work was always intended to be both quantitative and qualitative in nature (O'Brien, 2001), that Parsons emphasised context, active client involvement in assessment and a range of intra- and interpersonal factors that needed to be considered in a more holistic assessment of an individual's career development. Evidence of this is provided in Parson's suggestions for a more comprehensive approach to career assessment that would go beyond the mere scoring of traits and the simpler notion of matching such scores to related work environments. Thus Parsons suggested several more qualitative approaches in the assessment of an individual's career development. He referred, for instance, to the "picture-method" (p. 24) which was a precursor of the use of metaphor in which imagery was provided to clients in order for them to conceptually reassess their present understanding. An example would be his image of the alternatives of running a race tied to an iron ball or running without such an encumbrance. Parsons also encouraged clients to peruse magazines in order to identify "biographical" imagery

of "leading men in their youth" (p. 24). The latter exercise provides historical echoes of steps Savickas (1989) suggests within his Career Style Interview.

The Xhosa-speaking people of South Africa have a saying that 'It dies and rises like the moon', that is that issues keep returning. The saying captures in many ways the history of career assessment. There is a recycling dynamic in career assessment. This is evident on the one level in the re-invention of certain constructs that return to favour sometimes decades after they are first proposed. Take, for example, the movement towards constructivist career theory and the resultant need to assess the concept of career adaptability (Savickas, 2005). Even within the more stable and simplified world of work within which Parsons developed his career theory, he placed great emphasis on the need for adaptation in clients' career development. Parsons (1909) was quite unequivocal in this regard: "But the fundamental question that outranks all the others is the question of adaptation" (p. 13). In more recent decades the concept of career adaptation has been re-emphasised and both quantitative and qualitative assessments of this construct have emerged (see, for instance, the special issue of the Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2012, volume 80, in this regard).

On another level, there has been a recycling of the idea that quantitative and qualitative career assessment may co-exist and indeed be viewed as complementary. The debate on the relative value of these two forms of career assessment has moved gradually from an either-or binary to a both-and perspective. Watson and McMahon (2014) have described the failure to consider the complementarity of these two forms of assessments as "an unhelpful divide that has positioned many career practitioners in dichotomized approaches to career counseling and assessment" (p. 631). Thus there is a need to recycle back to Parsons' (1909) original concept of a more holistic perspective of career assessment that combines both forms of assessment, an approach to career assessment that would emphasise convergence rather than divergence (Sampson, 2009; Savickas, 2000). Several chapters in this book describe this movement towards a complementary approach to career assessment. It is not that qualitative career assessment has been recently discovered. Indeed, McMahon (2008) states emphatically that "qualitative career assessment is most certainly not something new" (p. 591). It is rather that the overly dominant story of quantitative career assessment no longer adequately meets the increasing diversity of contexts in which career assessment needs to occur. Thus there is an increasing call to redress the balance in career assessment, to move from a singular story to a multistory assessment process that is better able to accommodate the increasing complexities, and subjectivity, of individual career development in the twenty-first century. There are numerous examples of how authors have risen to the challenge of combining quantitative and qualitative career assessment in pragmatic ways, examples of which are evident in this book.

A MODEL STORY OF CAREER ASSESSMENT

Frank Parsons' (1909) advice about the career choice process could equally apply to career practitioners and their selection and use of both quantitative and qualitative

career assessment: "It is better to sail with compass and chart than to drift into an occupation haphazard or by chance, proximity, or uninformed selection" (p. 101). It is advice we could well heed but in conjunction with Arulmani's (2014) warning that "the stance taken toward assessment is often a reflection of the career counselor's theoretical and philosophical positions" (p. 609). Sure career practitioners need to chart their way through the proliferation of career assessment that is presently available but they also need to consider what criteria or compass they would use to do that. Thus, Osborn and Zunker (2006) call on career practitioners to consider the issue of career assessment by using a conceptual model that would help determine both the purpose of testing as well as the interpretation of the results of such assessment. They suggest that such a model needs to be flexible given the complexities of career development in the times we practice in. An example of such a model, and indeed a guide for career practitioners, is offered by McMahon and Patton in their chapter in this book on incorporating career assessment in career counselling.

Osborn and Zunker (2006) propose a model that consists of five steps and the present authors are of the opinion that these steps provide a generic framework that most career practitioners could adapt to meet the contexts within which they practice. The first step requires an analysis of needs which would help not only in the establishment of the career counselling relationship but also in identifying what the client's needs are. The second step requires establishing the purpose of testing, a step that would attempt to relate the purpose of testing to the needs of the client as identified in the first step. It is in the third step that the career practitioner considers the issue of what assessment to undertake. While Osborn and Zunker operationalise this step more in terms of quantitative measures, this step would allow both the career practitioner and the client to jointly consider the value of quantitative or qualitative assessment or both. The fourth step involves the use of the assessment results. Given the uniqueness of individual career development and the diverse and often cultural contexts in which such development takes place, any assessment results – whether quantitative or qualitative – need to be contextually interpreted. The final step of making a decision is the operational culmination of the preceding four steps. An important point stressed by Osborn and Zunker with this proposed model is that it has a recursive nature in that, as a consequence of implementing later steps, the individual may recycle to earlier steps.

CONCLUSION

McMahon (2008) suggests that the re-emphasis on qualitative forms of career assessment may continue to flourish with the emergence of practical counselling and assessment approaches in the career literature. Watson and McMahon (2014) caution, however, that a reason why quantitative career assessment has remained so dominant is that it lends itself more readily to practical application. The discussion of qualitative career assessment has remained largely that, a theoretical consideration, a point made by Stead and Davis in their chapter in this book on the research evidence

base for qualitative career assessment. Yet there is increasingly a wide diversity of qualitative career assessment processes emerging in the literature and this book provides the reader with the opportunity to explore what is presently available.

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Mark Watson
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
South Africa

Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland
Australia

PETER MCILVEEN AND WARREN MIDGLEY

2. A PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATION OF QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a consideration of the philosophical dimensions of career assessment as an act of social construction. As a philosophical chapter that necessarily renders our own values in this text, we declare our endorsement of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen & Davis, 1985) and the Systems Theory Framework of career development (STF; Patton & McMahon, 2014). Indeed, we present this statement quite deliberately for we believe it is incumbent upon all scholars and practitioners who engage in a process of a philosophical consideration to metaphorically wear their epistemic and professional values on their sleeves to ensure transparency and understanding (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2013). Thus, the chapter begins with a selection of historical moments in the evolution of the field of career development. We present a caution that career assessment—qualitative and quantitative—is itself an historical, culturally constructed entity that manifests the power of career practitioners afforded them by clients' unwitting collusion with the discourse of career. We then present a conceptualisation of narrative through the lens of social constructionism.

CAREER ASSESSMENT AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION: A PSYCHOTECHNOLOGY

The close of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was an era of technology, industry, immigration, and war. In this tumultuous time, one finds the likes of social reformer Frank Parsons (1909) whose commitment to the employment of immigrants saw the emergence of what can only be described as the classical model of career assessment, and the philosopher of education and society, John Dewey (1916), who extolled the inseparability of learning and work as the foundation of democratic society. In this era *vocational psychology* (Hollingworth, 1916) emerged as a branch of a new discipline, *applied psychology*, otherwise known as "psychotechnics" or "psychotechnology" (Geissler, 1917).

Yet, it was an era in which the scientific assessment of a person and the capacity for work was, by current standards, inchoate and unsophisticated, but it was already flexing its power as a scientific discourse. The quotation below is drawn from a paper

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 13–20.

in which the author discusses the role of individuals with an intellectual disability in the Great War, WWI.

> The moron fits into the cogs of a big system with very little friction. He is content to eat and sleep and dress and work as a part of a machine with machine-like regularity. Such monotony he can understand and appreciate. (Mateer, 1917)

The contemporary scholar may recoil at the ostensibly discriminatory language because these words speak more than what is written. The lines should alert one to reflect on the current discourse of career assessment and counselling (cf., McIlveen & Patton, 2006). The lines are indicative of a discourse of power whereby the client/the subject of the assessment is in the gaze of the practitioner. Regardless of whether career assessment entails quantitative and/or qualitative procedures, both are instruments of an agent whose power is dependent upon the very discourse that is used to theorise, formulate, and assess the apparent needs of the client. The agent in this case is the practitioner. This assertion should be read as a warning against *presentist bias*—that of adjudging past standards by current standards (cf., Thorne & Henley, 2005). Just as the misuse of psychometrics has been criticised (e.g., McIlveen & Patton, 2006), social constructionism's epistemological and rhetorical discourse for qualitative career assessment makes it just as much a tool of power; for it is within the dialogue of counselling that the practitioner has the power to manipulate what is deemed meaningful. This power is writ large in the notion of *co-construction* whereby the client and practitioner together develop a narrative for the client. Of course, a practitioner's intentions should be caring; however, the fact is that the practitioner is inherently in the process of co-construction, and not an objective observer on the side.

Cultures, mores, and conventions evolve with societies and the meaning of work concomitantly evolves. Thus, it is apposite to consider the philosophical roots of the meaning of work in people's lives (cf., Blustein, 2006). As a paradigm for the formulation and application of theories and practices of career assessment, social constructionism emphasises the contextual, historical ways of being, knowing, and doing (Young & Popadiuk, 2012). However, taking a contextual perspective is not simply a matter of gathering facts in a career assessment interview and arriving at an understanding of a client's environment; to the social constructionist, context is much more. To be precise, social constructionists attend to context by way of discourse and its capacity to create knowledge/power (cf. Foucault, 1972). This is a crucial assumption upon which to proceed because it is the axis of the turn toward discursive psychology and radical formulations of sense of self promulgated by scholars such as Hermans (2006). But, first, in order to arrive at that radical perspective and to provide a vehicle for social constructionist thinking of work and career, we must turn to the STF as a conceptual framework for career development that decentres the individual amidst a context of influences and provides a new way to apprehend the meaning of work in people's lives.

SYSTEMS THEORY FRAMEWORK, THE DECENTRED INDIVIDUAL, AND FOUR-DIMENSIONALISM

The social constructionist paradigm can be manifested by application of the Systems Theory Framework of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Although the STF lends itself to other paradigms, Patton and McMahon have tended toward social constructionism in their scholarship of career counselling that is informed by the STF (e.g., McMahon & Patton, 2006). The STF's contextualisation of the individual extends from the intrapersonal influences that are embodied in the individual (e.g., physical attributes, values) through to the influences that constitute the individual's interpersonal, social world (e.g., friendships, family), and the environmental-societal system (e.g., school, work, government). From the perspective of the STF, an individual cannot be empathically understood as an entity that is ontologically distinct from context; he or she can be understood only as a person-in-context. Seen objectively, the multiple influences in the STF are understood to be in a state of flux, constantly evolving as a result of their recursive effects on one another, concomitantly manifesting the influence of chance, happenstance, or *Acts of God*. The STF also requires the scholar to historicise the individual. Accordingly, a person cannot be empathically understood as a psychological snapshot at a point in time; he or she has a past, present, and imagined future. In sum, the STF presents a four-dimensional framework of an individual: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental-societal influences, in and across time.

The ontological understanding of the dimension of time in this paradigm aligns with the theory of four-dimensionalism, which seeks to explain the long-standing question of how objects persist and change through time (Koslicki, 2003). The theory of four-dimensionalism (Sider, 2001, 2003) posits that objects, which could include people and events (Rea, 2003), have temporal parts, and therefore can persist and change through time. For example, a steaming hot cup of tea can be described as having certain properties. One of those properties is a temporal one: it exists in the now in which it is observed or experienced. One hour later, the same cup of tea may still be sitting on the desk, un-sipped. In that case, according to the four-dimensionalist stance, it is understood to be the same object, with some of the same properties as before, but also with some different properties. There has been a change in the property of relative temperature—from hot to cold—and it also has a different temporal property (it is one hour later than the previous time). For four-dimensional theory, the steaming hot cup of tea now and the cooled cup of tea in one hour's time have the same ontological status of existence. As Rea (2003) explains, objects which are not present owing to different temporal properties (e.g., being in the future or past) are like objects that are not present due to different spatial properties (e.g., being in another country or on another planet). Both objects exist; they just do not exist where/when we are (here and now).

It may seem pedantic to discuss the ontological status of objects that are distant in time; however, four-dimensionalism suggests a radically alternative ontological stance from which to examine the concepts encompassed in the notion of career assessment. Much that has been written about career assessment conceptualises it as a static three-dimensional object or state, that is, it can be described without reference to specific time. We would argue that career assessment is ontologically four-dimensional, and that its temporal properties are significant. According to this four-dimensional view, the notion of 'person' cannot be completely dissociated from past, present and future experiences. To remove the past and future and capture only the present, is to capture a caricature of the concept of person: one that has been artificially reduced for the purposes of recording and analysis. Indeed, it is impossible to apprehend a person's identity without including stories of the past, present, and future, all spoken and read as a continuous biography, albeit with twists, turns, and stories *told, untold, silenced*, and/or *forgotten* (cf., McMahon, 2006).

Imagine a personal photo album. At the front of the album there are photos of a person who is younger, perhaps a child. Over time, new photographs are added to the album. Naturally enough, the subject of the photographs appears to age with the turning of each page of the album. Each photograph is a snapshot in time and one can discern physical changes in the subject over time. Yet, the album is silent. Although a picture is worth a thousand words, in this album the photographs per se do not speak; they do not tell a story. It is the beholder of the photographs who creates and tells a story by describing the events in each, and their connections to other photographs on previous and subsequent pages, in other points in space and time. The aim of career assessment is to collect, select, and reflect on the images and experiences of a life, and to connect them together as a coherent story that is incomplete and open-ended, and that is understood as an ongoing conversation with oneself and the world.

A radical approach to social constructionism holds the ontological assumption that: (a) a person's reality is socially constructed; (b) reality is psychologically experienced; and, moreover, (c) experience is constituted of psychological representations of discourses that are culturally mediated in and across time. In other words, there is not an essential self within a person; instead, a person's sense of self is a rendering of the discourses that have spoken and currently speak a person into the present and anticipated future reality the person experiences. Indeed, social constructionism assumes that "the most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 172). Thus, a person's sense of self is utterly bound by discourse and culture. Stories and storying, therefore, are the grist of identity, subjectively experienced and objectively described. Accordingly, we assert that, along with context and time, story is an ontological and epistemological tenet that constitutes the rhetoric and methods of qualitative career assessment.

STF AND STORY

Rather than being considered as the site of isolated facts to be assessed, the influences identified in the STF can be made meaningful through the *process influence* of *story*. Patton and McMahon (2014) posit story as an important element of meaning-making, both subjectively from the client's perspective and objectively from the practitioner's perspective. In this way, a client may tell a story about his/her life autobiographically, and a practitioner may formulate a story of his/her life as a biography.

Transcending the subjective-objective dichotomy of the client-practitioner stories, adherence to the STF as a social constructionist framework requires the practitioner to consider the convergence of the influences of the client and practitioner. From a classical perspective, this convergence may be seen as the transference-countertransference dynamic. However, social constructionists depart from the classical position because they must assume that the talk and action that go on between client and practitioner constitute a form of co-construction. Co-construction implies a joint effort. Patton and McMahon (2014) depict this confluence of influences as the STF influences of client and practitioner enclosed as a "therapeutic system" (p. 368).

A significant implication of this view of career assessment pertains to the knowledge and power relations within the therapeutic system. Career assessment as a process per se and the technology it deploys (e.g., psychometric tests, qualitative interview schedules) are a discursive practice that is administered by professionals who have their own sub-cultural discourse that is constitutive of a form of knowledge and power (McIlveen & Patton, 2006). For example, two career practitioners talking about a client's interests as being *realistic* and *investigative*, as in Holland's (1997) typology, or as a client's *career theme*, as in Savickas' (2011) model of narrative career counselling, may very well understand one another; however, the meaning of these words do not necessarily nor immediately convey the same for the client. Thus, the idea of confluence between client and practitioner requires a commitment to reflexive practice whereby a practitioner develops a subjective and an objectified awareness of his/her dialogue and influence within the therapeutic system, perhaps by professional supervision (Patton & McMahon, 2014) or self-supervision (McIlveen & Patton, 2010).

THE PROCESS OF STORYING THROUGH TIME

Story may be an historical account of one's life, or it may be an open-ended narrative that portends possible futures and, moreover, through the lens of the STF, story can be theorised in terms of the psychological processes of *dialogical self* (McIlveen, 2007). In this way, a person's story may be generated from different personal perspectives or *I-positions* (Hermans, 2006) that are constitutive of the multiple influences identified in the STF. Furthermore, these different I-positions may engage in dialogue with one another, thereby decentring the individual to include influences

beyond the boundaries of his/her flesh as constitutive of his/her reality, and these influences may have temporal dimensions of past, present and/or anticipated future. As much a personal narrative generated by oneself, in social constructionist terms, story is necessarily a dialogue that is shared and created with others who comprise the contextual influences of an individual.

Although reinterpretation of the past is inherent to social constructionist career assessment, particularly through a process of co-construction with the practitioner, simply interpreting a person's past as if it were a collection of bygone facts is not necessarily social constructionism. To assess, as in to engage in a process of career assessment, implies that there is an entity to assess, to observe, to capture, to appraise, to somehow measure. Here, the very words compel one to construct an entity, firmly fixed in time, in the process of assessing. Represented as word, image or sensation, the entity that is assessed is pragmatically real enough to the beholder—the client, the practitioner. Here, we present a vision of career assessment that is radically social constructionist in its philosophy and demonstrate how coming to know a sense of one's self through career assessment and its attendant processes (e.g., co-construction) is more than simply reinterpreting the past so as to effectively operate in the present world-of-work. More than this, social constructionism holds that meaning does not reside in one's head, as it were, in a mentalist sense; instead, meaning resides in discourses that are spoken, read, and signed as cultures.

This ontological and epistemological emphasis implies that the process of knowing and the product of knowing—knowledge—are contingent upon processes and products that have gone before. Adherence to the social constructionist paradigm requires one to accept that what is (re)created as to be new in the present time has a relationship from whence it came. Thus, what is deemed new in the present time is not completely new; ontologically, it persists as a lived reality. With respect to career assessment, one may develop a new perspective of one's sense of self by: (a) learning new ways of knowing; so as to (b) produce new knowledge of one's sense of self in the world; and consequently (c) to act out one's career in the world on the basis of the new way of knowing one's sense of self. All of these processes operate in and through time.

CONCLUSION

The presumed epistemological differences between quantitative and qualitative career assessment methods are not manifest in a person's lived experience of a career story; that is, the story the person knows, rehearses, and revises over time. Regardless of whether a person's story is generated on the basis of personality tests or creative writing, the process of storying and making meaning through the rhetoric and methods of quantitative and qualitative career assessment is the same: the person constructs a psychological reality in conversation with the practitioner (and others). That a person's personality is objectively described as XYZ type matters little; what matters most is how the person and others, especially the practitioner, talk and

write about being an XYZ type—this is the reification of identity in talk and text as story. Thus, we directly appeal to you—the reader—to consider the philosophical foundations on which you construct your career development practice and ensure that there is correspondence between the assumptions of what you believe constitutes reality (i.e., ontology); how you know and create knowledge (i.e., epistemology); how and what you value as knowledge (i.e., axiology); how you use the technical language, words, and symbols of knowledge (i.e., rhetoric, discourse); and, most of all, how you put all of the aforementioned into practice.

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Peter McIlveen
University of Southern Queensland
Australia

Warren Midgley
University of Southern Queensland
Australia

GRAHAM B. STEAD AND BRITTAN L. DAVIS

3. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: RESEARCH EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief description of evidence-based practice and thereafter to describe various career qualitative career assessments in association with evidence of their utility. This will be followed by recommendations for qualitative career assessments.

The American Psychological Association (2006) defined evidence-based practice in psychology (EBPP) as "the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences" (p. 273). Although this definition was intended to be inclusive and neutral, opposing factions have appropriated the concept of evidence-based practice to suit their needs (Norcross & Lambert, 2011). While some speciously equate EBPP with the best available research and mostly the results of randomised controlled/clinical trials on treatment interventions, others erroneously overstate the predominance of relational or clinical expertise while disregarding research support (Norcross & Lambert). Nevertheless, the foundational goal of EBPP is to provide guidelines to improve the delivery of interventions to clients within an environment of open dialogue, respect, and cooperation between all stakeholders of the intervention procedure including practitioners, clients, researchers, and managed care organisations (La Roche & Christopher, 2009). In order to advance the psychotherapy knowledge base, enhance client care, and decrease the gap between research and practice, Kazdin (2008) recommends three shifts in research: (a) to investigate the processes of therapeutic change, (b) to examine moderators of client change that can be transferred to clinical practice, and (c) to increase qualitative research.

Using APA's definition of EBPP and Kazdin's (2008) recommendations for improving psychological research on intervention outcomes and examining the usefulness of qualitative assessments, this chapter aims to investigate support for evidence-based practice within current scholarship on qualitative career assessment. The qualitative assessments that will be referred to are the card sort, career genogram, future career autobiography, My System of Career Influences, narrative career assessment, and relational career assessment. We shall provide the evidence for the efficacy of these approaches and recommendations on furthering evidence-based practice.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 21–30.

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENTS

Card Sort

Card sort assessments have been present since the early 1960s (Goldman, 1992; Tyler, 1961). The client is presented with a set of cards, often with names of occupations, and is asked to place the cards into three piles. The piles comprise occupations which the client may consider, in terms such as interests, values, goals, and abilities. The client sorts the three piles into sub-piles in which the commonality for each pile provides reasons the client is interested or not in the occupation. The sub-piles may also be created based on other themes the counsellor selects. Thereafter, a discussion between the client and counsellor ensues in which the choices are jointly reflected upon and interpreted. According to Goldman, the card sort assessment is closely integrated with the counselling process.

Various studies have examined the efficacy of the card sort, many of them using quantitative psychometric evidence. Cooper (1976) used a vocational card sort among 120 female undergraduate students. She found that this card sort was more effective in broadening the career options of the participants than the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Campbell, 1974) and in increasing their frequency in reading occupation information. Using the Tyler Vocational Card Sort (TVCS; Dolliver, 1967) among 67 male and female university students, Dolliver and Will (1977) found that the TVCS was more accurate than the Strong Vocational Interest Blank (Campbell, 1974) in predicting students' occupations 10 years later. In 1979, Talbot and Birk used a vocational card sort with other interventions to determine their effectiveness in broadening the career options of 103 undergraduate women. The findings indicated that the intervention effectiveness was small. They reported that the vocational card sort was the least effective in participants considering more career options. Using a sample of 140 undergraduate women, Atanasoff and Slaney (1980) reported that the Vocational Card Sort was a better indicator of the participants' expressed career choices than the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Campbell, 1974). Slaney (1983) conducted a study among 180 undergraduate women on the effectiveness of interventions including the Vocational Card Sort (Slaney, 1978) on career indecision. He reported modest intervention effects. Slaney and Dickson (1985) used the Vocational Card Sort (Slaney, 1978) as a vocational exploration task intervention among a group of interventions with 121 undergraduate women. They reported that the interventions were minimally effective in reducing the participants' career indecision. Glick, Jenkins, and Gupta (1986) asked 631 respondents from four organisations in the U.S.A. to determine their job characteristics using card sorts. They found that job characteristics and outcomes were related. Using a sample of 28 university students, Wnuk and Amundson (2003) conducted a focus group to determine the usefulness of the Intelligent Careers Card Sort (Parker, 2002). The participants found this card sort useful in assisting them with their career development.

Career Genogram

The career genogram is a qualitative assessment that enables information to be gathered about people's family, life experiences, histories, environmental barriers, and backgrounds. The client is asked to draw a diagram with three generations of family members, providing information, such as their birth and death dates, occupations, significant others, children, brothers and sisters. Once the genogram has been constructed, clients tell their life stories using the genogram as a frame of reference. The counsellor is attentive to the client's role models, and inconsistencies, ambivalence, and possible omissions in the client's narrative. The purpose of the career genogram is that if one understands one's past, one may be equipped to understand one's present and to plan for the future regarding work and careers (Gysbers, 2006; Okiishi, 1987).

The utility of the career genogram has been researched. Malott and Magnuson (2004) provided genogram-based activities during five weeks of a 15 week elective undergraduate career course. The students found the course a positive experience in making them aware of their family's occupations and how that might relate to and assist with their current career choices and decision-making. Using a career genogram as part of a constructivist-based semester career course among 36 university students, Grier-Reed and Ganuza (2012) found a statistically significant ($p = .015$) improvement in pre-test and post-test scores of career self-efficacy. A control group was not utilised.

Di Fabio (2012) set out to determine the effectiveness of the Career Construction Genogram (CCG; Di Fabio, 2010) using a quasi-experimental research design with the Future Career Autobiography (Rehfuss, 2009) as the dependent variable. A sample of 33 Italian entrepreneurs comprised the experimental group and completed the CCG, whereas the control group ($n = 36$) did not. It was found that the experimental group's Future Career Autobiography scores improved statistically significantly ($p < .001$) relative to the control group.

Future Career Autobiography

The Future Career Autobiography (FCA; Rehfuss, 2009) is a qualitative assessment designed to measure change in personal and career narratives after participants have attended a career intervention. The measure instructs participants to "write a brief paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you hope to be doing occupationally five years after graduating from college" (pp. 83-84). The responses are then evaluated according to verbal and thematic content.

Rehfuss (2009) evaluated the effectiveness of the FCA in changing peoples' career narratives over time. The FCA was administered to 48 undecided undergraduate male and female students at the beginning and end of an 8-week classroom course. By analysing verbal content and themes, Rehfuss concluded that the FCA appeared to be sensitive to change in narratives. Rehfuss and Di Fabio (2012) conducted a

study among 82 female entrepreneurs to determine the extent to which the FCA was sensitive to narrative change over time. They used an experimental research design (control group n = 42), with the experimental group (n = 40) attending a 6-day career counselling workshop. They concluded that narrative change did occur and that participants moved from the general to the specific in their narratives over time. Di Fabio's (2012) study utilising the FCA is reported under the section on the Career Genogram.

My System of Career Influences

The My System of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005; McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2005) is a qualitative assessment developed in Australia and South Africa. Its theoretical base is the constructivist Systems Theory Framework of career development (McMahon & Patton, 2006) and its focus is to explore the influences on a person's career situations with a view to an action plan. The MSCI is a 12 page booklet comprising open ended questions with three themes, namely My Present Career Situation, Representing My System of Career Influences, and Reflecting on My System of Career Influences.

Research has been conducted on the usefulness of the measure among 16 South African adolescents through quantitative and qualitative analyses of questionnaire responses (McMahon, Watson, Foxcroft, & Dullabh, 2008), and between 14 to 21 Australian and South African university students respectively in a two-part study using qualitative analyses of the MSCI and focus group responses (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005). The findings of these studies suggested that the participants found the measure useful in learning about their career development in relation to context and process. McMahon, Watson, Chetty, and Hoelson (2012) used an exploratory case study method among a sample of seven South African university students. Participants were required to complete the MSCI and a career values card sort. The authors concluded that their research demonstrated how the assessment instruments could be incorporated in career narratives.

Narrative Career Assessment

If the field of vocational psychology is to remain responsive to growing client diversity, the various approaches to narrative career counselling have been regarded as a way forward (McMahon & Watson, 2012). Although narrative career counselling has a long history in the field, it has numerous names, including: narrative career counselling (Cochran, 1997), active engagement (Amundson, 2009), sociodynamic approach (Peavy, 1997), storytelling approach (McMahon & Watson, 2010), action theory (Young et al., 2011), and life designing (Savickas et al., 2009). However, despite many descriptive titles, such approaches are foundationally more alike than dissimilar (McMahon & Watson, 2012), as they are equally informed by agentic, holistic, and meaning making ideologies (Mahoney, 2003) while utilising stories and narratives.

As qualitative assessment has been referred to as "informal forms of assessment" (Okocha, 1998, p. 151) and has had a postmodern change from objectivity in scores to subjectivity in stories (Savickas, 1993), research on narrative career assessment has focused more on the process of narrative counselling than formal structured assessments. Through an extensive review of the literature, narrative career counselling has strong theoretical support (e.g., Brott, 2004; Reid & West, 2011); however, very few empirical studies have been conducted on narrative career counselling interventions, including assessment. Studies on narrative career counselling assessment have mostly utilised case studies that provide descriptive examples of how specific narrative interventions are used and demonstrate the process of narrative approaches. Yet, the existing scholarship lacks rigour in qualitative methodology and often fails to report on the applicability or effectiveness of such approaches. Further, case study research on narrative career assessment has not provided support for why narrative interventions were the best choice for clients. As evidence-based practice is informed by clinical expertise, evidence of intervention efficacy, and client needs, values, and preferences, more research is crucial to increase counsellors' 'narrative competence' (Savickas et al., 2009), demonstrate effectiveness of narrative interventions, and provide support for use of narrative approaches based on client considerations. Even though McAdams, Josselson, and Lieblich (2001) have remarked that career choice is "more multilayered and internally contradictory than univariate studies of vocational choice would suggest" (p. xviii), the field is in need of research on intervention efficacy.

Relational Career Assessment

Much like narrative career counselling, relational career assessment is rooted in constructivism, whereby meaning is constructed through discourse and action in social, cultural, and historical contexts in which people form relationships and community (Young & Collin, 2004). A relationally based perspective recognises the adaptive purpose of interpersonal connection and views relatedness and interconnection as central to human growth and development (Josselson, 1992). There has been an increasing body of literature (e.g., Richardson, 2004; Schultheiss, 2003, 2006, 2007; Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001; Schultheiss, Palma, Predagovich, & Glasscock, 2002) in relational career decision making and how relational processes with others, self, and society inform career development and counselling (Motulsky, 2010).

Through the use of assessment practices, such as critical incidents (Young & Friesen, 1992), semistructured interviews (Young, Friesen, & Borycki, 1994), videotape playback procedure and conversation (Young et al., 2001), conversations of joint actions, goals, and shared meanings (Young et al., 1997), and family career projects (Young et al., 2001), both clients and counsellors develop an understanding of how clients construct their career stories within significant relationships. However, research on such assessments is limited, as it has focused primarily on

adolescents and their relationships with parents or peers. Further, scholarship in this area has not provided reliability and trustworthiness of such relational instruments as such literature has been primarily theoretical and has occasionally incorporated non-empirical case studies.

Schultheiss (2003) recognised the absence of empirical scholarship on relational components of career counselling and developed the Relationships and Career Interview based on qualitative empirical studies of the function of relationships in career development (Schultheiss et al., 2001; Schultheiss et al., 2002). Through collaborative client and counsellor relationships, the clients identify the most influential (positively or negatively) relationships in their career development and are able to recognise and access available relational resources in future career decisions (Schultheiss, 2005). Schultheiss et al. (2002) also utilised a variation of this interview to investigate the influence of siblings on career exploration and decision-making. Schultheiss (2005) noted the dearth of scholarship on qualitative relational career assessments; thereby she combined various relationally based processes and defined them as "relational career assessments" (p. 387). Further, Schultheiss (2006) put forward career counselling and assessment guidelines for the interface of work and family life. In addition, Ponterotto, Rivera, and Sueyoshi (2000) developed the Career-in-Culture interview, which is used to obtain information about the familial, cultural, worldview, and environmental factors that contribute to the client's career concerns.

As with narrative career assessment, relational career assessment literature largely consists of theoretical explanations of relational career assessments, examples of counselling processes, and the demonstration of relational interventions through case studies that are not empirical. Despite the importance of theoretical understanding of counselling interventions, minimal research on relational career assessments has utilised rigorous qualitative methodologies and no studies, to date, have investigated the efficacy of relational career assessments. Even though practice-based approaches to qualitative relational career assessment have emerged in the literature (e.g., Ponterotto et al., 2000; Schultheiss, 2003, 2006) and the utilisation of qualitative methodologies in the study of the role that relationships have on career development and decision making have become firmly recognised in empirical vocational scholarship (Schultheiss, 2005), there remains a dearth of scholarship on empirical analyses of relational career assessment. Therefore, more empirical literature on qualitative relational career assessment is needed to move the vocational psychology field toward a more holistic understanding of client functioning and to create support and awareness of integrative models of interventions that include the relational context in career counselling (Schultheiss, 2003).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing evidence for research assessments is important as it provides scientific substantiation for the assessment used. Research evidence for qualitative assessment

is reflected upon in the literature, but perhaps not as often as it could be. Qualitative assessments do not easily lend themselves to evaluation given the diverse range of qualitative approaches and methodologies. Also, qualitative researchers aim their assessments to be holistic and contextually-based, adding to the difficulties in providing evidence supporting qualitative assessments.

While qualitative researchers have commented on possible evaluative criteria for the qualitative research process (e.g., Cho & Trent, 2014; Stead et al., 2012), little has been written on evaluative criteria for assessment. There are no widely accepted guidelines on how qualitative assessments can be evaluated other than utilising what has been written on the research process. One of the most prominent criteria for determining the rigour of qualitative research, and perhaps assessment, is trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggested that credibility (e.g., through triangulation), dependability (e.g., consistency of findings), and confirmability (e.g., confirmed data using other sources) could be employed. Further, they underscored the importance of trustworthiness as being useful (e.g., through triangulation), as did Morrow (2005). Such qualitative methodological rigour will require the implementation of other methods besides anecdotal case studies. McMahon, Patton, and Watson (2003) suggested that assessment from a constructivist perspective should follow certain steps that include designing a process that is holistic, focused and flexible. Whiston and Rahardja (2005) commented on the lack of guidelines for qualitative assessment, suggesting that perhaps integrating qualitative and quantitative assessments should be explored. Further, Savickas and colleagues (2009) argued that research needs to investigate career counsellors' competence in qualitative career methods, as the guidelines of how to implement constructivist approaches to career counselling are not well understood (Reid, 2006). In addition, social constructionist, discourse analysis and other qualitative perspectives on assessment are urgently needed. In conclusion, qualitative career assessment is in need of scholarship on the effectiveness of such assessments, the efficacy of the assessments among various client populations, and the competency of career counsellors through the use of evidence-based practice. The field needs to develop qualitative career assessment guidelines whether they focus on particular or groups of similar qualitative approaches, or integrate quantitative and qualitative assessment processes.

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Graham B. Stead
Cleveland State University
United States of America

Brittan L. Davis
Cleveland State University
United States of America

PAMELIA E. BROTT

4. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the purpose and process of qualitative career assessment. With a focus on the practice of qualitative career assessment within career counselling, this chapter explains underlying constructs and complementarities between approaches and instruments.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

In 1990, Healy called for reforming career appraisals to give more control to clients' sense of agency by citing the need for clients to: (a) be in a collaborative role, (b) be self-observers (i.e., self-assessment), (c) recognise their dynamic interaction with contexts, and (d) use aids for clarifying and improving their choices and follow through. Since that time, at least 100 articles, book chapters, and books have been published defining qualitative career assessment and processes (e.g., Brott, 2005; McMahon & Patton, 2002; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003; Okocha, 1998). Across this literature is the theme of personal agency by placing the client in an active role in the counselling process for both gathering information and developing personal meanings.

The newer generation of self research and theory helps us to better understand the human ability for reflexive thinking: to think about the relevance of one's experiences; to reflect on one's perceptions, beliefs, and feelings; and to deliberately regulate one's behaviour (Leary & Tangney, 2003). This self model has placed counselling in a new light based on the subjective, personal meanings clients give to experiences. Reality is participatory as individuals engage in social interactions and dialogues with others as they personally construct meanings. Personal constructs are the ways in which the individual construes by interpreting, anticipating, and engaging life; it is what is real for the individual (Kelly, 1955). This has implications for career counselling by re-thinking career as being synonymous with life and where counselling is about the client's reflexive process to actively explore through dialogue and practical activities the social interactions and meaning-making system of living a life (Peavy, 1996). Therefore, career assessment processes should be selected to place clients in an active, dynamic role to construct and re-construct their self as personally experienced and understood.

Qualitative career assessments provide aids for client agency through self-observation, self-assessment, and illuminating the dynamic interaction with client

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 31–39.

contexts both intra- and inter-personal. This subjective process is idiographic. *Idio-* is a word-forming element meaning "one's own, personal, distinct" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2014). Qualitative career assessments are idiographic as they provide rich avenues to explore client meanings, themes, and preferences as unique, personal, and distinctive.

However, it is not the assessment tool but the assessment process that gives more control to clients. Using a narrative, storied approach to uncover, open up, unify, and author the life story, the client and career counsellor become collaborators. The client is an active agent in the process, and tools are selected that can best assist the individual client. This chapter presents the reader with a better understanding of the purpose and process of qualitative career assessment.

Purpose

Qualitative career assessment is a "theoretically based intervention modality with an established and cogent philosophical foundation" (Whiston & Rahardja, 2005, p. 371). It is grounded in constructivism with a focus on the subjective, meaning-making understanding of the client's contextual experiences that are continually evolving (Whiston & Rahardja). This counselling process approach allows for a more comprehensive view of the client across the life roles of relating, learning, pleasuring, working, and valuing (Brott, 2004). Goldman (1990) presented a convincing argument that using qualitative assessments tends to: foster an active role for the client, emphasise a holistic study of the individual, be sensitive to client diversity, focus on clients learning about and understanding themselves developmentally, and reduce the distinction between assessment and counselling.

Qualitative career assessments as idiographic tools are selected to meet the needs of the client and to explicate the client story. Qualitative assessments play a key role by engaging the client in a collaborative process as contextual self-observers about the subjective meaning-making of living one's life. These 'aids' help to uncover a more holistic and integrated client story that can be shared with the counsellor. Career assessments are a means to look at more traditional variables, such as interests, abilities, and personality, and person-in-context variables, such as cultural orientation, socialisation, and personal constructs. Qualitative assessments can be helpful in organising information, such as that gained from Holland's (1997) RIASEC hexagon or Brott's (2005) goal map, and in providing alternate perspectives by prompting clients to 'tell me what that means to you.' Assessments are selected to fit the client and to be helpful in explicating the story through past, present, and future chapters. The counsellor's skills in probing, reflecting, clarifying, and interpreting are an integral part of a facilitative, exploratory process to enable the story to be heard (maybe for the first time) by the client.

Descriptions of qualitative career assessments and their use in the counselling process have come to the forefront in the past 25 years. Goldman (1990) described eight methods that included card sorts, lifelines, values clarification exercises, simulations,

in-basket test, worksample, shadowing, and direct observation. Okocha (1998) championed the life career assessment interview, lifeline, genogram/occupational tree, and life roles. Brott's (2005) narrative process used qualitative assessment tools, such as lifelines, card sorts, life roles circles, and the goal map. McMahon, Watson, and Patton (2005) used the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) activity based on the Systems Theory Framework (STF; Patton & McMahon, 2014) of career development as a guided written reflection activity that visually represents the current situation, constellation of influences (e.g., self, society, experiences), and an action plan (McMahon & Watson, 2008). Savickas (2011) used a series of five questions in the Career Construction Interview as the guiding qualitative tool to assist clients in telling their autobiographical story and providing a bridge into the future.

It is important to weave qualitative assessments into a career counselling process. The emphasis is not about 'doing activities with the client' but rather the psychological processes and idiographic, subjective understanding of the client. Therefore, the following steps are suggested: ground the assessment process in theory, test the relevance and usefulness to the client, ensure a reasonable time frame, foster holism, personalise the instructions to be readable and easily understood, sequence small achievable steps to provide a sense of direction, be focused yet flexible, encourage a collaborative counselling relationship, and debrief the activity with the client to highlight learning and meaning (McMahon & Patton, 2002; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003).

Standards for appraising qualitative career assessments are purposefully different from quantitative career assessments. Rather than using the psychometric properties of reliability and evidence of validity from nomothetic canons, the adequacy of constructivist assessment is "primarily interpretative and phenomenological" (Niemeyer & Niemeyer, 1993, p. 23) from an idiographic perspective. Viney and Nagy (2012) proposed four criteria of rigour in personal construct research that "provide greater understanding of the complexity of the studied phenomenon" (p. 56) and are applicable to using qualitative assessments, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. *Credibility* refers to the extent that the information represents the client's beliefs, feelings, and values. Here it is important to assist the client in (a) triangulation by examining the information from multiple perspectives and (b) comprehensive checks to uncover alternate interpretations and exceptions. *Transferability* is the extent to which the themes, meanings, and preferences are applicable in a variety of settings. It is important for the client to (a) differentiate between frequency and impact of life events and (b) generalise the information to a number of different settings. *Dependability* is the consistency of interpretations, so it is important to have evidence that illustrates both consistencies and variations. Structuring the way that information is gathered allows both the client and career counsellor to (a) re-visit the sources and (b) review the procedures. *Confirmability* is the extent to which findings can be verified. A confirmability audit ensures that (a) information exists to support interpretations and (b) interpretations are consistent with the information.

Therefore, the purpose of qualitative career assessments as idiographic tools in career counselling is to give a credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable voice to the subjective client story. Such assessments are aids to support client agency in the career counselling process. Further, these tools provide the career counsellor with documented evidence from which to provide interpretations and further exploration.

Process

There was a paradigm shift in the 1990s that moved the profession from a positivist vocational guidance approach (e.g., solving a work-related problem, finding a job) with an emphasis on quantitative assessments to career counselling with a focus on subjective client narratives. This postmodern career counselling approach shifted the focus to collaborating with individuals so that an integrated, meaningful life is lived because "career is personal" (Savickas, 1993, p. 212). Career counselling models (e.g., career construction, life design, narrative career counselling, storied approach, Systems Theory Framework) rely on counsellors being facilitative and exploratory by focusing on psychological processes. The two pre-eminent psychological theories associated with this postmodern shift are constructivism, which emphasises the cognitive processes of interpreting external events (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988), and social constructionism, which emphasises the social forces in construing one's reality (Gergen, 1994).

Postmodern approaches to career counselling use client narratives (i.e., stories) to focus on how one fits work into life (Cochran, 1997; Savickas, 2011; Savickas et al., 2009), systems of influence (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2007; Patton & McMahon, 2014; McMahon, Watson, Patton, 2005), and chapters in the life story (Brott, 2001). Storytelling is one of the earliest forms of communication and is used to convey information, history, and culture. The human existence is inherently storied and is the central way we understand the lived world: "without a story, there is no identity, no self, no other" (Lewis, 2011, p. 505). So it follows that stories or narratives are natural modes of communication to organise and share one's lived experiences in a social context and provide a bridge to the future. This seems to be a fundamental purpose of career counselling. A brief review of selected career counselling processes will demonstrate the importance of the active role of the client in a collaborative counsellor-client relationship and the use of qualitative assessments as tools to illuminate the client career story.

Cochran's (1997) narrative career counselling concerns the employment of the client "as the main character in a career narrative that is meaningful, productive, and fulfilling" (p. ix) with the task of helping the client "construct and enact more meaningful career narratives" (p. x). Tools used in this approach include the vocational card sort, construct laddering (i.e., interpret and clarify similar and different constructs across possible occupations), lifeline, success experiences, family constellation, role models, and early recollections.

Savickas's (2011) "counseling for career construction" (p. 41) uses a meaningful conversation (i.e., interview) to make sense of the client's world by authenticating choices and improving adaptive fitness. The core narrative assessment tool consists of five story-structuring questions in the Career Construction Interview. These questions elicit self-concept by asking about role models, preferred environments by asking about media preferences (e.g., magazine, TV program, website), favourite story (e.g., book, movie) to see how fictional characters faced similar challenges, favourite mottos or quotations (i.e., self-advice), and early recollections to uncover life themes.

Savickas et al.'s (2009) life designing has emerged from an international perspective based on the new global society that is rapidly changing and emphasises human flexibility, adaptability, and life-long learning. The intervention model consists of six general steps, namely: developing a working alliance through dialogue to describe the history of problems to address and salient client roles, exploring the current subjective identity, objectifying the stories to open perspectives, placing the problem into this new perspective (i.e., possible self), trying out the new identity, and following-up on the outcomes and providing additional consultation, if needed. The main tools are the working alliance and dialogue.

The Systems Theory Framework (STF; Patton & McMahon, 2014) of career development has generated two qualitative career assessment tools, namely My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005; MSCI; McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2013) and My Career Chapter (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2007). The systems perspective in career counselling is applicable to both adolescents and adults and focuses on the intra-personal and contextual positioning of the client story. My System of Career Influences (MSCI) was developed as a qualitative assessment tool (a 12-page booklet) to guide clients through a sequential exploratory process in examining their current career situation. The MSCI diagram provides clients with a visual representation of their career story and influences; a series of 10 reflective questions guide the process. My Career Chapter (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2007) is a booklet that clients take home to complete; there are a series of guided steps to assist clients in exploring their career-related questions and rating their system of influences. Clients use a sentence-completion activity to write their autobiography about each influence and its emotional importance from past, present, and future perspectives.

Brott's (2001) storied approach takes an integrated life roles approach where the client story is told through past, present, and future chapters. Qualitative assessment tools (i.e., lifeline, early recollections, life roles activity) are used to assist clients in telling their story and illuminating their preferences and themes through past and present chapters. Possible selves and finding alternate perspectives and exceptions aid in opening up space in the story. The goal map is a structured activity to organise information (i.e., goal, obstacles, resources) and action (i.e., steps to take) in the next chapter of the story.

The process of career counselling set out in postmodern models addresses Healy's (1990) call for reform in a collaborative working alliance to strengthen client agency, the importance given to subjective meaning-making in context, and the use of aids for clarifying plans and following through. The process emanates from the theoretical foundations of constructivism and social constructionism. Qualitative career assessments are tools to assist in the collaborative, idiographic process of uncovering the themes, preferences, and motivations that lead to a deeper understanding of self and self-in-context and to living a life as an active participant. These tools attest to the criteria for rigour needed when dealing with the complexity of the phenomenological study of the narrative.

Process in Practice: Underlying Constructs and Complementarities

The story metaphor permeates the postmodern models of career counselling. Savickas (2012) structures life design interventions to *construct* through small stories, *deconstruct* the story's meanings and possibilities, *reconstruct* into a macronarrative of subjective identity, *coconstruct* so that the draft of the life portrait can be edited, and action to engage in the next story episode. Brott (2001) uses co-construction to highlight a collaborative approach in illuminating the story, de-construction to create space, and *construction* to place the client in an active role in the next chapters of the story. A melding of these counselling processes is used to better understand how qualitative assessments are the tools to actively engage the client in the process (see Figure 4.1). It is the process not the tool that is the catalyst; therefore, tools must be purposefully selected that are unique to the client and the presenting concern.

This approach to career counselling is a dynamic, interrelated process of *co-constructing* (uncovering the story), *de-constructing* (opening up the story), *re-constructing* (weaving a unified self constructed storied identity), and *constructing* (performing in the next chapter of the story). The story is told through past and

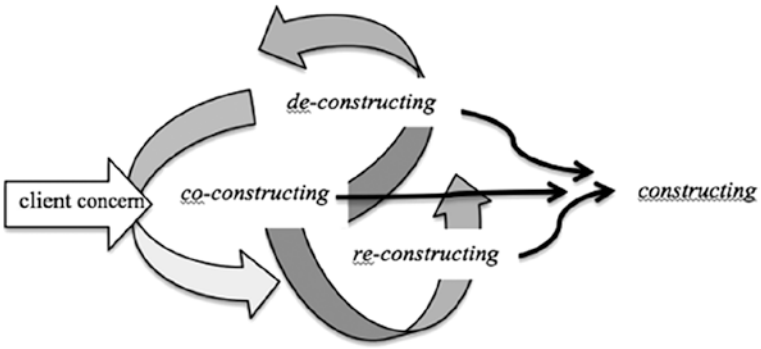

Figure 4.1. A dynamic, interrelated process of career counselling.

present chapters while moving forward in authoring and taking action in the next chapter. Qualitative career assessment tools include activities (e.g., lifeline, life roles circles, card sorts, goal map, career genogram), booklets (e.g., MSCI, My Career Chapter), checklists (e.g., interests, skills, values), and interviews (e.g., early recollections, Career Construction Interview). However, the most important 'tool' will be the collaborative client-counsellor working alliance.

The process begins in *co-constructing* to emphasise the collaborative nature of the career counselling relationship as client and counsellor work together to uncover the story. Tools are selected to explicate the past and present chapters across time, through relating with others, and in context. Early memories or recollections need to be personally remembered, not told to the client by someone else. Also, it is not the accuracy of the memory but the client's perspective that is most important. Co-constructing uncovers not only the cognitive descriptions of what happened but also the emotions associated with these experiences. Selection of tools is based on how to help clients be self observers and become aware of emotions, preferences, and themes.

The collaborative process continues through *de-constructing* to open up space, provide alternate perspectives, and explore motivations. Qualitative career assessment tools are selected that facilitate an exploratory process of the subjective, meaning-making system that is unique and personal to the client. Intra-personal and contextual influences are re-examined to consider 'What if…?' or 'Could it be…?' or 'Help me understand….' Taking the current life résumé (i.e., lived chapters of the life story to date), the counsellor assists the client to tease out preferences and re-write descriptions or use a third person voice (or a significant other's voice) to re-interpret these chapter experiences to be understood in context. In many instances, *co-constructing* and *de-constructing* are occurring simultaneously or as a circular dynamic; as experiences are uncovered, they can be explored for their intra-personal and contextual influences.

De-constructing opens into *re-constructing* so that the story can be put back together based on new or re-newed idiosyncratic meanings in context. Tools are selected to edit the story by weaving in the preferences and meanings that will be the 'guides' for action in the next chapter. The autobiography emerges with a unifying theme (i.e., title of the life story to date) that narrates how clients meet their needs, make choices across all life roles (i.e., relating, learning, pleasuring, working, valuing), and navigate changes over time. The client experiences ownership as the author of the life story, which will provide motivation in writing the next chapter.

Constructing is about empowering the client to live meaningful and purposeful future chapters. But it is also about taking action. Tools are selected to assist with making a plan and taking the first steps in the next chapter. Action taken will be based on motivations to meet the client's needs. It is important to identify both the obstacles that may get in the way and the resources to deal with these obstacles. Following-up on at least one of the first action steps supports the client's authorship. Counsellors can provide encouragement as well as challenges to the client. Asking

the client to articulate both the behaviour and the motivation encourages self-observation based on one's meaning-making system in living the next chapter. Life is about choices, and taking action is a choice. Even 'continuing as you are' is an action based on choice. These choices are the client's authorship of the next storied chapters.

This framework for career counselling is a collaborative process of dialogue and practical activities to assist clients in being self-observers of the intra-personal and contextual influences that have created a life thus far and place them as authors of choices and action. Qualitative career assessments are the tools to assist clients in a reflexive process to explore and personally understand the social interactions and meaning-making system of living a life and for taking active steps in the next chapter of the life story.

REPRISE

The purpose of this chapter was to explicate qualitative career assessment processes that are guided by client agency: how clients can be active participants in the career counselling process as collaborators, self-observers, and authors. The focus throughout has been on the process of counselling not the tool of assessment. It is not what tool you use but how you use it. Therefore, qualitative career assessments are purposefully selected as tools to collaboratively explore and understand the client story as it has been lived and for the client to take action in the next chapter of the story. The rigour of the tool/s selected from an idiographic perspective, demonstrates credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability based on the individual client. In moving from vocational guidance to career counselling, it is suggested that a storied framework guides the process. This dynamic, complementary, and integrated process of career counselling includes *co-constructing, de-constructing, re-constructing, and constructing.*

Part 2 of this book provides the reader with a variety of qualitative career assessment tools. As you read about the tools, keep in mind how each tool can be integrated into the career counselling process to co-construct the current story, de-construct to open up space, re-construct into a cogent meaning-making narrative, and construct action in the next chapter of the client's life story.

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Pamelia E. Brott
Virginia Tech – Northern Virginia Center
United States of America

FRANS MEIJERS AND REINEKKE LENGELLE

5. CAREER LEARNING

Qualitative Career Assessment as a Learning Process in the Construction of a Narrative Identity

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores qualitative career assessment as an identity learning process where meaning-oriented learning is essential and distinguished from conditioned or semantic types of learning. In order to construct a career identity in the form of a future-oriented narrative, it is essential that learners are helped through cognitive learning stages with the help of a dialogue about concrete experiences which aims to pay attention to emotions and broadens and deepens what is expressed.

LEARNING

Since Parsons (1909/1967), all theories about career development and all intervention strategies based on these theories presuppose learning, but not the same kind of learning. In the literature, three types of learning are distinguished: conditioned, semantic, and meaning-oriented learning (see Argyris 1999; Bateson, 1972). Conditioning is the process whereby reward and punishment are used to support or discourage behaviours. In semantic (or reproductive) learning, both the information shared and the assumed meaning of that information is transferred without questioning content or ascribed meanings. In meaning-oriented learning the individual is invited to learn in a dialogical way so that 'information' is transformed into knowledge that is personally meaningful. This transformative process is also referred to as identity learning (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012).

Each type of learning has different effects (for an overview see Hill, 1977; Schunk, 2012) but only meaning-oriented learning can be considered effective in contributing to qualitative career assessment. Both are focused on stories rather than scores and are, in this context, aimed at uncovering "subjective careers and life themes" (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2003, p. 196). Conditioned and semantic learning benefits may be more quickly achieved, but they are rarely transferable to other contexts, nor do they foster intrinsic motivation and an awareness of life patterns. Moreover, the learning accomplished in these ways does not provide answers to tomorrow's problems. In contrast, the benefit of meaning-oriented learning is that knowledge and the accompanying behaviour are based on internalised learning. This

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 41–48.

type of learning promotes a growing understanding of the 'subjective' (personal) career and it is therefore able to facilitate change and is transferable to other contexts.

LEARNING IN (UN)STABLE CAREER CONDITIONS

The trait-and-factor approach dominated thinking about career development well into the 20th century along with quantitative assessment models. Matching individuals' skills and talents with specific jobs needing those skills and talents was at the heart of this model. The most well-known proponent of the trait-and-fact approach is Holland (1973). However, his theory has been criticised, as it does not clearly specify the cognitive mechanisms by which vocational interests actually develop. Holland, as Brown (1990, p. 349) summarises, "has not addressed the psychological processes involved in choice making, other than to indicate that persons with certain personality types seek environments in which they can implement values and perform tasks that will result in rewards". The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) of Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994; see also Lent & Brown, 1996 and Brown & Lent, 1996) and the career learning theory of Krumboltz (1996; Krumboltz & Worthington 1999) do specify the cognitive mechanisms that lead to vocational/occupational choices. In both theories, based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, the choice of an occupation or occupational direction is the result of an interaction between career-oriented self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. Indeed, as long as society and the occupational structures within it were stable, career-learning theories based on social cognitive theory were well able to explain choice processes. In stable situations, young people could make a career choice based on their experience in their first jobs, which were normally situated within the "zone of acceptable alternatives", as described by Gottfredson (1981, p. 557). The process of career choice could for the most part be a process of institutionalised socialisation (Wijers & Meijers 1996), because stable communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) made vicarious learning as well as learning from success and failure possible.

By the mid-1970s however, it became clear that the social context within which individuals lived was changing in such a way that most people could no longer expect to live out a so-called 'standard' biography (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005). Since then many professions have disappeared and, along with that, the clear social roles that a profession represents and that people use as points of identification. In 1976, the Netherlands counted 5,500 professions and several thousand non-specific functions (e.g., data worker, policy analyst, computer specialist) (Wiegersma & Van Bochove 1976). By 1998, there were only 1211 professions left and the number of non-specific functions had risen to around 23,000 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 1999). At the same time, 21st century skills became important; as Schön (1987) expressed, one has to become a 'reflective practitioner' within the complexity of the current labour market.

As a response to the rational models that assume that choice making is "methodical, systematic and doesn't happen impulsively" (Phillips, 1997, p. 276), the 1990s saw

new non-rational models being introduced. Examples of these are Krieshok's (1998) 'anti-introspective perspective' (Krieshok, 1998), the 'positive uncertainty' model of Gelatt (1989), the 'planned happenstance' theory of Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999), the theory of 'emergent qualities' and 'non-linear change' of Leong (1996), as well as the chaos theory of careers of Pryor and Bright (2004). In these models it is assumed that due to the complexity of the current labour market, it is impossible for the individual to make an informed choice and, in order to make a good choice, individuals must concentrate on the discovery and development of their own identity and potential to respond to unplanned events. All authors emphasise the importance of self-knowledge and the ability to respond to opportunities that arise. However, they are vague about how these competencies can be acquired.

In constructivist approaches to career counselling and career assessment, that also emerged as a response to more insecure conditions and the need for self-direction, the point of departure is that grand narratives – that formed the basis of socialisation processes – have to be replaced by individual narratives. Central to this is the idea that "narration can be used to form a subjective construction of meaning that emplots self as a main character in a career-defining story" (Cochran, 1997, p. 55). Career stories "tell how the self of yesterday became the self of today and will become the self of tomorrow" (Savickas, 2005, p. 58). In the construction of a career story a counsellor must have and know that "a poetic creativity is necessary to help turn scattered stories and emotions into experiential vignettes that reflect the students' efforts to get a life" (Savickas, 2010, p. 16). It remains unclear, however, what this poetic creativity is and how it can be enacted. It *is* clear however that career stories emerge as a result of interaction and negotiation – in dialogue in other words. A story can only be developed when its episodes are continually tested by reality and the only way to do so is by telling the story to relevant others. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 345) puts it succinctly: "the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's". The development of a career story therefore is a joint exploratory and dialogical process that provides the individual with both cognitive and affective feedback that can be used in the appraisal of life experiences.

CAREER LEARNING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Research about career decision-making under unstable conditions shows that emotions and intuition factor into the process strongly (Krieshok, Black & McKay, 2009). Choices based on intuition are mostly more stable than rational choices (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006), but they don't necessarily lead to more agency or a career identity. The latter is precisely what is needed in uncertain times. Following Erikson (1968), one can assume that in uncertain times the development of a career story – and of a career identity that expresses itself as this story – occurs due to crises that form a demarcation point in the life course. Bühler (1935, p. 43) refers to such a crisis as a "boundary experience": an experience whereby an individual encounters the boundaries of his or her existing self-concept and cannot cope with the situation

and its exigencies (Meijers & Wardekker, 2002). Individuals' default response to a boundary experience is usually an unhelpful first story in which victimisation, entitlement, rescue, and blame dominate (Baker & Stauth, 2003). In qualitative approaches to career assessment, the issues that arise when individuals experience a boundary experience (i.e., a personal crisis) can however lead to uncovering life themes (Savickas, 2011) and are necessary in articulating wishes, blocks, and meaningful influences. In order to create greater agency, problems underlying the life theme have to be named; as Robertson (2012, p. 283) puts it, "there can be no change without naming the problem." 'Naming the problem', however, requires an internal as well as an external dialogue in which experiences that first result in 'tacit knowledge' (Jiang & Chun, 2001; Reber et al., 2003) have to be made explicit. Law (1996) developed a model that can be used to conceptualise how tacit knowledge is voiced. His model distinguishes four stages: sensing, sifting, focusing, and understanding.

Sensing is the stage in which information is gathered (from various sources, in particular those that are emotionally compelling), but no explanation or perspective is yet developed. In this first stage emotions are explored and described; gaining an awareness of one's feelings as they happen in the body is important (Cochran, 1997). This way of learning relates to the concept of mindfulness, which can be described as bringing one's complete attention to the present experience, deliberately observing one's internal experiences in an accepting, non-elaborative and non-judgemental way (Baer, 2003). In this stage the main focus is on becoming aware of feelings (and the attached memories) so that the individual might 'give them a voice'.

Sifting is a sorting process, which moves a person "towards the issue of causality" (Law, 1996, p. 55). One compares one's circumstances with those of others and starts to develop analogies and from those analogies, constructs and concepts start to emerge. Here a kind of sorting process takes place and the individual is no longer overwhelmed and bombarded by all the thoughts and feelings that are inherent to the boundary experience and the sensing phase. Note that the stages do overlap and that regressions are normal as well as leaps that lift the veil on what the 'new' story may eventually look like.

In the focusing stage actual viewpoints are formulated. These viewpoints are still fragmented, but they are an attempt to string together feelings and ideas that arose during the sensing and sifting stages. The focusing stage ideally segues into the understanding stage and the insights and fragments start to become a new or 'second story' (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). This process is referred to as episodic learning, which means the learner puts the events into sequence and clarifies the who, what, where, when, how, and why of what has happened. This process is usually a combination of ordering the material, articulating the 'big picture', and drawing conclusions. Because emotions drive attention (Frijda, 1989), which in its turn drives learning, understanding should be conceptualised "as an experience linking reason and feeling instead of an experience of controlling emotions" (Van Woerkom, 2010, p. 348).

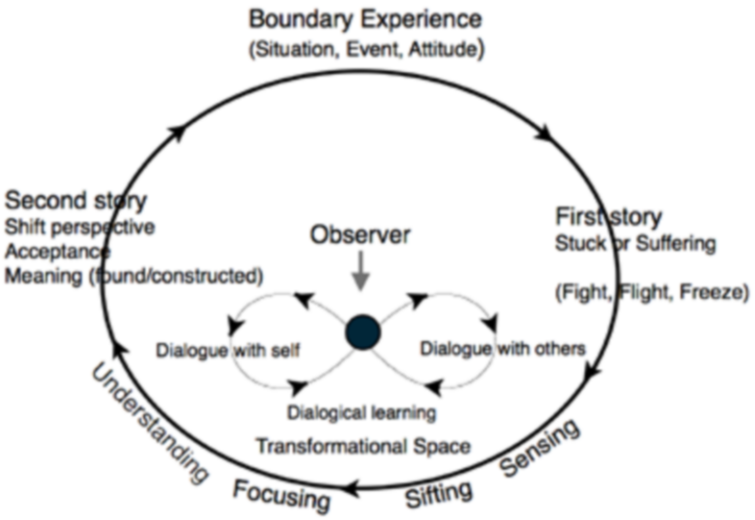

Figure 5.1. Transformation through writing: A dialogical model in four steps

Figure 5.1 shows how qualitative career assessment can take the shape of a career dialogue leading to the construction of a narrative career identity through meaning-oriented learning. It is a process that starts with a boundary experience that is emotionally relevant but at the same time has no meaning and evokes a defensive 'first story'. In order to attach meaning to the experience, the individual has to enter an internal and external dialogue. These dialogues make it possible for tacit knowledge to be voiced and through the four stages described above, a 'second story' takes shape.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CAREER DIALOGUE

Based on this model, there are several recommendations that can be made that can help professionals when they engage in career dialogues with clients or students. First, the professional should not speak about or 'towards' individuals but rather *with* them. This seems like common sense but research shows this rarely happens (Winters et al., 2009, 2012). A second recommendation is that the dialogue is about experiences relevant to the student or client; the latter becomes apparent when the student or client expresses emotion words. Frequently the presence of emotion words is a sign that a boundary experience is being touched on. The third recommendation is: let us put emotion into motion – in other words make good use of what is salient for students. This is only possible, as Doorewaard (2000) suggests, when emotions are valued and treated with respect. They are often extremely powerful motives for the behaviour of individuals. When an emotion is ignored or even denied, it can be

turned against others, which may result in paralysis affecting the individual and the environment. Emotions should be seen as potentially shedding light on underlying messages they carry (see also Ashforth & Humphrey 1995).

That said, Rand (1984, p. 42) aptly explains "Rationalization is a process of not perceiving reality, but of attempting to make reality fit one's emotions". To overcome this natural tendency – and this is the fourth recommendation – a client must be helped to talk about what happened concretely in the form of 'small stories'. Once the small story is evident with its concrete and specific details, one should invite the client to broaden and deepen the story. Broadening is helping the client to look for similar occurrences in the present, while deepening it is looking for similar events that have happened in the past. Both broadening and deepening help the client to describe which happenings led them to the same reaction and in this way life themes are uncovered. By putting these small and related stories side by side, the client is able – through a process of comparing – to develop analogies and on that basis to name personal constructs. The stories that emerge have to be compared and it is imperative that clients are guided to make such comparisons.

The final recommendation is that career counsellors must be aware of their own natural tendency to reduce insecurity by trying to speak for the client. Essential in helping someone with this meaning-oriented learning process (i.e., identity learning) is to go in search of the right words with the client, which is evident when the client says "Yes, this expresses what I really feel". In this way, career learning can be a form of qualitative career assessment, where meaning-oriented learning happens in stages and a dialogue helps turn tacit knowledge into a new narrative. We think this is the core of the poetic creativity of which Savickas (2010) speaks.

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Frans Meijers
University of The Hague of Applied Sciences
The Netherlands

Reinekke Lengelle
Athabasca University
Canada

MARY MCMAHON AND WENDY PATTON

6. INCORPORATING CAREER ASSESSMENT INTO CAREER COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION

Career assessment has long held a central place in career counselling since the work of Parsons (1909) signalled the birth of a new field of practice, vocational guidance, and its subsequent iterations of career guidance and counselling and more recently life designing. Designed to assist individuals with their career decision making, career assessment provides data or information that assists career exploration and self-exploration (de Bruin & de Bruin, 2006; Sampson, 2009). Hartung (2010) contends that career assessment is founded in three trends evident in the field, specifically: (1) the measurement of individual differences emanating from the work of Parsons; (2) an emphasis on life-span development typified in the work of Super (1957); and (3) contemporary postmodern views on career reflected in life-designing (Savickas, et al., 2009), narrative and constructivist approaches (Maree, 2007; McMahon & Patton, 2006). Of these trends, assessment reflecting constructivist principles is also evident in Parsons' legacy to the field as well as the long tradition of assessment based on the measurement of individual differences. Thus it may be concluded that Parsons has contributed a dual legacy to career assessment (McMahon & Patton, 2006; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Despite the centrality of assessment to career counselling, an uneasy relationship has existed between them that, to some extent, has not yet been resolved. For example, Savickas (1998) described the challenge he faced as a beginning career counsellor of interpreting interest test inventories. Indeed, Parsons provided career counsellors with their "first guide" to practice (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p. 1) and subsequent linear models of career counselling that incorporate assessment have been proposed (e.g., Williamson's [1939, 1965] six step process; Yost and Corbishley's [1987] eight step systematic model). However, as career counselling has been increasingly influenced by constructivism, its seeming incongruity with assessment, specifically quantitative assessment informed by the measurement of individual differences, has become more apparent. By contrast, it has been suggested that career assessment informed by constructivist principles could have a greater role to play in career counselling (e.g., McMahon, 2008). Regardless of the type of assessment, its incorporation into career counselling has implications for the roles of the career counsellor and the client, its timing and purpose in career counselling, and the process in which it is integrated.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 49–58.

This chapter considers career assessment and its incorporation into career counselling. It will first consider the dual legacy of Parsons and then briefly describe quantitative and qualitative assessment, before moving to a discussion of assessment as an integrated part of career counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2002a, b; 2006), with a particular focus on qualitative assessment.

PARSONS' DUAL LEGACY

Frank Parsons is "… credited with founding the career counseling specialization of modern day professional counseling and the related fields of vocational psychology and counseling psychology" (Pope & Sveinsdottir, 2005, p. 105). Parsons (1909) proposed the use of a "personal record and self-analysis" questionnaire (p. 27) that became the foundation for the long tradition of trait and factor matching approaches to career assessment and career counselling. Parsons is best remembered for his tripartite model of personal assessment, world of work knowledge and "true reasoning" (p. 5) on the basis of the two. This dominant legacy is consistent with the logical positivist worldview which emphasises objectivity and rationality and de-emphasises context. Thus assessment in this tradition is based on measuring isolated traits such as personality, interests or values.

However, a closer look at Parson's (1909) "personal record and self-analysis" (p. 27) questionnaire and the process he expected his clients to engage in reveals features that are consistent with constructivist qualitative approaches to career assessment such as agency, connectedness, meaning making, and reflection. First, the "personal record and self-analysis" (p. 27) questionnaire was a holistic self-assessment instrument completed by clients who were invited to reflect on a range of contextual factors including abilities, interests, health, financial status, mobility, lifestyle, and family. He also encouraged clients to consult with family, friends, employers and teachers where necessary to obtain information. Second, Parsons recognised clients' potential to engage as active agents in the career decision making process rather than simply deferring to an expert for advice and believed that a client could "come to wise decisions himself" (p. 4). Thus, Spokane and Glickman (1994) concluded that Parsons was a forerunner of the "constructivist position" (p. 298).

Parsons' (1909) dual legacy is reflected in two traditions of career assessment that have been portrayed as mutually exclusive, specifically quantitative and qualitative career assessment. While these two forms of assessment are underpinned by different philosophical positions, they both make valuable contributions to the field and may be complementary and utilised in qualitative processes in career counselling. Indeed, Parsons emphasised self-understanding as a reflective process rather than as a product reported in a test score. This chapter will now briefly explain each assessment tradition, beginning with quantitative career assessment.

QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

Despite Parsons' (1909) dual legacy, his work is best remembered for an approach to career assessment that is aligned with the logical positivist world view, that is, quantitative assessment in the individual differences tradition that has dominated career assessment to the present day. Widely regarded as a trait and factor or matching approach, quantitative career assessment largely relies on diagnosis, psychometric information, occupational classification and information, and attends little to the contextual location or subjective experience of individuals in relation to their careers (Patton & McMahon, 2014). In alignment with its focus on individual measurement, quantitative career assessment has contributed deep understanding of personal attributes that influence careers such as values, personality and interests. Consistent with quantitative career assessment, the characteristics of occupations have also been classified as reflected in the work of John Holland (e.g., Gottfredson, Holland & Ogawa, 1982). Essentially, trait and factor approaches to career counselling rely on "assessment of characteristics of the person and the job" (Sharf, 2013, p. 25) and subsequent 'matching' of the personal traits with typical features (factors) of the job. A common criticism of quantitative career assessment is oversimplification (Sharf, 2013). Nonetheless, Lent and Brown (2013) concluded that Parsons' tripartite model remains the "fundamental blueprint" (p. 21) for career counselling.

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

The long history and dominance of quantitative career assessment has overshadowed the history of qualitative career assessment. As reflected in the work of Parsons (1909), however, holistic assessment in which clients actively participate in a process of making meaning of both self-information and occupational information also has a long history. Consistent with its constructivist philosophical background, qualitative career assessment tends to be less formal, flexible, non-statistical and holistic (Goldman, 1992; Okocha, 1998). Subsequent to Parsons, Super (1954), Tyler (1959, 1961), Dolliver (1967) and Dewey (1974) pioneered the use of qualitative career assessment. Super proposed the Thematic Extrapolation Method (TEM) while Tyler, Dolliver and Dewey pioneered the development and use of vocational card sorts. Tyler recognised the uniqueness of individuals in her attempt to develop a "workable psychology of individuality" (Tyler, 1959, p. 75), through her vocational card sort which focused more on choice patterns than on trait measurement. Subsequently Dolliver further developed Tyler's vocational card sort and was the first to apply Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory to career counselling. In response to concerns about the sexist nature of vocational tests, Dewey developed the Non-Sexist Vocational Card Sort and confronted sex-role biases through career counselling.

The most enduring legacy of these early approaches to qualitative career assessment is found in the work of Super (1954) whose Thematic Extrapolation

Method (TEM) was based on a theory of life patterns to assist with predictions about future career development and behaviour. Super believed that by gathering life history data, recurring themes and underlying trends could be determined and projected into the future. He proposed three steps that included analysing past behaviour and development for recurring themes and trends, summarising themes and trends, and projecting the themes into the future. In essence, Super's three steps underpin most of the more recent constructivist approaches to career counselling and qualitative career assessment (e.g., Amundson's (2009) active engagement and Pattern Identification Exercise and Savickas et al.'s (2009) Life Design counselling and Savickas' (1989) Career Style interview). Despite its value and original contribution to the field, Jepsen (1994) concluded that the "TEM as a counseling technique has certainly attracted less attention than has actuarial interpretations of tests and inventories" (p. 44) reflected in quantitative career assessment.

INCORPORATING ASSESSMENT INTO CAREER COUNSELLING

Debate in the field about the merits of positivist and constructivist approaches to career counselling has been described by Sampson (2009) as an "unnecessary divorce" (p. 91) that is also reflected in either/or perceptions of quantitative and qualitative career assessment because of their "seemingly irreconcilable viewpoints" (Hartung, 2007, p. 103). It is not, however, a question of choosing between the two; rather career counselling may be enriched by "using the best of both worlds" (Perry, 2010, p. 11). Recognition of this both/and position is not new and is reflected in Super's (1954) claim over 60 years ago that career counsellors "must use both methods, sometimes emphasizing one, sometimes the other" (p. 16). Part 3 of this book contains several specific examples of the integration of assessment into career counselling from particular theoretical perspectives. Despite general agreement about the need for rapprochement of trait and factor and constructivist approaches, the challenge of how this can be facilitated remains.

Over a decade ago, Reardon and Lenz (1999) claimed that "Too many practitioners simply obtain the three letter summary code from the completed SDS and conclude that is the end of the assessment process" (p. 111). Matching per se on the basis of assessment instruments such as the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1985) is not the problem; rather it is the counselling process in which career assessment is embedded that warrants consideration. Indeed, Kidd (1996) claims that matching will always be part of career counselling and that practitioners need to accept this and closely consider the processes in which it is embedded. Thus consideration needs to be given as to how career assessment may be effectively incorporated into the career counselling process.

An example of the "best of both worlds" (Perry, 2010, p. 11) approach is found in the Integrative Structured Interview (ISI) process (see chapter 23 of this book for a detailed description of the ISI process) which brings together the quantitative career assessment instrument, the Self-Directed Search (SDS: Holland, 1985), with a story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon & Watson, 2012). Subsequently,

Watson and McMahon (2014) described an ISI process that combined Super's Work Values Inventory-Revised (SWVI-R; Zytowski, 2006) with the story telling approach. The ISI process represents an example of the "plurality of practices" that McMahon and Patton (2002a, p. 7) urge career counsellors to adopt to facilitate the complementarity of the positivist and constructivist philosophical positions.

Using a series of story crafting questions to contextualise the results of the SDS and the SWVI-R, the ISI process facilitates holistic rich reflection on and discussion about clients' lives. The ISI process demonstrates how the core constructs of the quantitative SDS may be combined in a qualitative process based on the core constructs of the story telling approach to career counselling. Application of the ISI process has implications for the role of the career counsellor, the client, the counsellor-client relationship and the career counselling process, unlike Rayman's (1998) description of a comprehensive interpretation of the SDS through 10 questions that focused primarily on the role of career counsellors. The ISI process guides career counsellors and clients through a six part reflection process based on the assessment scores. Beginning with crafting stories about 1) the assessment scores and 2) the order of the assessment scores, the ISI process then encourages clients to craft stories that connect their scores to 3) life contexts and 4) work contexts. The next part of the process is 5) a meaning making process in which clients reflect on their assessment scores in relation to their career planning. The final part of the ISI process is 6) crafting an integrative future story on the basis of the past and present stories that have been told during the process.

The integration of career assessment with career counselling has long been emphasised (e.g., Whiston & Rahardja, 2005) with McMahon and Patton (2002b) stressing that assessment should be seamlessly embedded and integrated into career counselling in a way that helps people address their concerns productively. A process for integrating career assessment, including qualitative career assessment, into career counselling was first proposed by McMahon and Patton (2002a) over a decade ago (see Figure 6.1).

Unlike linear models of career counselling, career assessment is not automatically included in an initial assessment and diagnosis step. Rather, the use of career assessment emanates out of clients' stories and therefore may, or may not, be used. Thus, as reflected in Figure 6.1, McMahon and Patton (2002a) concluded that career assessment should occupy a new location in career counselling. Rather than providing the focus of and stimulus data for career counselling in an early step of a linear process, career assessment should, if necessary, emanate out of the career counselling process.

Consistent with common themes identified in constructivist approaches to career counselling, Figure 6.1 illustrates how the incorporation of assessment into career counselling is "customised to individual clients, more creative, less directive, less routinised and therefore less likely to operate according to the linear processes that have long been associated with career counselling" (Patton & McMahon, 2014, p. 358). Within the process depicted in Figure 6.1, the need for assessment of any form

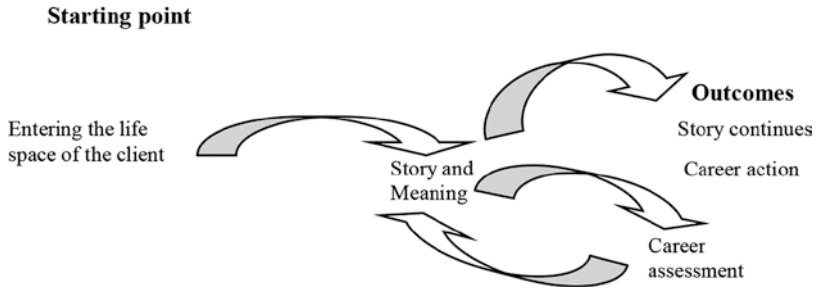

Figure 6.1. A new location for career assessment (McMahon & Patton, 2002a)

– quantitative or qualitative – will evolve as the client's story unfolds. In addition the client can have input into the assessment processes (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Thus, as with constructivist approaches to career counselling, the process represented in Figure 6.1 emphasises the counsellor-client relationship, story, meaning making, and the active agency of the client (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

In reflecting on their ISI process, and consistent with McMahon and Patton's (2002a) suggestion about the location of assessment in career counselling, Watson and McMahon (2014) concluded that:

> clients are given a voice in the narrative career counseling process and the role of the career counselor is defined more as a facilitator of a process of meaning making rather than as an expert interpreting test results. The interpretation of results becomes more a process of clients making sense of their results in the context of their life experiences rather than a decontextualized counselor-driven process based on theory and psychometric properties. In sum, a qualitative exploration of quantitative career assessment results represents a mutual learning process. (p. 643)

The ISI process and the chapters presented in Part 3 of this book, offer examples of how to incorporate assessment into career counselling.

Broadly, such models accord with the nine guidelines for incorporating qualitative career assessment into career counselling proposed by McMahon and Patton (2002b). In brief, these guidelines are: 1) individualise the process for the client; 2) map the qualitative assessment onto the story previously told by the client; 3) make the qualitative assessment fit for the client not the client fit the assessment; 4) broach the subject of using a qualitative assessment device tentatively, respectfully, and informatively; 5) acknowledge that it is the client's prerogative to engage in the activity; 6) work with and support the client through the process of the assessment using counselling skills; 7) debrief/process the activity; 8) invite feedback on qualitative assessment processes; and 9) be creative. These guidelines, in conjunction with the 'map' provided in Figure 6.1, offer practical suggestions to

career counsellors about the perennial challenge of how to incorporate assessment into career counselling. For example, McMahon, Watson, Chetty and Hoelson (2012) demonstrated the utility of these guidelines through a case study with a Black South African university student participating in career counselling that incorporated qualitative career assessment.

Table 6.1. Incorporating career assessment into career counselling

Focus (Watson & McMahon, 2014)	*Guidelines (see McMahon and Patton, 2002a,b, 2006)*	*Constructs*
Personalise the process for the client	Individualise the process for the client	Agency
	Map the qualitative assessment onto the story previously told by the client	Connectedness
	Make the qualitative assessment fit for the client, not the client fit the assessment	Connectedness
Introducing career assessment into the career counselling process	Broach the subject of using a qualitative assessment device tentatively, respectfully, and informatively	Agency
	Acknowledge that it is the client's prerogative to engage in the activity	Agency
The conduct of the career assessment process	Work with and support the client through the process of the assessment using counselling skills	Agency; Meaning making; Connectedness; Reflection
	Debrief/process the activity	Meaning making; Connectedness; Reflection; Learning
	Invite feedback on qualitative assessment processes	Agency; Meaning making; Connectedness; Reflection
	Be creative and flexible in the career assessment process	Agency

(Adapted from Watson & McMahon, 2014)

More recently, Watson and McMahon (2014) considered these guidelines according to three primary foci in the career counselling process, specifically: personalising the process for the client, introducing career assessment into the career counselling process, and the conduct of the career assessment process. As illustrated in Table 6.1, the focus and guidelines can also be related to the constructs found in most postmodern/constructivist career counselling approaches.

Table 6.1 illustrates how the incorporation of career assessment into career counselling can be a seamless process of integration of two seemingly disparate processes, assessment and career counselling. At the heart of this process is a collaborative and respectful client-counsellor relationship. Such a process necessitates a shift in the role of the career counsellor to that of a process facilitator and in the role of the client to active participant in the process. Sampson (2009) suggested that career counselling and career assessment may be viewed as divergent processes and urged the field to work towards convergence. Importantly, Table 6.1 shows how the dichotomy between career assessment and career counselling can be minimised and, indeed, how they can converge.

CONCLUSION

The long standing and vexed issue of incorporating career assessment into career counselling, especially at a time when narrative approaches to career counselling are becoming more prevalent, remains a challenge in the field. There are signs, however, that integrative approaches and guidelines that have been proposed offer useful models for the future.

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Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland
Australia

Wendy Patton
Queensland University of Technology
Australia

PART 2

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: INSTRUMENTS

Part 2 of this book, *Qualitative career assessment*: *Instruments*, presents a number of brief chapters that describe some of the more internationally well-known and widely used qualitative career assessment instruments. As the first comprehensive book on qualitative approaches to career assessment, this part of the book features the work of international authors who have written on or proposed particular instruments. Using learning as the organising structure, this part of the book is structured according to the predominant learning style that we, as co-editors, perceive is supported by the qualitative career assessment instrument described in each chapter, that is, visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic. For example, readers will notice that one chapter on card sorts is contained in the visual learning section and another that focuses on online card sorts is contained in the section on kinaesthetic learning. In structuring Part 2 of the book in this way, the co-editors acknowledge that most qualitative career assessment instruments support a variety of learning styles. Our goal, however, in applying this structure, was to emphasise the importance of learning in qualitative career assessment and in career counselling.

PART 2

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: INSTRUMENTS

A) VISUAL LEARNING STYLES

We have located chapters in this sub-part of the book that describe instruments which develop a written or pictorial depiction that we believe supports a visual learning style.

NORMAN AMUNDSON AND BARBARA A. SMITH

7. THE PATTERN IDENTIFICATION EXERCISE

INTRODUCTION

The Pattern Identification Exercise (PIE) has been used as a qualitative assessment process in career, personal, and mental health counselling. It has been refined over a thirty-year period of time in Canada and in many other countries. We continue to be amazed at the results that can be realised through this seemingly simple and direct exploratory approach. In this chapter we would like to lay out the historical and theoretical background underlying this method, describe in some detail the various steps in the method, and then explore some of the learning outcomes.

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In Canada, the 1980s was a decade of innovation and change within counselling and specifically, the career development field. People moved away from a strictly quantitative assessment perspective and sought more creative and personally meaningful methods. There was growing openness to qualitative approaches in both academic research and counselling practice. A similar movement also seemed to be stirring in many other countries, with a growing readiness to explore alternate methodologies.

Within this historical context there was interest in developing a broader questioning approach (Amundson & Cochran, 1984). There was also a concerted effort to develop more creative and personally engaging career programs (Westwood, Amundson, & Borgen, 1994). As part of this dynamic process some of the work of Young, Becker, and Pike (1970) in the field of rhetoric showed considerable promise. Their system of questioning and perspective changing, and how the method could be applied to counselling was particularly interesting.

The PIE evolved from this exploration period and is based on an analogical reasoning approach where there is the assumption that a careful examination of life experience will lead to life/career pattern(s) identification. There is a further assumption that these patterns occur in other life events. Analogical reasoning and transfer learning processes have been described as the core of cognition (Hofstadter, 2001). Using analogical reasoning to enhance the transfer of learning across domains has been well documented within psychology and neuroscience (Dunbar & Blanchette, 2001).

While there was the assumption that any life/career experience could be explored using this method, it seemed prudent to start with a positive psychological perspective

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 61–67.

(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). A strength-based approach provides an easy entry point into the client's life. One way of introducing this approach was through a thorough examination of a client's area of interest. Approaching the task in this manner provided an opportunity to explore experiences that were not typically well 'defended'. People usually engage more passionately in their life interests and are quite willing to start discussing them.

In addition to examining positive experiences, it also seemed important to explore situations that did not turn out so well. Pryor and Bright (2012) suggest that it is important to include a counterbalance to a strictly positive focus. People often learn in situations where things do not work out well, from their failures and mistakes. With the PIE method clients are asked to think about a parallel negative situation. Within a particular interest domain we want clients to identify both a high point and also a time when things did not work out so well.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXERCISE

Before introducing the PIE activity it is essential that the counsellor and client establish a positive working relationship (Amundson, 2009a). The relationship provides a foundation for exploration and decision-making. At this early point it is important that the counsellor creates a 'mattering climate'. Mattering has been defined by Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) as the beliefs people have that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else's attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them. Counsellors create mattering climates by focusing attention on clients, listening to their stories, engaging them in an open consultative manner, and by treating them as special people.

To help achieve a mattering climate it is important that a counsellor attend to the whole person, recognising that the client is more than the problems they bring with them. We have found it helpful at the beginning to broaden the scope of the discussion. We often tell clients that we want to know them as people before focusing on the problem. This more personal discussion can be facilitated through the use of the 'Favourite Things' activity (Amundson, 2009a). With this exercise, clients are asked to write down some of the things that they enjoy doing in any part of their life. After a few minutes of writing, clients are asked to discuss these interests and notice the general themes that might emerge, i.e., doing things alone or with others, spontaneous activity or actions that require more planning, leadership, and so on. The 'Favourite Things' activity helps to create a personal and positive tone for counselling. It also provides a rich array of interests and strengths that can be explored in more depth later, using the PIE.

After giving the client time to describe their concern, it can be helpful to discuss their expectations for the session. In the case of career development, many clients come to counselling with the belief that the counsellor has a 'magical' test that will reveal all about their aptitudes and abilities, and the direction that they should pursue. If it were only that easy! We have found it helpful to use the Career Wheel

as a way to describe the many different factors that might influence the career journey (Amundson & Poehnell, 2004); these factors also play roles in many other journeys such as relational or health. The factors in the wheel include personal dimensions such as skills, interests, values and personality. There are also some external dimensions such as influences from significant others, learning, training and education, work history, and some of the career connections that they have made. All of these dimensions contribute in some way to possible career directions.

As clients prepare to explore some of the Career Wheel dimensions, we often suggest that they start with interests generated in the 'Favourite Things' activity. Rather than exploring all of their interests, we ask them to focus on one particular interest. What we particularly look for here is an interest that has brought them some joy, and we want them to describe a time when it really went well for them – a high point. We also ask them to think about a time when the interest did not go so well for them. For example, they might talk about an interest in cooking and describe a time when they made this incredible meal for a dozen of their friends. The negative example would then need to also focus on cooking, this time describing a situation that did not turn out so well. This framework of in-depth exploration of an interest is the foundation of the PIE.

In both situations it is important to encourage the client to provide a full description. The client in telling their story can either start with the positive or the more negative situation. To facilitate the full telling of the story the counsellor should be prepared to ask a series of probing questions to bring out all the details. In capturing the story it is important to not only focus on actions, but also on thoughts and feelings underlying the development of the events. In teaching this technique to many career practitioners we have found that one of the most common mistakes is that counsellor trainees fail to gather sufficient details about the situation. As part of this exercise, we usually try to write down some of the key statements on a piece of paper or flip chart to externalise the story as it unfolds. It is important to use the language of the client when making these notes; this is not a time to incorporate analysis into the description. To conclude the questioning, we often enquire as to what it is about these particular situations that make them stand out from other stories that could be told.

After a full telling of the positive and negative stories, we shift the focus to analysis. It is important here to always encourage clients to start the process. What do the stories say about them? In most situations clients will give two or three themes and leave it at that. In these situations, the counsellor needs to become more active and start examining some of the details. The approach at this secondary stage is to simply draw attention to a particular incident and then make a comment such as: "I wonder what this might mean". Usually clients can add another layer to their initial analysis. If the counsellor has some additional insights they can share their perspective more directly by using statements such as: "When I look at what you have described I wonder if this could mean ….". It is important in pulling out the themes to focus on all of the details embedded within the positive and negative stories.

In the last portion of this exercise there is a shift from analysis to application. In this stage, clients need to consider how some of the identified themes might fit

with the particular challenges they face. Usually clients are surprised by how many different connections they make, particularly when they make connections between seemingly unrelated interests like cooking and their desire to find employment. These connections include skills that might be used in job search and in career exploration. Also, the connections may contain warnings about some of the ways in which they might be drawn off course. While people have many strengths, there are also some conditions that limit their ability to find fulfillment. Thus, there are applications to be made from both the positive and the negative stories.

Counsellors can use the PIE to explore a variety of interests. There will always be some overlap, but also new insights emerge as the exercise is repeated. Each analysis enriches the identified patterns and can lead to additional insights. If the starting point was a leisure experience, it might be interesting to see what would happen if the focus shifted to something from working life or from the home environment.

The PIE can be used with individuals and with groups with a range of presenting concerns. With the group process, the leader demonstrates how to introduce the activity, what to listen for, and how to debrief it. Group members can listen for and identify strengths as well as patterns during the demonstration. The group leader can create subgroups of three to four people for practice using PIE, with one person telling the story, one group member facilitating the identification of patterns, and the remaining members offering support when they notice something that has not been mentioned. Using the PIE in this manner helps the facilitator to tap into the benefits of group process. The PIE can be used with individuals of all ages. It has been used with secondary and post-secondary students, as well as with adults facing a variety of situations including unemployment, underemployment, career transitions, and developmental changes including aging and retirement.

CASE ILLUSTRATION

Jesse was 28 years old, living at home, and unemployed. He had graduated from university as an engineer about 6 months ago. His specialty within engineering was robotics. He had several interviews but has been unsuccessful, primarily because of his shyness and his inability to communicate effectively in job interviews. He comes across as unsure of himself and is unable to speak clearly about his skills and abilities.

When the career counsellor looked at his resume Jesse found it difficult to state what he had learned through the training he received in engineering. At that point, the counsellor asked him to describe some of the highlights in his courses. Initially Jesse wasn't sure what to say. The counsellor asked for a specific example of a time in his engineering experiences where something had gone really well. Jesse began to talk about some of the special projects he had been involved in during his studies. The counsellor then used the PIE to explore one of the projects that he described. Jesse described how he and three other students designed a robotic engineering solution to some real life manufacturing problems. Initially he couldn't identify the skills

that were involved in the project. The counsellor encouraged him to add detail to his story using phrases like "tell me more" or asking specific questions in response to his statements to draw out Jesse's strengths. As the discussion continued, Jesse relaxed and explained in great detail the various elements of the project. Creativity, problem solving and collaboration themes emerged from his story. During the project Jesse even took on a notable leadership role within the group. The project turned out very well and the instructor was very pleased with the quality of the work and how the group worked together.

In providing an example where he was presented with more of a challenge, Jesse described a time in the course when he was assigned to a dysfunctional group. The other students were not interested in robotics, and they were only able to meet together on a few occasions. In the end the project was still satisfactory, but mostly because he did most of the work. Several themes emerged; it was obvious that Jesse was passionate about robotics, and he needed to find ways of expressing his passion more effectively. Within the engineering domain, Jesse was creative, hard-working, an effective problem solver, and even willing to step outside his comfort zone and take on some leadership responsibilities in the right circumstances.

Jesse was excited about how to find themes in stories and then how to apply this story telling method to interview preparation. On his own, he went through all of his courses and special projects and highlighted the stories and the themes that were part of the stories. Jesse was soon ready to try a new approach in his interviews and shortly afterwards he was successful in finding employment. Jesse became aware that he needed to target his search to workplaces where people were enthused about working with robotics.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

In evaluating the PIE it is important to remember, in addition to being an assessment tool, this exercise provides a method for people to learn how to analyse and explore their own experiences. Through the process clients experience how a detailed enquiry can lead to pattern identification, and then how this information can be applied to other situations. The focus of the exercise is as much about learning analytical skills as it is about identifying patterns. Consequently, the PIE can be used with different types of clients facing a range of presenting concerns. In this case study, it clearly illustrates how the PIE method was used both for exploration and as a way to prepare for job interviews.

NEXT STEPS

While the PIE is a stand-alone assessment activity, it has also served as inspiration for several other activities. For example, the 'Circle of Strength' activity uses a similar questioning process but involves the counsellor playing a more central role in providing feedback regarding the client's strengths which emerge from the story

details (Amundson, 2009a). With the 'Circle of Strength' adaptation, the counsellor takes the lead in giving feedback, always connecting the comments to the various elements of the story. Linking to concrete examples from the story is especially important in situations where people lack self-confidence or have high anxiety.

In some instances it can be helpful to use drawing (McMahon & Patton, 2002), collage (Heppner, O'Brien, Hinkelman, & Humphrey, 1994) or even a sand tray (Dale & Lyddon, 2000; Sangganjanavanich & Magnuson, 2011) to help clients to generate their stories or to elaborate various aspects of the story within the PIE.

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Norman Amundson
The University of British Columbia
Canada

Barbara A. Smith
The University of British Columbia
Canada

ANURADHA J. BAKSHI AND VIDHYA SATISH

8. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT USING A GENOGRAM

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we present the genogram as a qualitative career assessment tool. We first outline the key ideas pertaining to genograms in general, and next address career genograms. In the third section we illustrate the use of career genograms with adults from Mumbai (India).

GENOGRAMS

One of the qualitative career assessment tools is the genogram (McMahon & Patton, 2002). A genogram meets all the criteria of qualitative assessment: numbers are not the bottom line (Goldman, 1995) and the client is the expert who provides the relevant information and engages in meaning making, along with a counsellor who listens and facilitates (Kuehl, 1995; McMahon & Patton, 2002).

What Is a Genogram?

A genogram is a diagram in which standard symbols are used to map at least three generations of the index person's (IP) family system: the IP's generation and the parents' and grandparents' generations (McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008). Family-of-origin influences are tracked through such a family tree diagram. Importantly, the utility of the genogram technique rests on the process as much as the product (Asen, Tomson, Young, & Tomson, 2004). The product is the visual representation of multiple generations of a family system. The process (which is not necessarily linear) includes: the making of the diagram; using the diagram to enable narration of relevant messages, themes, stories etc.; identification of patterns repeated across generations; and reflection, examination, interpretation, and intervention. The person plays an active role in collaboration with the counsellor/therapist/clinician at each step (McGoldrick, Giordano, & Garcia-Preto, 2005). Genograms can vary in the simplicity or complexity of the multigenerational mapping. A genogram can represent the demographic features of the three generations or, for example, provide a complex map of emotional patterns characterising family relationships across and within generations (McGoldrick et al., 2008).

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 69–80.

Assumptions

Each member in a family carries and lives out family-of-origin influences, which may or may not promote health and wellbeing, and which result in beliefs/behaviours/interactional patterns that endure across generations (Asen et al., 2004). Thus, a genogram is founded on the notion that there is multigenerational transfer of beliefs (including those relating to the self and the other), values, attitudes, customs, traditions, rules, problem-solving strategies, emotional expression and management, patterns of interaction, and role stereotypes. For example, role stereotypes that can be perpetuated across generations through family-of-origin influences may be based on age, gender, occupation, position in the family, ethnicity, and/or culture. Power differentials in the family of origin may be replicated in the new family. A second assumption is that in drawing a genogram, many or at least targeted/selected cross-generational influences can be identified. The third assumption is that once these covert cross-generational influences are brought into the open, they become available for examination, reflection, decision-making, and positive action (as needed) (c.f. Asen et al., 2004; White & Tyson-Rawson, 1995). It is assumed that a genogram can help build self-awareness and provide insight (Daughhetee, 2001), and make multigenerational influences yield to conscious/proactive processes as opposed to operating through unconscious/reactive processes (White & Tyson-Rawson, 1995).

Theoretical Influences

Bowen's transgenerational family therapy provided the first theoretical context for the application of genograms. Lack of differentiation with the family of origin, he observed, led to replication of undifferentiated relationships in the new generation; therefore, the goal in therapy is for clients to reduce their emotional fusion and triangulation with members from the family of origin. Such increased differentiation is expected to lower anxiety and emotional reactivity, and improve communication and autonomy in intergenerational as well as newer relationships (Snow, Crethar, Robey, & Carlson, 2005).

In testimony to their adaptability and flexibility, genograms have been integrated into many other theoretical approaches. Other than family systems theory or intergenerational theory such as that of Bowen's, genograms could be used today as part of (the interconnected perspectives of) constructivism, narrative family therapy, insight-oriented growth work, or strengths and solution-focused perspectives (Kuehl, 1995; White & Tyson-Rawson, 1995).

Types and Usage of Genograms

A great variety of genograms have been devised and used in marriage and family therapy training and practice, counselling education and practice, career

counselling (in particular), family medicine, and social work, especially in the United States. The most common of these is the *family genogram*, extensively applied in what may be called transgenerational psychotherapy (Vernon, 1983). An example of another type of genogram is a *gendergram*, which helps make cross-generational gender influences in patterns of interaction between spouses, parents and children, and members of an extended family, visible such that these influences can be addressed proactively and altered as necessary (White & Tyson-Rawson, 1995). For instance, as a final step in the gendergram exercise, White and Tyson-Rawson recommend that family members select the gendered messages and stories (about self and others) they would like to continue to have in their family system and those that they would want to discard or reinvent. Other types of genograms include *solution-oriented genogram*s (Kuehl, 1995), *cultural genograms* (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995), *domestic violence genograms* (Watts & Shrader, 1998), *spiritual genograms* (Frame, 2000), *projective genograms* (Kaslow, 1995), *placement genograms* (McMillen & Groze, 1994), and *career genograms* (Okiishi, 1987). In (clinical) practice, a genogram serves simultaneously as a client-centred, collaborative assessment tool and a means of therapeutic intervention (Kuehl, 1995; McGoldrick et al., 2005). It is also claimed to be an important training tool (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995; Keily et al., 2002).

General Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages of the genogram technique include: acknowledgement of a multigenerational context (McMillen & Groze, 1994), collaborative process (McGoldrick et al., 2005), versatility (Moon, Coleman, McCollum, Nelson, & Jensen-Scott, 1993), expandability (Vernon, 1983), and ease of eliciting family narratives (Asen et al., 2004). As a *visual* tool, it makes visible (intergenerational) patterns that are otherwise undetected or denied (Daughhetee, 2001; McMillen & Groze, 1994); "provides a quick gestalt of complex family patterns" (McGoldrick et al., 2008, p. 2); and permits the client and the counsellor to collaboratively construct and view "structural, relational, and functional information about the family" within and across generations (McGoldrick et al., 2008, p. 5). As a therapeutic tool it can help ensure that (dysfunctional) history is not repeated (Asen et al., 2004).

As the visual effectiveness of a genogram is lost if it is too cluttered (McMillen & Groze, 1994), the genogram technique's suitability is challenged when there are *families*-of-origin influences, very large family networks in collectivist cultures (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995), or many non-relational members in place of family members (Brandl, 2009). In any case, decisions on what to include or exclude can be complex (McMillen & Groze, 1994). Okiishi (1987) also mentions time constraints, and the possibility that family information may be unavailable because of emotional or geographic distance between family members.

CAREER GENOGRAMS

Family Influences on Careers

A career genogram can help assess and rework (if needed) the impact of family-of-origin influences on the index person's career development. A career genogram facilitates the counsellor and client in identifying the family members who have substantially influenced the client's views of self and the world-of-work; gender role stereotypes and other restrictive conditions/interactional patterns coming in the way of career decision-making can also be located (Okiishi, 1987). A career genogram is an open-ended technique in which multigenerational career issues relating to education, work values/ethics, suitability of careers, achievement expectations etc. can be examined in a nonthreatening and interesting manner (Moon et al., 1993). It helps build insight and awareness about intergenerational family influences on careers and assists clients in making better-informed career decisions (Thorngren & Feit, 2001).

Research

Okiishi (1987) used the genogram as an assessment, recording, and facilitative tool in career counselling with 15 undergraduate students at a student counselling service of a U.S. university. She illustrated a three-step process: constructing the basic genogram under direction of the client, adding the occupations of family members on the genogram, and exploring generalisations about self and the world-of-work through discussing occupational and life-style role models in the family. Moon et al. (1993) have presented a case study of a 40-year-old woman who clarified a career-change decision based on the use of a genogram through which multigenerational decision-making styles, career choices, and changes in gender roles were explored. Thorngren and Feit (2001) have described an adaptation—a career-o-gram—which entails diagramming and dialoguing with clients about their career history and key influences. They also have reported a case study: a 39-year-old woman at a U.S. university had increased clarity and decisiveness about her educational and career goals as a result of the career-o-gram exercise. Similarly, Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2013), guided by Savickas's Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), used a career construction genogram to facilitate an Italian woman entrepreneur to construct her own work vision.

Grier-Reed and Ganuza (2011) reported a significant increase in the career decision self-efficacy (especially goal selection and planning) of African American and Asian American students at a United States university after participation in a constructivist career course which included making a career genogram and acknowledging family-influenced work values and career stereotypes. Malott and Magnuson (2004) used career genograms as a psychoeducational tool to help undergraduate students at a U.S. university reflect on family influences on careers in a course aimed at facilitating career exploration and career decision-making.

CAREER GENOGRAM CASE EXAMPLES FROM MUMBAI (INDIA)

Indian families are very varied especially given differences in religion, language, ethnic group, caste/community, urban-rural-tribal residence, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. By and large, however, Indian families are more likely to endorse collectivist values. In many Indian families, it is taken for granted that the older generation will play an active role in the career decision-making and career management of those in the younger generation: this could involve encouragement, financial support, as well as more directive and, in some cases, coercive arrangements. Personal choice could be constrained by the dictates of the family for some, and/or by poverty for others. Moreover, there is explicit acknowledgement of marriage not between two individuals but between two families. Family-of-origin influences on career development are thus especially relevant for examination in an Indian sample. Family influences on the career choices of Indian youth have been examined using other methods (e.g., Bakshi, Gandhi, Shah, & Maru, 2012); also, the graphic advantages of (cultural) genograms have been reported for Indian marital and family therapy (MFT) students in the United States (Keily et al., 2002). The genogram technique, which lends itself to collaborative/self-directed examination of family-of-origin influences, was thought to be particularly apt for provoking and studying Indian adults' reflections on their career development. Therefore, the use of career genograms was explored among three participants from Mumbai, India.

Participants

The participants (VS, PT, & SI) included the second author, another woman, and a man (ages 44, 37 and 32 years). Two of the participants belonged to the same community, namely Tamil Brahmins (Hindus); one participant was a Parsi (Zoroastrian). All three participants were fluent in English, privileged, employed, highly educated, members of high-status communities, and married with one child each. Participants were engaged with satisfaction in their careers; their current occupations included teacher educator, preschool teacher, and financial analyst. They reported high quality relationships with family members and frequent contact with some of the extended kin. Names used are as desired by the participants. Written consent has been obtained to present their genograms and verbatim responses.

Construction of Three Types of Career Genograms

For each participant, three types of three-generation genograms were constructed: one focusing on educational paths of family members, another on occupations, and a third on interests and hobbies. All participants collected the information along with family members; two participants met the second author multiple times as they made progress over a period of several weeks. At a later stage, VS and PT attempted to construct the genograms without special software. However, given the complexity

of the diagramming task, the genograms were made by professionals. Also, VS and PT's family systems were so extensive that the maternal and paternal sides of the families had to be constructed using separate genograms. So 15 genograms were constructed, of which 3 are reproduced here as an illustration (see Figures 8.1–8.3).

Themes

The completed genograms were made available to the participants who then engaged in a written reflection exercise using a set of open-ended questions. The following themes, extracted from their written reflections, represent the utility of the career genogram exercise for them. Each theme is supported by thick description.

Valuing the role of the family in self-determination. SI was unequivocal about individual accountability and self-determination being the defining forces in his life, and more specifically, his career. At the same time, he clarified the integral role of his family in fostering introspection, responsibility and self-direction:

> I think self-awareness comes from constantly learning to know what we are at different points of our existence and evolution, irrespective of family influences. Such essential introspection was cultivated in me by my family and those immediately around me. Interest in music and reading only buttressed this habit. I also learnt—fairly early in life—that one must take full responsibility for one's actions—actions of commission as well as omission. Family influences have been strong. But most in the family have striven to express themselves and participate in decision-making; also, independence of thought and action has always been encouraged. I value my family influences insofar as they make me independent and self-assured and allow me to stand on my own feet (mentally and psychologically).

Valuing the exposure to careers of family members. PT found that the genogram exercise helped her make sense of her career shift from Science/Technology to Arts/Teaching.

> My father's side is more into Science and Technology and I always felt that I was ONLY inclined towards science and technology. I started my career as a tech person, working for an I.T. company. But after my daughter was born, I could not continue and then decided to take up a career that gave me a proper work life balance. My mother always told me from childhood that I could be a good teacher, but for some strange reason I was never interested in Arts or teaching. However while playing and teaching my daughter I realised that I had inborn talent for teaching and took up a course in ECCEd (Early Childhood Care and Education). I completed it successfully and now I am working as a

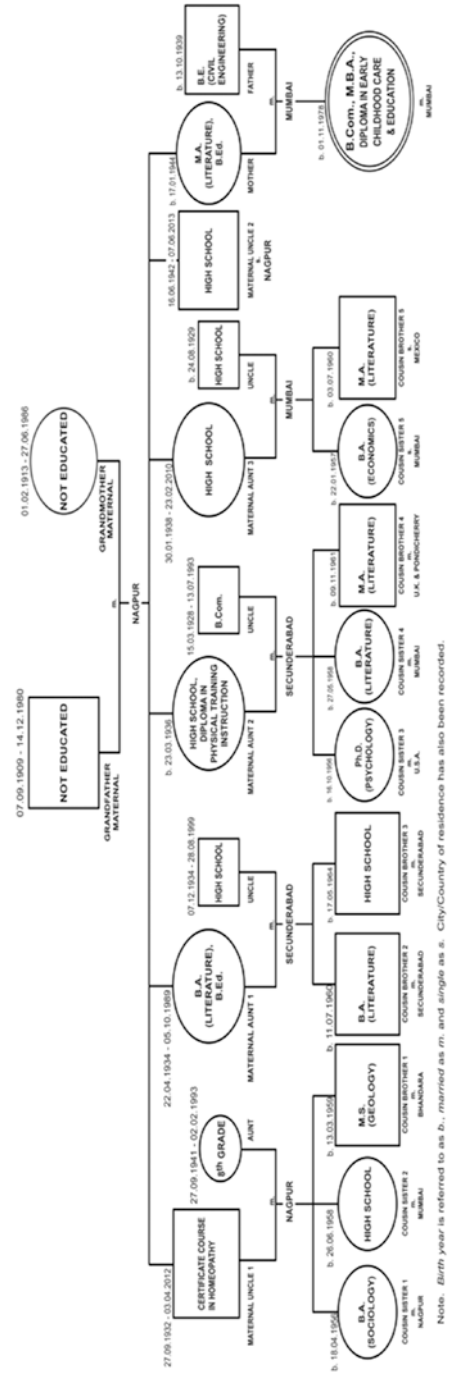
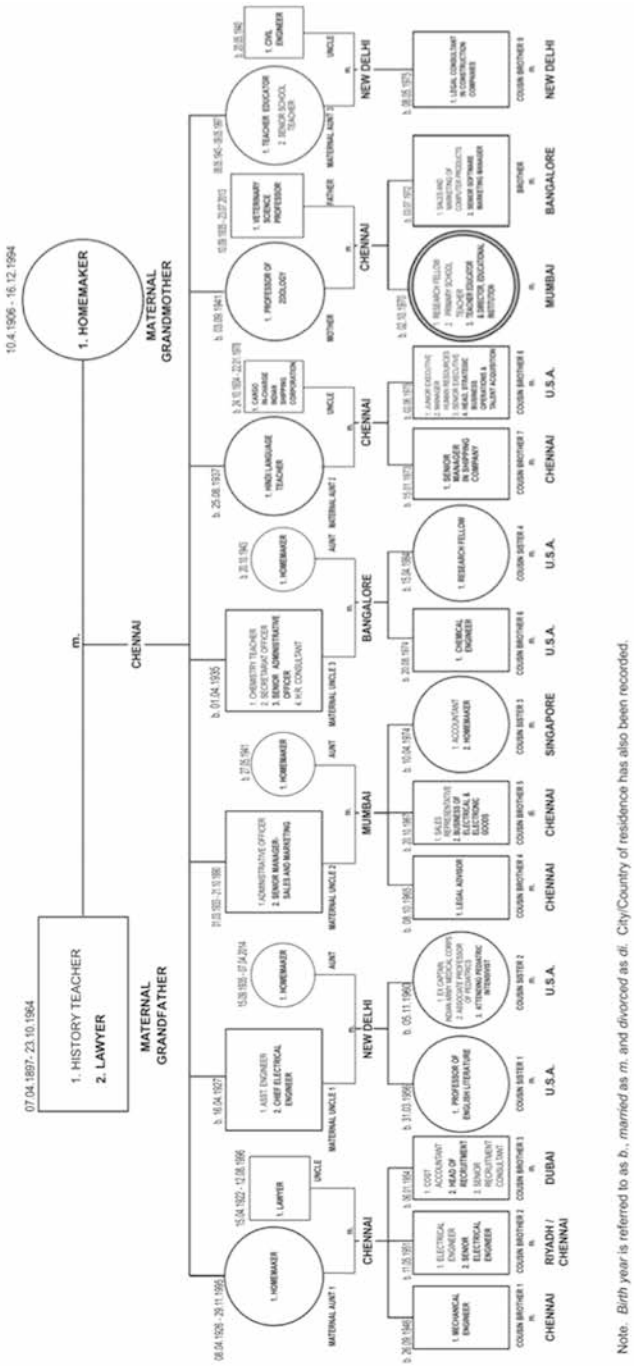


Figure 8.1. PT's maternal family educational qualification genogram



Note. *Birth year is referred to as b., married as m. and divorced as di.* City/Country of residence has also been recorded.

Figure 8.2. VS's maternal family career genogram

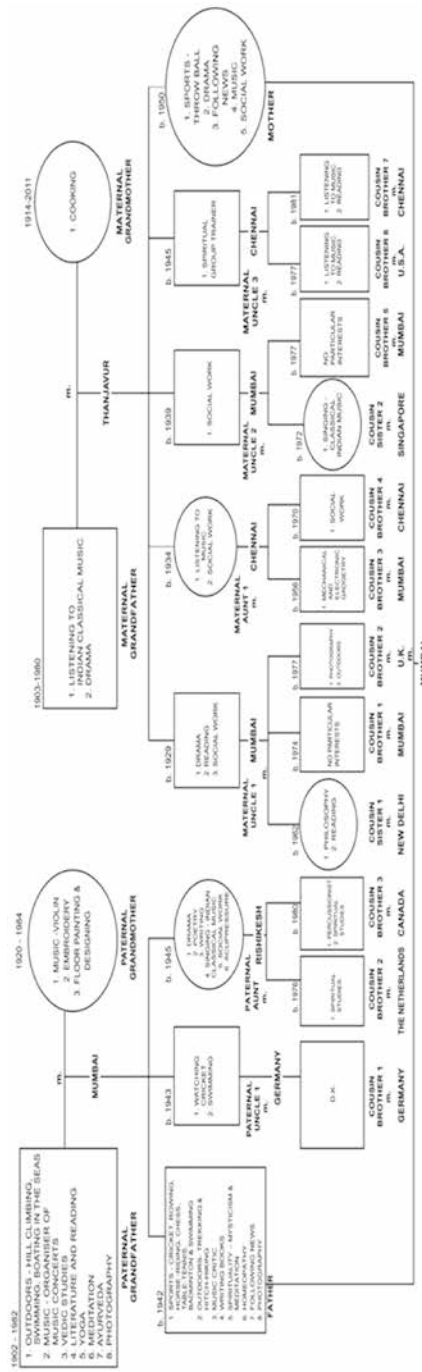


Figure 8.3. SI's interests and hobbies 'genogram.

> preprimary (school) teacher. I have realised that all my aunts from my mother's side and my mother are teachers and teaching is in my genes.

VS also appreciated the influence of the family on her career:

> Firstly, this gave me an opportunity to look at my family influences with regard to my career choices which was insightful. Being the daughter of parents who were teaching at the university level, I realised teaching came very naturally and it was extremely satisfying as a career. I also realised that many of my relatives from my maternal side were in the teaching profession.

Valuing the exposure to interests and hobbies of family members. More than the careers of family members, it was the hobbies and interests of family members that SI identified as an influence in his own career development:

> I also value them for cultivating in me an interest in music and in exposing me to the great world of reading. Sports and the outdoors cultivate in one a spirit of teamwork, humility and a spirit of acceptance. For these, I am indebted to my family.

VS also identified the influence of family members' interests on her career:

> Paternal side reflected a great deal of interest towards music. Though my training in music is incomplete, the joy that music gives to the family as a whole was clear when interests were studied. This interest in music has helped me pen songs for my students to aid their school lesson planning, conduct music and movement sessions for my students as well as conduct workshops on rhymes and songs.

Identifying strengths in the family and building new aspirations. All three participants identified new aspirations as a result of the genogram exercise:

> My career goal is to start my own preschool. I would like to emulate my maternal aunt and start a school of mine. And this exercise has helped me realise that I possess a good blend of arts, science and technology. So I would develop a lot of scientific thinking in the minds of my students. I would focus on the experiential learning approach for my students and would use technology as an aid to better their understanding to things. This exercise has also motivated me to pursue a PhD in future and I wish to be like my cousin sister carrying out research and related activities. (PT)

> I also realised that my maternal side cousin sister had authored various books and it is indeed my dream to author one too. Through this exercise, I realised that my maternal uncle's daughters were highly qualified, were successful in the teaching profession and also have commendable professional advancements

> which I wish to emulate (it is only for this exercise, I had contacted them after more than two decades). (VS)
>
> Social work is another area which is of interest to most of the family members, especially my maternal side. Due to my present work commitments, I am not in any position to get involved in social work. However, I may do so in future if things fall in place. (SI)

CONCLUSION

The genogram technique was found to be useful for inviting reflections about family-of-origin influences on their own career among urban, privileged Indian adults. The innovative use of three types of career genograms aided meaning-making by participants. Typical of Indian families, multiple family members got involved and reportedly enjoyed collaboratively piecing together the information for the genograms.

The use of genograms with those with limited literacy in countries such as Zimbabwe (Watts & Shrader, 1998) indicates that such a technique could possibly work with underprivileged Indian adults as well. In addition, the career genogram technique could also be utilised with Indian adults who wish to clarify career decisions and are grappling with family- and career-related issues. As of now, we can conclude that even without experiencing career-related issues/distress, the genogram exercise can have meaning for participants from urban, privileged Indian families. At the very least, the genogram exercise provides an opportunity to (re) connect with some of the extended kin and to locate strengths in the family which can be capitalised for one's own career development.

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Anuradha J. Bakshi
University of Mumbai
India

Vidhya Satish
University of Mumbai
India

DEBRA S. OSBORN, JULIA F. KRONHOLZ AND J. TYLER FINKLEA

9. CARD SORTS

INTRODUCTION

Card sorts have been a resource in the career counsellor's toolbag since the early 1960s, often used to supplement standardised career assessments. As a type of qualitative career assessment, card sorts are also seen as having unique value as a stand-alone approach in helping individuals explore various aspects of themselves. In this chapter, we begin with the historical context and theoretical background of card sorts, followed by a review of card sorts and ending with research exploring the impact of card sorts on career concerns.

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF CARD SORTS

Historically speaking, card sorts were first mentioned by Leona Tyler in a 1961 address to the American Psychological Association. A basic process was described, in which clients would sort cards into one of three piles: "Would Not Choose," "Would Choose," or "No Opinion" (p. 195). Clients would then reshuffle the cards in the first two piles into smaller piles representing the various reasons why they would or would not choose a specific occupation. According to Tyler, "what one gets out of this situation is a highly complex delineation of some aspects of the subject's personality that are not revealed by the psychological testing methods we ordinarily use" (p. 196). Goldman (1983) suggested that the activity of sorting cards was a projective technique, in which the most important outcome was not the accuracy of client descriptions of occupations, but what emerged during the process. For example, Pinkney (1985) proposed that counsellors include a discussion of avoidance themes (i.e., the reasons cards are placed in the would not choose pile) with their clients, while Peterson and Lenz (1992) suggested that card sorts could be used as a cognitive map of how a client organises the world of work. In addition, Peterson (1998) recommended that a counsellor attend to 'sort talk' or the verbalisations a client makes as they are engaged in the card sort. Finally, other potential topics of exploration when using card sorts include examining how a client engages in the task, or observing task approach behaviours, such as the speed with which a client sorts, how cards are organised, and whether clients 'check in' with the counsellor for confirmation that they are 'doing it right' (Osborn & Zunker, 2012). In terms of processing the final outcome, counsellors have multiple options on how to proceed. For example, they could ask clients to label and describe each pile, identify where significant others land as compared to the client's leanings, re-sort the piles either in terms of rankings or sub-themes, and so forth.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 81–88.

Card sorts are a technique that does not claim a particular theory as its knowledge base; practically speaking, card sorts could find a theoretical home in many camps. For example, the process of identifying one's individual characteristics, as is common with many card sorts, fits well with Parsons' (1909) approach, RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997), values, as expressed in Brown's (2002) values-based approach, or the self-knowledge component of Cognitive Information Processing Theory (CIP; Peterson, Sampson, Reardon & Lenz, 2002). Occupational card sorts might also fit well with Parsons' conditions of success or the knowledge about options component of CIP. The discussion that occurs during and following the card sort process might address dysfunctional thinking, which is a central component of CIP theory. The conversation may look at contextual issues, such as family, socio-economic status, or discrimination, all key elements of Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent & Brown, 2008), as well as career decision-making and the identification of next steps, such as researching occupations (Osborn & Zunker, 2016).

In addition to the previously mentioned theories, as a qualitative career assessment with an emphasis on client discussion, card sorts also have a very comfortable fit with constructivist career approaches. Instead of emphasising an objective measurement of a client's interests and skills, the focus is on the meaning that a client projects onto the stimuli (i.e., the cards), as well as the ongoing development of meaning that occurs throughout the process of the card sort activity (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003). Card sorts provide a framework from which to view an individual holistically, which can be heightened through carefully constructed questions, such as, "In looking at the skills that you just sorted into these piles, what impacted your growth or lack of growth in these areas?" or "How have the values that you've prioritised shown up in other areas of your life besides your work?" or "How do these results fit with what you've been sharing with me about your career story?" Clients could also be instructed to re-sort the cards in various ways, such as if they were five or ten years older, or if a person important to them was sorting the cards for them, or if they had no barriers holding them back. Questions a career counsellor might use to process the activity are numerous and some are specifically linked to the type of card sort being used and for what purpose. Types of card sorts will be addressed in the next section.

REVIEW OF CARD SORTS

Card sorts are typically printed on durable paper such as card stock as they are reused many times. As previously mentioned, there are many different types of card sorts on varying topics such as values, interests, skills, personality type, and occupations. Card sorts may even make use of thinking aloud, whereby the user verbalises what he or she is thinking about the values, interests, occupations, etc. as the card sort takes place (Peterson, 1998). This may give the counsellor a better understanding of the user's mindset and what follow-up questions could be asked. Occupational stereotypes or negative career thinking might emerge, as well as patterns of

interest, values, or family rules. In addition to traditional paper card sorts, online or computerised card sorts allow the user to access the instrument via computer or other online devices. Card sorts not only diverge from typical 'check a box' assessments and inventories, but have the advantage of flexibility and tactile experience of dragging a card to its place (Osborn & Bethell, 2009). Both technology-based and traditional card sorts may contain these elements of flexibility, including ease of use and creativity.

Career counsellors can create their own card sorts to suit certain parameters. The card sort may be very artistic in nature allowing the client to have an inviting visual experience as they sort through career concerns. The freedom to create one's own card sort allows the counsellor to customise career options or other career concerns based on the needs of the counsellor's population. For children or the young at heart, card sorts that include animals (see Figure 9.1) or other creative elements may provide a more appealing experience. Using animals or objects also can eliminate potential gender, ethnic, or disability bias that might be present if the cards had pictures of individuals on them.

Figure 9.2 provides an example of another counsellor-created card sort using a series of rocks with different work interests. Moving away from the traditional "card" format to objects such as rocks might be appreciated by those with tactile learning preferences.

Figure 9.1. Sample card sort – frog sort

Figure 9.2. Sample card sort – rock sort

Examples of other counsellor-created card sorts can be found at http://careerresource.coedu.usf.edu/linkteachingtools/examplesoflessonplans.htm,and have included small mirrors (with assertive statements such as "I am a good decision maker" or "I have value that I bring to the world"), and articles of clothing (hats, shoes, outfits – which of these "best fit" me).

Further, there are online card sorts and Computer Assisted Career Guidance Systems (CACGs) that both offer digital ways for individuals to engage in a card sort. Sigi3 (www.sigi3.org) is a CACG with card sorts on various topics including values, interests, and personality type. The Virtual Card Sort (VCS; Osborn, 2003) was designed to provide an online card sort experience. An example of a virtual, online card sort can be seen at http://www.careerplanner.com/Knowdell-Career-Values-CardSort.cfm. These interfaces may be more alluring to individuals who are technologically savvy and enjoy interacting with computer-based programs.

Potential Client Groups and Use

It is worthwhile to discuss the appropriateness of the use of card sorts in various populations. Pinkney (1985) suggested using a card sort with a client who has attained a flat profile on an interest inventory. Encouraging a client to 'think aloud' while sorting the cards allows the counsellor to obtain rich data regarding the client's world of work map, and provides a picture of the client's construction of her or his occupational schema (Peterson, 1998). Slaney (Slaney & MacKinnon-Slaney, 1990) identified other clients for whom the card sort experience would be an appropriate intervention, including undecided clients, older clients, clients with limits in mental abilities (though clinical caution must be exercised in this instance), younger clients, clients possessing a high level of intellectual control, and finally, clients whose assessed interests differ from their expressed interests. Vocational card sorts might also be found appropriate to use when counsellors work with clients who may need persuasion or buy-in regarding the career counselling process.

Learning Outcomes

The outcome of using a card sort may provide a positive experience in career counselling. The immediate results provided by a vocational card sort appear to be preferable to the period of time required to receive results from a formal assessment, such as the Strong Interest Inventory (Croteau & Slaney, 1994). Osborn and Zunker (2016) also noted the effectiveness of immediate results from vocational card sorts, adding other benefits of this tool such as the cost effectiveness, ease of administration, and number of creative uses in implementation. One study (Peterson & Lenz, 1992) showed that card sorts can be used to increase occupational knowledge and help the client develop a cognitive map of how they organise the world of work. Peterson's (1998) results also suggest that having someone with more mature occupational knowledge, possibly a career counsellor, may enhance the card sort process.

Learning outcomes for clients using card sorts may be more immediate as they unfold throughout the process of the sort; a client may answer some of his or her own questions and the career counsellor can facilitate the outcome as the card sort takes place (Osborn & Bethell, 2009). For example, the stated purpose of the Knowdell's (2005) Motivated Skills Card Sort is to assist clients to identify valuable employability skills, decide on their motivation to use these employability skills, identify which skills need to be improved upon, and ascertain which skills they would like to pursue in their career (Fields, 2013). Whether doing this card sort alone or with a career counsellor, it enables learning outcomes about employability skills. Additionally, Severson (n.d.) states that VISTa Cards is a tool that gives clients the ability to communicate what their inner voice may not be able to articulate in a way that both client and counsellor can understand. Severson (n.d., para. 5) goes on to say that in her experience using VISTa Cards with clients, "many are stunned that for the first time in their lives, they finally feel understood

and valued." To summarise, there are many types of card sorts that offer many kinds of outcomes and may provide a conduit to help clients become 'unstuck' with their career concerns.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT CARD SORTS

Goodman (1993; as cited in Zunker, 2008) stated that, because of the value typically placed on quantitative career assessments, career counsellors might overlook the effectiveness of non-standardised assessment measures in career counselling, such as vocational card sorts (VCS). In fact, research supports the efficacious use of card sorts applied singularly and as a supplement with other interventions. In a study comparing the efficacy of the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII; Campbell, 1974) and the Vocational Card Sort (VCS; Slaney, 1978), Slaney (1983) found modest effects for both treatments in a group of 180 undecided college women, and noted a positive relationship between career decidedness level and response to career intervention. These results suggest that both the SCII and VCS have comparable effects when used as a career intervention. Because the VCS is relatively inexpensive and does not require machine scoring, this study found promise for its use as a career intervention.

Osborn and Bethell (2009) conducted a research study that investigated the degree to which Holland codes matched when being assessed through various measures, including a virtual card sort. In this study, 83 Master's degree counselling students completed the Campbell Interests and Skills Survey (CISS; Campbell, Hyne, & Nilsen, 1992), the Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, Fritzsche, & Powell, 1997), the Interest Profiler from Florida Choices (IP; CHOICES, 2014), and the Virtual Card Sort (VCS; Osborn & Bethell, 2009). Results showed the SDS and VCS produced exact matches of Holland code of 81% for first letter matches, while the degree of match for the CISS and IP was 62%. When examining if the VCS first letter of the summary code was represented in the first two letters of the summary codes in each inventory, it was found that the SDS and VCS matched 96% of the time, while the CISS and IP included the first two letters of the student's VCS Holland code 83% and 82% of the time, respectively. Because the virtual card sort yielded similar Holland code results as the Self-Directed Search, Osborn and Bethell (2009) concluded that the VCS is an appropriate measure to use in career counselling.

Peterson (1998) found that card sorts are also useful in aiding counsellors to assess a client's representation of occupational knowledge. Using a card sort as a cognitive mental mapping activity for a 16-year-old male client and a 30-year-old female client, Peterson found that the card sort activity differentiated maturity levels in occupational knowledge between the younger and older participants. Thus, Peterson suggested that a vocational card sort could be used to determine developmentally appropriate career interventions. Peterson (1998) concluded by suggesting that a vocational card sort is "an effective, efficient, and practical assessment device to help career clients and counsellors explore levels of occupational knowledge and the

way clients relate their career aspirations to their own constructions of the world of work" (p. 64).

The apparent lack of empirical data regarding the efficacy of vocational card sorts as a career counselling intervention suggest that it may be challenging to obtain quantitative information from this activity, perhaps due to the informal or projective ways in which card sorts are designed to function. In addition, there appear to be no recent studies on the efficacy of card sorts as a career counselling intervention, with the majority of investigations on vocational card sorts conducted between 1975 and 1990. However, preliminary research supports the efficacious use of vocational card sorts as a career intervention and suggests the necessity of additional research on this unique and non-standardised assessment tool.

CONCLUSION

Card sorts represent a qualitative career assessment tool that can be used by career counsellors to aid in the self-exploration process associated with career decision-making. During the process of sorting the cards, the complexities associated with the career concern often are made known through the client's spoken narrative. Still, outcome research on the use of card sorts in the career decision making process is woefully lacking and, unfortunately so, especially given the many varied benefits of its use.

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Debra S. Osborn
Florida State University
United States of America

Julia F. Kronholz
Florida State University
United States of America

J. Tyler Finklea
Florida State University
United States of America

ELZETTE FRITZ AND GRETHE VAN ZYL

10. LIFELINES

A Visual Exploration of the Past in Order to Guide the Journey into the Future

INTRODUCTION

According to Gibson (2000), our experiences during our lives inform our interpretation of events and how we perceive the world. This chapter begins with a differentiation between lifelines and timelines, followed by an overview of the process through which lifelines can be developed. We discuss the relevance of lifelines in combination with narrative interviewing in the context of career guidance based on a case study. We conclude that lifelines are a useful qualitative career assessment instrument in structuring past events in order to explore possible themes that could influence future career decisions.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN TIMELINES AND LIFELINES

The concepts *timelines* and *lifelines* are often used as synonyms yet we would like to differentiate between the two concepts in aid of concept clarification and differentiation. Timelines can be constructed based on the experience of an event in order to capture the sequence of that event and to explore the recall of events. Carelli (2011) provides a good example where participants attended a pantomime and afterwards had to draw timelines of each actor in an attempt to reconstruct the temporal patterns of the pantomime. Drawing a lifeline, on the other hand, enables a person to explore his/her personal life history, paying attention to significant events, both positive and negative, in order to obtain an "autobiographical review" (Fritz & Beekman, 2007, p. 168). Consideration can also be given to significant people that participated in shaping the person as well as the context of growing up as all of these influences need to be considered in the context of career guidance.

In our experience, making a career choice is often complicated by a past highlighted with chaos, confusion, uncertainty and restraints. Constructing a lifeline assists in ordering events, considering family patterns and relationships, and in opening conversations of strengths and potential which serve a person well in making decisions on the journey into the future. Lifelines therefore are most useful as a tool in following a "storied approach" (Brott, 2004, p. 190) to career counselling.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 89–96.

CONSTRUCTING LIFELINES

There are different ways to construct lifelines, often determined by the personality of the client and style of the career counsellor. We have found that combining the lifeline with a genogram is most useful as it provides information on the family constellation, possible hereditary traits and trans-generational themes relevant to the individual's development. Using a genogram for career counselling purposes helps to explore possible motivational factors within family dynamics that could influence the career decision-making process (Gibson, 2005). A genogram is a visual depiction (drawn by hand or graphically developed on computer) that indicates the individual people that form part of the family and the relationships between the respective family members. A variety of symbols may be used to depict the different family members and their relationships (McGoldrick & Gerson, 2008). As chapter eight discusses genograms we will not explain the process of developing genograms, but rather explain how they can be used in conjunction with lifelines through a case study.

After completion of a genogram the career counsellor can introduce the concept of a lifeline by explaining how the past influences the future and that career exploration and choices need to consider the history and past experiences of the client. Gramling and Carr (2004) refer to lifelines as visual depictions and interpretations of an individual's life events in chronological order. By structuring these life events, or critical incidents (Chope, 2005), on a lifeline, the client, together with the career counsellor, can explore to what degree these events influenced his/her career path.

Developing a lifeline in the career counselling session is beneficial to clients who require prompting and guiding questions to assist in the recall process of looking back at their life. There are many ways to create a lifeline and clients should be allowed creative freedom. A basic way of creating a lifeline is to take an A4 piece of paper turned horizontally and draw a horizontal line from left to right in the middle of the page. Another possible way is to jot down major events in a person's life from the top to bottom, working either from birth to current age (past to present) or from the present to the past. In the case illustration, the line drawn was divided into years/ages or life stages (considering the age of the client). Clients can be guided to indicate positive experiences or highlights above the line and negative experiences below the line. The following instruction can be given to the client:

> I would like you to create a lifeline of your life, beginning with your conception, birth, infancy, going through your primary school and secondary school experiences, early adulthood up to where you are now. Your lifeline can be drawn horizontally in the middle of the page on a piece of paper turned horizontally. You can divide your lifeline into years or ages, depending on what works best for you. Then indicate what positive and negative experiences you encountered – you can indicate the highs above and the lows underneath the lifeline.

Some people prefer to develop their lifeline at home and then bring it to a career counselling session where they go through it with the counsellor. This process can save time in terms of drawing the lifeline but the career counsellor needs to take care not to rush through the process of engaging with the lifelines as the client may have overseen important aspects. These will be uncovered through the questioning of the lifeline in an attempt to reveal significant themes pertaining to the career journey. Figure 10.1 provides an example of a lifeline developed at home on a computer.

The lifeline can then be explored by asking the following questions:

- Who were significant role players in each event?
- What is significant about the event?
- What emotions accompanied the event?
- How did the event influence your life?
- What decisions did you make based upon this event, if any?
- What themes do you identify based on your lifeline?
- Where on your lifeline were these themes present?
- What do the themes convey about you as a person?
- How did these themes influence the path of your life's journey?
- What gifts did you receive considering your lifeline that can assist your journey into the future?

After exploring the lifeline with the client the career counsellor can guide the client in reviewing what needs to be done to reframe possible hindering factors, like uncertainty about the future or poor self-esteem, for future career decisions (Chope, 2005). The client can then be asked, taking into consideration identified themes and gifts, to construct their lifeline of the future. The career counsellor can structure this process by asking the client to pay specific attention to factors like housing, education, work or any prominent theme that was identified in the initial lifeline. By providing the client with some form of structure, Thomson and Holland (2002) found that more detailed responses were obtained from the client while constructing a future lifeline. The future lifeline will assist the client in developing realistic goals that can empower them to reach future career aspirations.

The case study of Felix will illustrate how genograms and lifelines are utilised to explore a career trajectory.

CASE STUDY OF FELIX

Felix was 30 years old at the time of exploring his future career prospects. Upon engaging with his genogram, Felix explained that he was the second born of four children. He had a brother, five years older than him and then two sisters, respectively four years and six years younger than him. Felix indicated that their family shared close and loving relationships with each other and their father's family. He originated from a lineage of Shona (the majority and ruling ethnic group in Zimbabwe) sub-chiefs in a rural village in Zimbabwe. His first five years were carefree and he

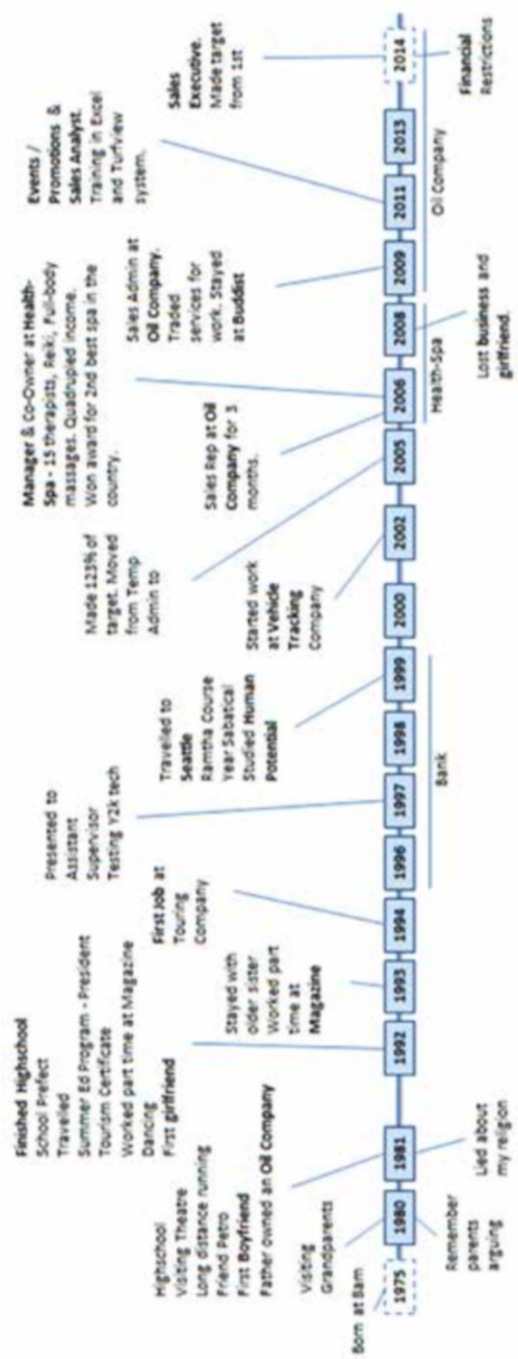

Figure 10.1. Lifeline developed on computer

remembered playing with his cousins in the field (Figure 10.2). The vernacular of the region was Shona.

Shortly after his fifth birthday the family moved from the rural village to an urban community due to his father's work as a fitter and turner for an industrial company. Felix experienced being separated from his extended family as difficult. The urban community was Ndebele (second largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe with whom the Shona tribe has a history of ethnic rivalry) and Felix and his family were subsequently ostracised. He enrolled in primary school at the age of six years and he did well in school, in spite of the fact that he had to learn in a foreign language, with English as the medium of instruction. Maths was however challenging due to the fact that they received corporal punishment if they took too long to provide answers to the teacher's questions. Felix however still managed to do well in maths.

At the age of thirteen years, Felix went to high school and initially attended a boarding school. He missed his youngest sister a lot as they had a special bond and after a year he moved back to his family and attended a private school. He did well in French, Literature and History and was exposed to Science, Commerce and Art and Design during the last two of his formal high school years. During an open careers day in his second last year of school he attended a talk focussing on business and commerce and took a liking to this field as a possible career. His teachers however pushed him to pursue a career in the sciences due to the fact that he excelled in school. A career in business was regarded as inferior to a career in the sciences. During his last year of school and a day before his English exam, his father died unexpectedly. In spite of this, Felix went to write the exam but due to poor scores he was advised to redo the year in order to improve his English marks. After his father's death, Felix's mother and sisters moved closer to Bulawayo and Felix stayed behind with a family member in order to redo his final year. He was seventeen years old at the time. He subsequently enrolled in a college where he completed a three-year electrical engineering qualification. His brother, a mechanic, relocated to South Africa in 2008 due to the unrest in Zimbabwe in order to secure a better job. This was also the year Felix's mother passed away.

Shortly afterwards, Felix also crossed the border in order to secure employment in South Africa. Due to the fact that he struggled to obtain citizenship in South Africa and considering that his qualifications were not recognised in South Africa, he resorted to working as a truck driver and casual worker.

In 2010 and 2012 Felix's two sisters also came to South Africa, seeking employment. His two sisters worked as receptionists / administrative assistants. A turn-around event for Felix was when he was arrested in 2010 for allegedly stealing a truck. Unbeknown to him he was employed by a bogus company who used foreigners as truck drivers with the instruction to take the trucks to indicated drop-off sites where they then had to leave the trucks. This experience left Felix disillusioned and taught him to be wary in terms of suspect employment. He struggled for four years to prove his innocence and was arrested in 2014 again due to the fact that the warrant was not removed from the system. After spending nearly three weeks in jail,

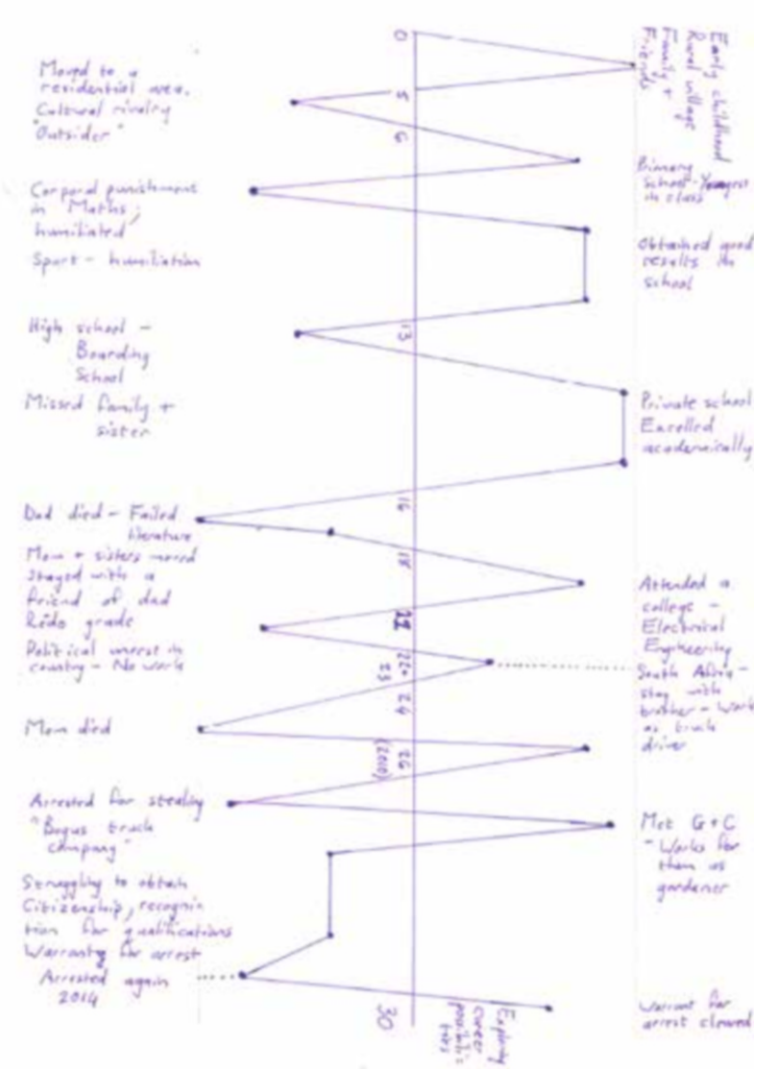

Figure 10.2. The lifeline of Felix

he was released with no criminal record but also no apology. His trust in people has subsequently diminished.

The challenge for Felix's future career trajectory lies in obtaining South African citizenship against a backdrop of xenophobia and also getting his Zimbabwean qualifications recognised. After having experienced disillusionment with unregistered training institutions he began the process of enquiring from

universities regarding diploma courses and short-term learning programmes in commerce or electronics.

Discussion of Felix's Lifeline

By engaging in the genogram and lifeline with Felix it became evident that he possessed considerable resilience and a positive outlook that enabled him to persevere in his pursuit for a better life. He valued family and wanted to render a service to the community. Although the loss of his parents was devastating, he identified his arrest as a turning point in his life. He was previously naïve and too trusting and that experience had taught him to be cautious in whom he placed his trust. He became more determined than ever to fulfil the requirements for citizenship in South Africa and secure a reputable job. He had also realised the importance of the relationships he had made in South Africa that supported him and upon whom he could trust. His lifeline supported his personality profile in terms of being an extrovert governed by sensation and thinking. He enjoyed practical engagement and it had been this quality that had enabled him to earn a living in South Africa. A dominant theme in his lifeline was one of relocation and having to adjust to being an outsider. Felix indicated that his childhood experience of how he had to overcome being an 'outsider' when they relocated to an urban neighbourhood and school in essence had prepared him for his life in South Africa. He was able to think on his feet and his willingness to pursue alternatives was what had enabled him to explore his study options, especially in the field of electronics or commerce, at a variety of tertiary institutes in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

CONCLUSION

Lifelines as a career exploration approach focus on uncovering what meaning the individual makes from past events while considering how these events shaped the person's current and future life. We therefore align ourselves with the words of Steve Jobs (Jackson, 2011, para. 13):

> You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.

Within the postmodern paradigm to career exploration the use of lifelines empowers the client to become an active agent in co-constructing his/her life story (Maree, Bester, Lubbe & Beck, 2001).

This chapter illustrated how, through the use of lifelines, significant events in a client's life can be explored considering the influence it has on a career trajectory and future decisions. We would like to conclude by reminding readers that life stories are often thickly woven together with rich and complex information that shapes the meaning that clients make from their lives. The use of lifelines can assist both

the client as well as the career counsellor to structure these thickly woven stories in order to better explore the story sequence pertaining to significant events and explore the possible impact these events have on future career paths.

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Elzette Fritz
University of Johannesburg
South Africa

Grethe van Zyl
Randburg High
South Africa

ANNAMARIA DI FABIO

11. THE LIFE DESIGN GENOGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Postmodern societies are becoming increasingly complex and unstable at the same time and the world of work is constantly changing (Savickas, 2011). The construction of a professional and life path is placed, therefore, increasingly in the hands of the individual (Savickas, 2011). Career counselling interventions for the 21st century have to shift to embrace the storied approach to counselling (Di Fabio, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014a; Di Fabio & Bernaud, 2014; Di Fabio & Maree, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Hartung, 2013; Maree, 2007; McMahon, 2008, 2010; McMahon & Patton, 2002; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003; McMahon & Watson, 2012; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012; Savickas, 2005, 2013; Watson & McMahon, 2014). The need has emerged for new, valid and effective career assessment and interventions to allow individuals to tell their own story (Savickas, 2005). On the basis of Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005, 2011) and Life Construction Theory (Guichard, 2013), the Life Design Genogram (Di Fabio, 2014b), a qualitative career assessment and intervention for the 21st century, was developed.

Genograms were developed in the field of family therapy (Bowen, 1978) and used to help family members understand intergenerational family influences. Typically, this is done through written depictions and diagrams representing family dynamics (Thorngren & Feit, 2001). The genogram is a procedure of qualitative assessment that can also be used in career interventions (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985). The career genogram applied to career choice is an adaptation of the work of Bowen centred on gathering information regarding occupational choice (Dagley, 1984; Gysbers & Moore, 1987; Okiishi, 1987). The genogram is applied in career intervention as an established form of qualitative career assessment with a proactive role for clients during the process (McMahon, 2008). More recently, the genogram has been considered a postmodern qualitative technique to help clients tell their stories and identify their life and career themes during career intervention (Gysbers, Heppner, & Johnston, 2009). The career genogram can be used for self-development through the integration of past events in a person's life (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). In fact, career genograms can allow people to connect their past to the present to better understand the present and then design the future (Alderfer, 2004). The present chapter aims to describe the Life Design Genogram and provides a case study to better understand its application.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 97–103.

CAREER CONSTRUCTION GENOGRAM

More recently the Career Construction Genogram (Di Fabio, 2012), based on the new Strengthened Career Genogram (Di Fabio, 2010), was developed as a postmodern career assessment and intervention for the empowerment of individuals on the basis of the principles of narrative theory. From this perspective, the genogram is a career assessment instrument providing a structure that enables individuals to give voice to their stories (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2013; Rehfuss, 2009). This narrative assessment and intervention is based on Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005, 2011) and on the fundamental theoretical perspective that clients who seek career counselling have a story to tell and want the career counsellor to become a co-author of the new story. From this perspective, the self is a story that is not defined through a list of traits (Savickas, 2005) because it is unique. So, the subjectivity and the complexity of the contextual influences and relationships from the past to the present are crucial for designing the future storied chapter of the client.

LIFE DESIGN GENOGRAM

Evolving from the Career Construction Genogram (Di Fabio, 2012) is the Life Design Genogram (Di Fabio, 2014b) inspired by the conceptual evolution of career theories in the 21st century. This qualitative assessment and intervention is based on two previous forms of genogram, including the Career Construction Genogram (Di Fabio, 2012).

The second genogram is the Life Genogram (Di Fabio, 2014b), based on Self-Construction Theory (Guichard, 2005), and also in relation to subsequent Life Construction Theory (Guichard, 2013). The Life Design Genogram is anchored in the complexity of postmodern societies, helping individuals to integrate themselves by connecting their different life experiences using narratives from the past through to the present and to the future. This perspective makes sense and meaning of individuals' lives, building future projects based on authentic intentionality (Di Fabio, 2014c).

The Life Design Genogram uses a formula comprising a detailed articulation of levels of reflection of each individual family member focusing on career with the Career Construction Genogram and focusing on life with the Life Construction Genogram. The reflection formula comprises: a) dreams and aspirations of each person who appears in the genogram (jewel case); b) both self-ascribed qualities and qualities attributed to the individual by others (mirror); c) messages handed down explicitly to new generations (letter); and d) personal mottos of each member in the genogram (parchment) expressing implicit vision handed down by the person and his/her motto. At the end of this careful reflection of each family member, clients identify the work and life mottos of each parental line (the father line and the mother line). After this step, clients take time to read the whole production, to reflect carefully and to produce their own authentic work motto and life motto.

Subsequently, clients reflect on whether the two personal mottos are consistent with or different from the familial stimuli and why. Clients can confirm or distance themselves from the parental work and life mottos in the construction of their future based on a strengthened awareness to design their life. According to Savickas (2011), the motto is the best advice that individuals can give themselves for their future, in terms of helping to construct the next chapter of their career and life.

The Life Design Genogram can be used with different groups (e.g., high school and university students, people who are employed and unemployed) to face the transitions and challenges of the 21st century as a storied approach to construct their life. In the Life Design framework individuals are asked to construct rather than choose their own professional and life paths (Savickas, 2011). From this perspective it is essential that individuals develop their own purposeful identitarian awareness (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2014d) and the Life Design Genogram is a concrete help in this regard. The Life Design Genogram can be used both individually and in groups using, for example, the methodology of the audience (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). This innovative methodology is not group work in the traditional sense. The members of the group are considered as participants in individual psychological counselling but at the same time have the opportunity to hear the other participants of the group without intervening. As an audience they are also able to use the individual work that the facilitator does with every other participant in the context of an audience for personal reflection on the self. The power of an audience setting type intervention enables a greater number of clients to access a service that often is too expensive to support in its individual form.

CASE STUDY

The present case study aimed to investigate the usefulness of the Life Design Genogram to facilitate a client in identifying the work and life perspectives handed down by parental lines (motto of the father line and motto of the mother line) and subsequently to elaborate her personal work and life mottos. This personal elaboration is based on a more personal meaning that enabled the client to construct her own professional and personal path in the next chapter of her own life story.

Client Background Information and Context

Francesca (a pseudonym) was a final-year chemical and pharmaceutical technologies student at the University of Florence who asked to participate in a Life Design counselling intervention to assist her in the transition from university to the world of work. Francesca was 24 years old and came from a small town in southern Italy where her family still live. In Italy, the labour market is characterised by instability and economic crisis that is more evident in the regions of Southern Italy (Fletcher, 2013).

Francesca was undecided about what to do after graduating in chemical and pharmaceutical technologies. On the one hand, she wanted to stay in Florence where she had identified a number of internship opportunities but, on the other hand, she wanted to return to where she came from and her family who she missed.

Qualitative Assessment and Intervention

The qualitative assessment through the Life Design Genogram was carried out during a narrative Life Design counselling intervention of five sessions (one hour per session). Francesca's wellbeing was ensured throughout the study. Her informed consent was obtained and full confidentiality was maintained. In addition, Francesca was given feedback by the life design counsellor during the life design counselling intervention.

Discussion of Case Application of the Life Design Genogram

Analysing Francesca's Life Design Genogram, the salient aspects that emerged were firstly the work and life mottos of her parental lines. The work motto from the father's line was "The work allows you to have a place in society" and the work motto from the mother's line was "Always try to find pleasure in the work you do". The life motto from the father's line was "The relationship affect is the most important thing" and the life motto from the mother's line was "First family, then work". Following reflection about the value and the meaning of work and the life mottos of the two parental lines (paternal and maternal), Francesca elaborated her personal motto at work: "Work to discover something new every day".

Subsequently Francesca elaborated her personal life motto as "Wherever you are never forget where you come from". Through the final stimulus, "What will I take away from my Life Design Genogram that is particularly helpful for me to remember?", Francesca elaborated and reflected indepth on her personal work motto and on her personal life motto and on how these mottos are consistent with or different from the mottos of her parental lines. Francesca highlighted that her personal work motto was closer to the maternal line that emphasised the importance of doing work you really like. Francesca also highlighted how the theme of social position and social redemption that came through the father line does not belong completely to her.

Francesca perceived her personal work motto as innovative with respect to the career mottos of the parental lines, specifically her strong desire to know and to discover new things, curiosity that has always characterised herself. On the basis of these elements, Francesca gained greater awareness of how her choice to study chemical and pharmaceutical technologies was fully in line with her deep interest in the continuing search for new things in her work, leading to greater clarity with respect to her next professional step.

With regard to the personal life motto, Francesca recognised the importance for her of affection and family that derived from both the paternal and maternal lines but that the best advice for her was to remain physically distant from her family without forgetting the importance they have for her. Francesca did not intend to abandon her family and her emotional attachment to them, but felt that she could grow them from a distance in order to build her own independent life, being able to actualise and continue to grow. Francesca also reflected on her desire to partially distance herself from the life motto of the maternal line because at that time of her life she considered it important to focus on her professional achievement. It did not mean neglecting the family of origin and her new eventual family which she would like to build. Rather, it was essential for her to balance family and work because she felt a desire for research and discovery and working as essential for her life. This reflection allowed Francesca to get in touch with her Authentic Self (Di Fabio, 2014b, 2014d).

CONCLUSION

The results of the present case study with the application of the Life Design Genogram as a qualitative assessment and intervention are in line with reflections by Savickas (2005, 2010) and by Guichard (2005) that underline the value of narrative processes in self-construction of the individual through a process of continuing construction of one's own stories and through a reflection on the past through to the present in order to construct one's own future (Savickas, 2011). Life Design Genograms can facilitate the construction of clients' new authentic professional and personal chapters for their future by facing and reorganising information from the family of origin on the basis of a new purposeful identitarian awareness and Authentic Self (Di Fabio, 2014c, 2014d) both in a relational perspective (Blustein, 2011) and in a preventative perspective (Kenny & Hage, 2009). The Life Design Genogram is therefore a promising qualitative tool in a narrative framework that underlines the importance of realising the passage from score to story (McMahon, 2008, 2010; McMahon & Patton, 2002).

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Annamaria Di Fabio
University of Florence
Italy

BILL LAW

12. STORYBOARDING AND THE USES OF NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION

The chapter illustrates the uses of narrative in careers-work. The illustration is three-scene storyboarding, designed to link remembered experience to useful reflection. The process is integral to the qualitative assessment of learning. It draws on career studies, cultural theory, and neurology. They signpost a complex but useful appreciation of narrative. 'Inspiring stories', we are told, 'have the power to change lives' and so they do. They also have the power to mislead and deceive. Yet stories are prototypical teaching-and-learning methods: from the earliest times we have learned from saga, legend, myth, biography, poetry, fiction and lyric. This chapter probes the careers-work uses of such tales.

BASIC THINKING

Narrative is sequenced in time, using terms like 'before', 'during' and 'after'. Ricoeur (1998), among the most influential commentators on time and narrative, shows how the inscrutability of time needs the metaphor of narrative. We see time as if it were a movement from past memories, through present experience, towards future anticipations. But cosmology speaks of time in other ways, experience is contradicted by science. Ricoeur claims that the dissonance is endemic to the human condition. This chapter shows he does not exaggerate.

Bruner (1985) is also interested in learning from narrative, and his analysis parallels Ricoeur's. On the one hand, the credibility of a narrative depends on what Bruner calls 'believability' and 'meaning'; on the other, paradigmatic credibility is validated by 'verification' and 'falsifiability'. The former speaks of experience, the latter of reality.

Ricoeur and Bruner make room for a repertoire for career learning. Paradigmatic learning appears - in both curriculum and face-to-face work - as schedules, definitions, databases and psychometrics. All can be analysed and listed. They are good for searching and collating facts, and identifying factors. They set out observations as charts, problem-solving routines, and correlation-based links. By contrast, narratives give voice to preferences, memories and anticipations. They appear in mind-maps showing how a person relates one thing to another. They represent what are seen as 'alike', or 'like me', or 'I like' - and don't like. Most distinctively, a narrative is a sequence recounting one thing leading to another. It features in curriculum as problem-solving, role-playing, simulation and open conversation.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 105–111.

I doubt there is a watertight distinction between the uses of analytic lists and sequencing narratives; they are on a spectrum. And careers workers need to know when to call on each part of that repertoire. But Strawson (2004) entirely rejects part of the spectrum. He speaks of self-deceiving people trapped by falsely-coherent stories. Better, he says, to consider each fact analytically, because narrative is not how to find the truth it is how to miss it. Such forced-choice thinking excludes too much. Epistemologists may shudder, but careers workers are right to take an interest in the muddled recounting of experience. Nonetheless Strawson has a point: careers work needs to understand the scope and limits of what is, after all, anecdote. Storyboarding looks for scope. It is designed for when schedules, definitions, databases and psychometrics do not resonate with experience.

THREE-SCENE STORYBOARDING

A story finds a pattern in experience. It signals what's going on, and what can be done about it. It may confirm things, but it can also surprise. That gives experience a meaning. And finding meaning suggests a purpose. Storyboarding assembles all of this into a specification:

- linking reflective talk to remembered experience;
- using a combination of words and images;
- seeing self both as individual and with others;
- interweaving thoughts and feelings;
- engaging both the content and process of learning;
- inviting a person to be a witness to his or her own life;
- finding turning points and anticipating action.

Users set down an episode that they especially remember. Table 12.1 maps a design for how coverage is processed. A range of completed storyboard examples is available (Law, 2012a). They cover luck, loss, gain, encounter, curiosity, hope and fear. A turning point suggests new points-of-view, wider horizons, some holding on to the past, but also some letting go. The process is then troublesome, part soliloquy and part conversation. The person is becoming a witness to her or his own life. And that can mean that the future need not be like the past. Such a process is necessary to any hope of new insights, changed aspiration, and increased flexibility. Storyboarding is not designed to be scientific it is designed to be meaningful. It is a search for the sense that can be made of experience, and a commitment to act on that sense. It begins with remembering.

Remembering

The brain is widely reported to be as much for forgetting as for remembering (Wood & Byatt, 2008). Much of what we remember is short-lived and most of it is quickly discarded. What we are left with are fragments, not always in the right order and needing drafting and redrafting. The top row in the design invites moving back-and-

forth between the scenes, allowing one memory to call up another, sifting each to essentials, and finding a sequence that makes sense.

Showing

There is an extensive literature on how the past need not predict the future. It points to how flexibility, social mobility and raised aspiration become attainable. Research-based modelling shows how organisms increase their repertoire by evolving more complex ways of dealing with environments (Dennett, 2003). It points to the survival value of a reflexive capacity to re-pattern what is noticed so that more than one explanation is entertained. In narrative terms this is called a 'rounded' story, where more than one resolution is possible.

There is some agreement about the features of narrative roundedness (Abbott, 2002). With people, places, talk, events and meaning featuring, the story is layered. It invites probing beneath the obvious. Its heroes are not all-knowing, its villains not entirely evil, its victims less innocent than they claim. So the story is edgy, argumentative and unpredictable. Such storytelling makes complexity more like a solution than a problem, because the more ways-of-seeing we can imagine, the more ways-of-doing we can engage. That, says Dennett (2003), is not inevitability; he calls it 'evitability'.

Table 12.1. Designing for three-scene storyboarding – content and process

SCENES IN MY LIFE			
Process	*Content*		
	Opening scene *The way things were*	***Big scene*** *Things can change*	***Following scene*** *Things become different*
Remembering Gathering memories and sorting them into the turning-point big scene, and then what comes before and after it			
Showing Settling on what is found to be important assembled in filmic form showing graphic scenes of people, events, locations, talk and thought			
Futuring Anticipating what can be done, where that will be, who will be there, what needs saying and how things will be organised			

Futuring

Recounting experience looks back, career management also looks forward. The one ability is closely related to the other (Wood & Byatt, 2008). But conventional action planning does the process less than justice. Storyboard-based planning needs to set out both how things got this way and to anticipate what can be done about them. A person stops to think and resists distraction, focusing both present meaning and future purpose. Storyboarding is designed to process such mindfulness.

WIDER THINKING

So much for the design of storyboarding. But there are broader issues for all uses of narrative. Three areas of enquiry are particularly useful: career studies, cultural theory and neurology. Each illuminates how narrative enables the navigating of complexity in contemporary career. And they all need what educators do in curriculum.

Career Studies

Career management has been shown to be traceable to early social experience (Roe, 1956). Those experiences have been set in narrative order (Super, 1957). More recently the idea that career can be explained solely in terms of information relevant to employability has been overtaken by research. Among the most significant is ethnography, using narrative forms to show how work roles are rooted in upbringing, informed by relationships and set in social life (Williamson, 2004; Willis, 1977). A meta-analysis of social influences on career management shows how work is undertaken with, for, and in response to other people (Law, 2009). And these more complicated scenarios call for a further meta-analysis showing how career management needs a stage-by-stage sequence of learning (Law, 2010).

However, career-management thinking also draws on psychological constructs (McMahon, 2014). A construct is a subjective internalisation of experience assigning meaning to events (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Although a psychological theory, it is traceable to social interactionism (Reid & West, 2010). Narratives may be biographies recounted by individuals, but they construe events shared by groups. They are therefore contested (Collin & Young, 1992).

Constructs readily take a narrative form. In ‘rounded’ form they can portray inconsistencies, insecurities, and perceived failures. But they can also recount continuity, meaning and purpose (Collin, 2000). Narratives speak of the muddle, helpers need to listen.

Cultural Theory

There is a longer perspective on narrative. Cultural theory has disentangled plot-lines recurring over centuries (Booker, 2004). They crop up in movie scripts as ‘action’,

'chase', 'thriller', 'soap' and 'noir' (Law, 2012b). They make possible a reflection wondering 'which of these is my plot?', and 'need I be stuck with it?'.

It is surprise that engages. Cultural theory refers to 'twists', 'reversals' and 'disruptions' (Edgar, 2009; Jackson, 2007; Wood, 2008). These theorists are talking about what, in storyboarding, are called 'turning points'. A predictable story holds your attention by whizzing you along, an unpredictable story draws you in. The former is less of a learning experience than the latter. Cultural theory allows for what Dennett (2003) identifies as an expanding repertoire for action, and Abbott (2002) calls a rounded story. And it invites change-of-mind, which does not much figure in career studies' decision-making theory.

A culture speaks of shared beliefs, values and expectations. And cultural theory shows that each is narrated differently in different locations. They are called 'social enclaves' (Buonfino, 2007). If work is spoken of differently in different neighbourhoods then careers work has some catching up to do with how trust, interests and gratification differently feature (Eagleton, 2003). Where a culture favours the instinctively impulsive, storyboarding is counter-cultural. It calls for reflection on complexity over time.

Neurology

Career thinking is imported from psychology, economics and sociology. The theories that most dramatically reposition careers-work are neurological (Damasio, 1999). Survival behaviour is characterised as sometimes 'opening up' to stimulus and sometimes 'closing down'. Drawing on clinical evidence, Damasio finds a number of levels at which people respond. The most basic is 'core consciousness', referring to how in all animate life an instinctive impulse is to avoid pain and discomfort. It goes on to show how people incorporate this into a deeper account of what goes on. The metaphor is of 'a movie in the brain'. The evidence supports an image for how impressions are retained in an unfolding account of experience.

The evidence supports more: humans have the ability to locate themselves in that account, becoming audiences to their own stories. Damasio unifies what career studies fragment, by linking a reflective self to a performing self, and locating both in a social setting. His research describes a sense-making process of finding meaning and establishing purpose.

In the resulting dissonance meaning is at least as important as fact. The process relies on narrated memory. Neurological imaging finds at least three ways to remember: semantic memory retains facts-and-factors; procedural memory embodies how-to-do processes; episodic memory holds on to images significant for well-being and survival (Blakemore & Frith, 2005). Careers work is strong on the semantically informative and the procedurally skillful. But the most compelling memories are anecdotally episodic.

CONCLUSION

Careers studies, cultural theory and neurology radically relocate and reframe career work. They speak of variable, changing, multi-layered, complex and contested bases for action. They need unfolding interaction, in group activity calling for the time and space afforded by curriculum. This stage-by-stage learning enables the navigation of contemporary complexity. Curriculum can no longer be regarded as ancillary to face-to-face help. Storyboarding is a curriculum resource.

But the chapter is not a defence of storyboarding, it defends a bigger idea, essential to any qualitative appreciation of learning. Its starting point is the narration of memory. Identity is closely associated with memory (McGaugh, 2003). Lost memories are catastrophic, neglected memories are limiting and recovered memories are liberating.

Though it fails Strawson's (2004) methodological test, Ricoeur's (1998) account of science and experience extends the careers-work repertoire. Methodology is always the servant of the ultimate test, which is validity. Validity shows whether narrative speaks of what it claims or is just noise. It is valid, tested by what emerging methodology calls catalytic validity (Cohen et al., 2000).

Three-scene storyboarding illustrates possibilities. But the wider thinking reframes careers-work. The expertise it draws on, the learning settings it occupies, the research it validates and the partnerships it forges change everything. The term 'paradigm shift' comes to mind.

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Bill Law
The Career-learning Café (www.hihohiho.com)
England

PART 2

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: INSTRUMENTS

B) AUDITORY LEARNING STYLES

We have located chapters in this sub-part of the book that describe instruments which primarily focus on interview processes that we believe supports an auditory learning style.

PAUL J. HARTUNG

13. THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Career Construction Interview (CCI) comprises a qualitative assessment method that forms a central component of career construction counselling. Career construction counselling entails an interpersonal process of helping people author career stories that connect their self-concepts to work roles, fit work into life, and make meaning through work (Savickas, 2011). Using the narrative paradigm, career construction counselling begins with a CCI that comprises six questions; one question each about act (counselling goals), actor (personality, self, or social reputation), agent (manifest interests), author (script for linking self to setting), advice (guidance to self), and arc (central problem or preoccupation). Each question prompts individuals to tell small stories about themselves that convey who they are and who they wish to become. The career counsellor and client collaboratively shape the themes culled from these micro-stories into a macro-narrative about the person's central preoccupation, motives, goals, adaptive strategies, and self-view. In this co-construction process, clients empower themselves to author life-career stories that enhance their experiences of work as personally meaningful and socially useful. They may then use work to actively master what they passively suffer. The present chapter considers the background, content, use, and research evidence in support of the CCI. Readers wanting to learn more about the complete process of career construction counselling may read a definitive book (Savickas, 2011) and chapters (Savickas, 2013; Taber, 2013) as well as study a demonstration of the process (Savickas, 2006).

Background

Sometimes, taking career assessments or tests like interest inventories can be helpful to learn about what kinds of jobs and occupations a person may like and to make choices (for a compendium of such assessments see Wood and Hays, 2013). Career counsellors often use these assessments to help with *matching* people to jobs. While often helpful for identifying college majors or occupations that might fit a person best, such tests usually tell just one part of the whole life story. To understand themselves more completely and how they can use work to be the persons they want to be, it may help for individuals confronting career transitions and choices to think about their whole life story. Knowing and telling one's own life story, or autobiography, adds *meaning* and direction to career plans and decision making

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 115–121.

(Hartung & Taber, 2013; Maree, 2007; Savickas et al., 2009). Increasing the ability to do so forms a central aim of the CCI.

Formerly known as the Career Style Interview (Savickas, 1989) and the Career Story Interview (Savickas, 2011), the CCI offers a different kind of qualitative assessment method because it prompts individuals to tell their life-career stories rather than objectively construe themselves through test scores. Unique among career assessments, the CCI evolved from over 30 years of work by Mark Savickas (1989, 2002, 2011, 2013) to apply career counselling practice to the development of theory; in this case, career construction theory (Savickas, 2002, 2013). Career construction counselling and the CCI in turn follow a rationale based in career construction theory, offer use in diverse settings, and assist individuals to tell, hear, and perform their life-career stories (Savickas, 2011, 2013).

From a narrative perspective, humans make themselves and their worlds through the stories they tell (Bruner, 1987; Ricoeur, 1986; Sarbin, 1986). To best achieve life-career success, then, individuals must create a story about themselves that expresses very clearly who they are as a person, where they would most like to be in the work world, and how they want to use work in a way that best allows them to fully be themselves (Guichard, 2009; Maree, 2007; Savickas, 2002, 2013). To construct such a story, it helps to think of a life-career as an ongoing tale with three main parts: a lead character or self that represents who one is or is becoming, an educational or work setting where a person feels most comfortable, and a script with a plot and a central theme that explains and shows the person how to use work in a way to best realise the self that she or he has constructed. Favourite sayings or mottos support the storyteller in building the confidence needed to construct a career story and early memories indicate the story's fundamental scheme, plot, or character arc that "portrays where the individual started, is now, and wants to end up on some essential issue" (Savickas, 2013, pp. 165-166). This story-construction and storytelling process begins in childhood (Hartung, in press; Savickas, 2013) as individuals first perform in their families of origin as social *actors*, then adapt this performance as *agents* to other contexts like school, work, and community, and ultimately become *authors* of their own life-career narratives. By listening to their own *advice* individuals adapt and move on to subsequent episodes in their stories and by recalling early memories they indicate the *arc* of their character.

Content and Use

As seen in Table 13.1, the CCI contains six questions, one question each about act, actor, agent, author, advice, and arc (Savickas, 2011, 2013). As the client relates self-defining responses to the CCI questions, the career counsellor listens closely, asks follow-up questions, and makes reflective statements to clarify meaning. Counsellor and client then use the CCI responses to co-construct a life-career portrait.

Act. To set the scene for the current act in the client's life-career story, the CCI begins with the question: "How can I be useful to you as you construct your career?" The word 'useful' deliberately places the career counsellor in a supporting role to that of the client who is expert on her- or himself. Answers to this question indicate the client's counselling agenda and goals. This includes the client's perception of the current problem, goals for solving it, and the solution they already are thinking about. Relating the answers to this initial question to the responses made to all the five subsequent questions keeps clients mindful of their stated problem and the extent to which they believe they have addressed it.

Actor. To indicate the reputation of the actor in the story, the second question asks: "Who did you admire when you were growing up? Tell me about her or him." Asking clients to describe three role models, either real people or fictionalised characters, recognises that selves are multiple constructed. Unlike parents, role models are deliberately chosen because they share a dilemma similar to the client's own and show a way to solve the problem. As clients describe their role models they describe

Table 13.1. Content of the Career Construction Interview

QUESTION	*PURPOSE*	*PART OF THE STORY*
How can I be useful to you as you construct your career?	Elicit counselling goals	**ACT**
Who did you admire when you were growing up? Tell me about her or him.	Portray the self, or reputation	**ACTOR**
What are your favourite magazines, TV shows, or web sites? What do you like about them?	Indicate manifest interests, preferred work settings in which to enact self	**AGENT**
What is your current favourite book or movie? Tell me the story.	Links self to setting	**AUTHOR**
Tell me your favourite saying or motto.	Offers support and strategies for constructing next episode in the story	**ADVICE**
What are your earliest recollections? I am interested in hearing three stories about things you recall happening to you when you were three to six years old, or as early as you can remember.	State the central pre-occupation or problem	**ARC**

themselves. They tell about who they are and wish to become, their central life goal, and solutions to their main life problem.

Agent. Eliciting manifest interests, strivings, and adaptive activities, the third question asks: "What are your favourite magazines, TV shows, or web sites? What do you like about them?" Manifest interests as reflected in these vicarious environments indicate settings in which individuals actively immerse themselves. Asking about favourite magazines, shows, and web sites elicits stories about preferred educational and occupational environments. These stories tell where the client as an agent, or manager of their own career story, wants to enact their self-concept.

Author. Linking self as actor to setting as agent, the fourth question asks: "What is your current favourite book or movie? Tell me the story." The story is chosen because it contains a plot resembling the client's own principal problem, preoccupation, or pain. The client feels drawn to it because it offers a life script for successfully dealing with a core problem and includes a central character who constitutes an ideal self. The script connects the client's self-concept and preferred work environments into a life plan that the client can author.

Advice. To elicit self-advice, the fifth question asks: "Tell me your favourite saying or motto." The answer indicates the best inner wisdom and guidance the client has for dealing with life's problems. A favourite saying or motto offers self-advice. In it, clients tell themselves how to deal with their central life problems and become more complete.

Arc. Revealing the central preoccupation, the final question asks: "What are your earliest recollections? I am interested in hearing three stories about things you recall happening to you when you were three to six years old, or as early as you can remember." Early memories provide the most precise and clear indication of the client's central life problem, preoccupation, and pain. From all of the possible events that can be recalled, the client typically selects those most relevant to their current situation. The goal here is not to determine the historical facts of the stories, but rather to understand a person's self-perceptions and patterns of interacting with the world. And the career counsellor "wants to hear today's stories, not exhume buried memories" (Savickas, 2011, p. 34). The counsellor prompts the client to tell three early childhood memories that the person recalls in the present moment because they indicate the character arc, or central plot of the person's life.

Life portrait. Using the answers to the CCI shapes a larger narrative that tells the career story with greater clarity and comprehension. This process aims to promote understanding of the client's prevailing problem (arc), chosen solution (actor),

preferred setting (agent), workable script (author), and action plan (advice). In turn, re-constructing clients' life stories aims to increase narrative identity, or who clients are as the lead characters in their own life-career stories, where in the world of work they would most like to be who they are, and what they believe it will take to connect themselves to possible work settings. Having shaped the themes and patterns culled from the CCI micro-stories into a macro-narrative about the core problem or preoccupation, motives, goals, adaptive strategies, and self-view, attention turns to action. Reflecting on the career story leads to setting goals for the next episode of the life-career. This involves constructing a formula for success and making a realistic plan to put the story into action. Telling and talking about the career story and the conclusions drawn from the counselling process with valued audiences promotes making it more real and clear and feeling more confident in living it. Performing the story by identifying specific action to take increases exploration, commitment, and goal attainment.

Use. The CCI is designed primarily for use by a career counsellor within the bounds of a professional relationship with a client. To expand its reach and offer counsellors supplementary materials for use in career construction counselling, the My Career Story workbook (MCS; Savickas & Hartung, 2012) was developed. Research suggests that workbooks like the MCS offer an effective means of career intervention to improve career planning and choice (Brown et al., 2003).

Empirical Support

A number of published case studies support the efficacy and use of the CCI. For example, the CCI has been found useful for assisting clients in selecting a college major (Savickas, 2013), fostering career decision-making among adults (Savickas, 2006, 2009; Taber, Hartung, Briddick, Briddick, & Rehfuss, 2011), and counselling an adult seeking career direction in the face of uncertainty as a contract worker (Taber & Briddick, in press). The effectiveness of the CCI in these case study demonstrations underscores the usefulness of narrative interventions in helping people to create meaningful occupational futures (Bujold, 2004).

Additionally, qualitative research has examined the usefulness of the CCI from client and career counsellor perspectives. A qualitative study with 18 client-counsellor dyads using the CCI reported that, as a result of the intervention, clients attained greater career awareness, self-confidence, sense of direction, and confirmation that they were on the right career path (Rehfuss, Del Corso, Glavin, & Wykes, 2011). Another qualitative study examined the usefulness of the CCI as a career counselling technique from the perspective of 34 counsellors trained in conducting the interview (Rehfuss, Cosio, & Del Corso, 2011). The results indicated that career counsellors using the CCI found it helpful in working with clients to identify life themes and make meaningful career decisions.

CONCLUSION

The Career Construction Interview (CCI) aims to help clients tell, hear, and enact their life-career stories. By turning to qualitative career assessment in the form of narrative models and methods like the CCI, career counsellors assist clients to achieve life-designing goals of narratability – to know and tell one's life-career story coherently, adaptability – to cope with changes in self and situation, intentionality – to design a meaningful life, and activity – to put one's life-career story into action.

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Paul J. Hartung
Northeast Ohio Medical University
United States of America

PETER MCILVEEN

14. MY CAREER CHAPTER AND THE CAREER SYSTEMS INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Writing an autobiography is not an easy task and the process does not come naturally for all clients. In my career counselling practice I have found that some clients do not know how to start or what to write about. It seems ironic that the one person who knows the most about himself/herself finds it challenging to write a personal life story. Thus, this chapter provides an introduction to the qualitative career assessment and counselling procedure My Career Chapter (MCC; McIlveen, 2006). MCC is a semi-structured procedure that entails the client writing a brief autobiographical narrative—a chapter—of his/her life. This chapter also provides an overview of the semi-structured interview that accompanies MCC, the Career Systems Interview (CSI; McIlveen, 2003)[1]. Both CSI and MCC operationalise the Systems Theory Framework of career development (STF; Patton & McMahon, 2014). Furthermore, for the purposes of MCC's conceptual principles and administration, the key elements of narrative career counselling are taken to be: subjectivity and meaning; facilitated self-reflection; elaboration of self-concepts; collaborative process; and open-ended story (McIlveen & Patton, 2007). When using MCC, the counsellor should aim to operationalise all of these elements of narrative career counselling.

Administration of the CSI

There are three key dimensions of the CSI. First, the career counsellor should collect sufficient information so as to develop an initial formulation of the presenting issue. Second, the client should experience the interview as a relaxed conversation. Third, talking about the *influences* identified in the STF should be used as a reflective exercise by the client so as to provide a preparatory scaffold for him/her to write his/her autobiography in MCC, or to use other career assessment procedures. The CSI begins with the usual rapport-building questions (e.g., What brings you here today?) and then proceeds through the main interview that touches on all of the influences identified in the STF. At an early stage of the interview, I refer the client to the STF diagram (Patton & McMahon, 2014) and explain that nowadays it is important to take a holistic view of one's career. This is a useful 'warm-up', rapport-building activity because it provides clients with an opportunity to understand my perspectives as a career counsellor.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 123–128.

The CSI questions progress from the outside of the STF to the inside; that is, from the environmental-societal influences, through to the social influences, and then to the interpersonal and intrapersonal influences. Beginning with ostensibly impersonal matters before progressing to more intimate matters builds rapport. For example, in my culture in rural Australia, it is important to know where a person hails from because it is a way of connecting with other rural people. This ethic of rural conversation arises from the vast distances (and hours of travel) between people who live in rural Australia and a need to psychologically close the distance. This often extends to a brief discussion of who one knows in a particular town. Also, particularly for indigenous Australians, it is important to know where one hails from with respect to family ties. Therefore, in this situation, it is appropriate to begin the CSI with a discussion of environmental-societal influences with questions, such as: Are you a local? Where do you come from? Would you like to work in a rural area or in a city? Although the CSI has a list of recommended questions, these are not to be taken as hard-and-fast. The aforementioned questions may seem rather bizarre to a person who is not familiar with such localised cultural nuance; therefore, the career counsellor should present questions that ostensibly seem most relevant to the client.

The CSI may be amended according to the ebb and flow of the interview. Remember: It's a conversation not an interrogation. Sensitive matters (e.g., finances, sexuality) may be raised and elaborated at a later stage when rapport has been sufficiently developed and depending on their pertinence to the focus and themes of the counselling. In my experience, it has not been unusual for clients to ask, "Why do you want to know that? What has that got to do with my career?" These questions are usually not raised in a resistant manner or out of chagrin that boundaries of decency had been crossed; instead, the questions are raised out of sheer curiosity and puzzlement as to why career counselling would need to cover matters pertaining to relationships, for example. Therein rests one of the pernicious stereotypes of the division of work and non-work lives, and career and personal counselling.

At this juncture in the interview, the STF comes to the fore as a framework for career development learning. Patton and McMahon (2014) refer to the notion of *decentring* career, that of engaging in a process of understanding career as more than an entity that lives within the boundary—the skin—of an individual (and this reframing of career equally applies to scholar, practitioner, and client alike). I present a print copy of the STF diagram (see Figure 14.1) on which I draw lines to connect influences with one another and provide further explanation to the client that, although career counselling does indeed focus on knowledge, skills, and interests (the traditional grist), contemporary career counselling also focuses on a person's interpersonal world and the bigger picture of society and the environment. This is an important rapport building exercise because it demystifies the career counselling process and allows the client to affirm the boundaries he/she wishes to maintain in the counselling which is empowering for client and counsellor.

Upon completing the CSI, the career counsellor must make a judgement regarding the next phase of career assessment. This may entail consideration of whether there is a need to extend the interview process to explore some of the influences in more detail in

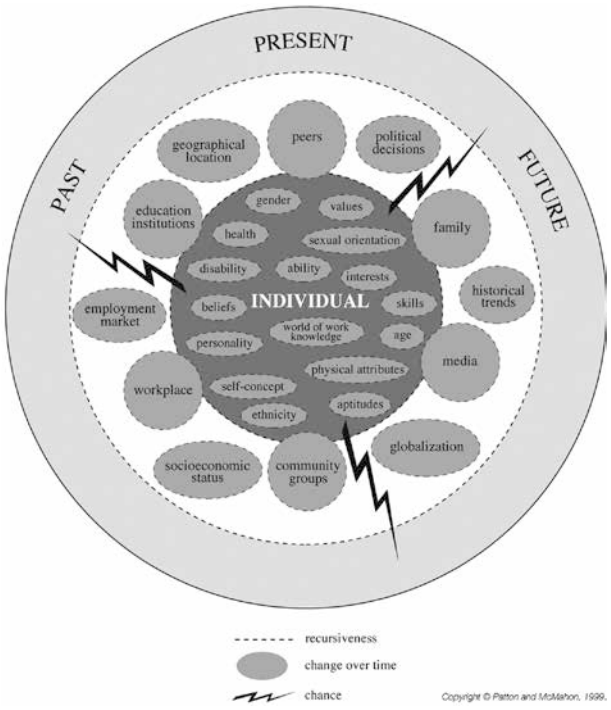

Figure 14.1. The Systems Theory Framework of career development

the next session. A crucial decision is to determine whether proceeding to MCC would be of any value to the client. Part of this judgement includes consideration of whether other career assessment procedures may be more useful at that particular point in time or whether the client has sufficient interest in a narrative approach to counselling.

Administration of MCC

MCC may be administered electronically or written by hand. In the case of electronic administration, the word processor version of MCC is emailed to the client. In either case, I first show the client a print copy of MCC, literally flicking through each page explaining how to use MCC. MCC progresses by steps and there are seven. Each step is a scaffold for the next. All steps do not need to be completed in one sitting.

Step 1: Some warm-up questions. The first activity requires the client to answer a series of questions with the instruction to not spend too much time on each and to write brief notes if required. Each question is a stimulus for thinking about a career influence (e.g., What are your friends doing and how do their choices affect you?). Step 1 serves as a reminder of the discussion that transpired in the CSI.

Step 2: Pondering the big picture. This activity prepares the client to decentre the influences of his/her career; that is, to consider influences beyond the intrapersonal. A picture of the STF is provided along with a very brief rationale for the activity, suggesting that the world-of-work and career is made up of multiple, multilayered influences. The client is instructed to consider each influence for a few moments and to write notes if required.

Step 3:Compatibility of personal and environmental-social influences. To further the decentring process, the client is asked to rate the level of compatibility and incompatibility among his/her personal influences (e.g., interests, skills, values, health, morals) with respect to his/her wider influences (e.g., workplace, peers, family, job market, media). The influences are laid out as a grid with personal influences down the left (y-axis) and environmental-societal influences across the top (x-axis). In each cell that intersects the client is to enter a score between -2 (very incompatible) through to +2 (very compatible), with 0 indicating neither compatible nor incompatible.

Step 4: Writing the manuscript. Having completed the preparatory, decentring work, the client now writes the manuscript of his/her autobiographical chapter. The writing entails a sentence-completion process (cf., Loevinger, 1985). Each influence in the STF is represented by five sentence stems and the client is to complete each. There is a stem for writing about the past, present, and future. Also, there is a sentence stem that represents the impact of the influence and one that represents its emotional valence, and the client must also rate the strength of impact and emotion. Here is an example using the influence of family:

- There was a time when my family …
- My family says that …
- I expect that my family …
- I mostly feel very positive /positive/indifferent/negative/very negative in relation to my family because …
- Family has a very positive/positive/neutral/negative/very negative impact upon my career life because …

The client is instructed to take his/her time and that there is no need to hurry, and to refer back to the previous activities in Steps 1 to 3 if necessary.

Step 5: Proof reading to yourself and back again. Now that the client has written the bulk of the manuscript, he/she engages in a process that is described as ‘proof reading’. This stage is based on the model of meaning-making given in the theory of dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993). There are two important tenets of this model that are directly related to the administration of MCC. First, it is possible for a person to generate different voices, or I-positions, for each influence—thus the importance of the decentring process. Second, it is

possible for a person to generate dialogue between those different I-positions and thus reflexively create meaning. The client is instructed to imagine himself/herself as five years younger and then read aloud the manuscript to that younger person (i.e., an imagined I-position). Next, the client takes on the role of the younger person. Then, the younger person writes editorial feedback to the older person in response to hearing the story.

Step 6: The conclusion. To complete the feedback loop—the dialogue—the current (older) client writes a conclusion in response to the younger person's feedback. This three-way process (i.e., older to younger, younger to older, older to younger) is an important operationalisation of the theory of dialogical self. Finally, the client writes about his/her strengths, obstacles, and the future.

Step 7: Final reading to a confidante. The client is now encouraged to read the manuscript to a person he/she trusts. Again, the reading to another person engages the three-way process of meaning-making.

Interpretation of MCC in Career Counselling

The interpretation of MCC in career counselling involves three important processes: reading the manuscript aloud; highlighting themes; and converging on meaning. Begin the interpretation process with a discussion around the client's reactions to using MCC and their initial impressions of themes that were discerned in his/her story. Read the manuscript aloud to the client and while reading highlight text that seems to go toward a theme. Field research has shown that clients find the reading process quite positively confronting (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2008). In my experience, it is not unusual for clients to express emotionally that it is moving to hear their own words read aloud, as if being heard for the first time. Periodically stop and discuss points of interest with the client, particularly if he/she makes a comment or shows an emotional reaction to a particular topic.

Upon finishing the reading, talk with the client about the text that was highlighted as a potential theme. At this initial stage of interpretation, it is important to come to an agreement on what are the main themes of the story. In this way, both client and career counsellor converge. Not all themes need elaboration; however, the client and career counsellor should discuss in detail those major themes that converge with the client's presenting problem. This work may take several sessions (e.g., three interpretive interviews, McIlveen & du Preez, 2012). The client should keep his/her copy of MCC and bring it to each counselling session. The themes agreed between career counsellor and client can be used to indicate other career assessment procedures, qualitative or psychometric. But, it is most important that the interpretation of other assessment procedures be reflected on using the themes derived from MCC, and there is a focus on future oriented actions toward resolving the client's concerns.

Application of MCC

The CSI and MCC were designed for career counselling with adults and mature adolescents (e.g., college and university students). Clinical research with clients has demonstrated that the clients respond positively to the two procedures (McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock, & Hjertum, 2003; McIlveen et al., 2008). Furthermore, research into career counsellors' experiences of MCC found it to be an ethically safe tool for use in career counselling (McIlveen, 2007) and that it had potential for use with younger adolescents (McIlveen, Patton, & Hoare, 2007). Current research and development aims to create a shorter version of MCC.

NOTE

[1] Electronic copies of MCC and CSI are available free of charge from the author.

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Peter McIlveen
University of Southern Queensland
Australia

BARBARA BASSOT

15. THE CAREER THINKING SESSION: CHALLENGING LIMITING ASSUMPTIONS IN CAREER COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION

Many might say that taking the time to think in today's hectic world is a luxury that we simply cannot afford. With the speed of change and constant activity that technological advances bring, it is easy to feel that there is no time to pause for thought. This chapter proposes a qualitative model for career assessment that asks people to do just that. It requires highly tuned listening skills on the part of the career counsellor and offers clients space to think about their future.

This chapter introduces the model of the Career Thinking Session (CTS). The background to the model is discussed and the model itself is described and explained. Its unique aspects, in particular the model's emphasis on challenging limiting assumptions in relation to self and career, are explored. The case study of Shirley is then presented and analysed, showing how limiting assumptions can be challenged effectively to enable people to think about themselves and their circumstances differently. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the constraints of the model in relation to practice and focuses on the need for further research to assess the model's potential for use in career counselling contexts.

BACKGROUND

In 2007, a good friend (Shirley – a pseudonym) introduced me to Kline's (1999) book, *Time to think*. Here Kline presents a model, offering a structure and detailed analysis of what she terms the Thinking Session. Kline developed the model during her years of practice in human resource management and organisational development. My initial impression was that I felt that it had something quite different and special to offer to career counselling theory and practice. In particular it resonated with my academic and professional interest in critically reflective practice in relation to challenging assumptions. At this point, as well as being friends, Shirley and I had also established an informal mentoring relationship and would meet each year to discuss our goals and plans for the coming year. This particular year we decided to try out the six steps in Kline's Thinking Session as part of this process.

Following the publication of a book chapter (Reid & Bassot, 2011) research into the CTS began in 2010 as part of the ERASMUS 'NICE' (the Network for Innovation

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 129–134.

in Career Counselling and Counselling in Europe) where we were able to examine innovative approaches to career counselling theory and practice. This resulted in a pilot study in 2011 to test the model and to develop it further. As part of this I asked Shirley if we could meet to reflect on her memories of the session we had in 2007, and to think about its impact on her career development. This chapter focuses on the CTS with Shirley, discussed later in the chapter in the form of a case study.

CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND CHALLENGING OUR ASSUMPTIONS

From the point of view of professional practice, as well as reflecting on our experiences of work and encouraging us to improve and develop our practice, critically reflective practice asks us to question our assumptions, or those things that we take for granted (Thompson & Thompson, 2008), and cautions against accepting things at face value. It encourages a deeper examination of issues, which is essential when working in a client-centred and impartial way. In particular it is vital when seeking to avoid issues of stereotyping in career counselling, which is necessary when promoting equality.

Argyris's (1982) Ladder of Inference provides a useful explanation of how assumptions are made. The seven steps on the Ladder show that we experience situations, observe selectively, add meanings which become part of our assumptions and beliefs about how we see the world. He argues that when similar situations occur, we tend to jump to observe selectively, seeing what we want or expect to see, thereby reinforcing our assumptions.

Mezirow (1978; 1981) describes seven levels of reflectivity which help us to examine how we approach people and situations, in particular the assumptions we might make as a result of past experiences. These levels include engaging with our feelings about situations, questioning whether our perceptions are accurate and recognising when we are quick to make judgements about people based on our cultural and psychological assumptions. By examining our thinking at each level, we can begin to question our assumptions, in particular whether they are accurate or not. This process enables us to challenge our assumptions where we feel they are not justifiable.

THE CTS MODEL

Like Kline, when discussing the CTS model the term Listener is used here for the career counsellor and the term Thinker for the client. This is in order to emphasise the collaborative nature of the process. For the Listener, each step of the process involves listening attentively, waiting patiently for the Thinker to express their thoughts and not accepting what the Thinker says 'at face value' but questioning the assumptions they may be making. The CTS has the following six steps.

Step 1. 'What do you want to think about?' Here the Thinker expresses the thoughts and issues they have brought to the CTS. It is particularly important that the Listener does not rush in and try to move forward with the first idea that the Thinker presents, particularly because it is likely that this will be at a fairly superficial level of thinking. The Listener also needs to resist the temptation to move too quickly to solutions. It is important to emphasise here that such solutions would undoubtedly emanate from the Listener's perspectives and not from those of the Thinker; this could result in little by way of change. Step 1 involves waiting for the Thinker to speak (as do the other steps), patiently interjecting when appropriate with positive comments and supplementary open questions to encourage them to think more deeply about any related issues. Once the Thinker has finished speaking and has nothing else to add, they are ready to move on to Step 2.

Step 2. 'What do you want to achieve from the rest of the session?' This is an opportunity for the Thinker to express their goals and desired outcomes from the CTS. Again it is important that the Listener waits for the Thinker to respond. Examples of many possible responses from Thinkers in relation to issues of career could include such things as 'to understand more about the future', 'to gain greater clarity in relation to my future work', 'to explore how I can be more confident at work' or 'to think about adjusting my work-life balance'.

Step 3. 'What are you assuming is stopping you from achieving your goal?' This encourages the Thinker to begin to think about their limiting assumptions. Kline (1999) identifies three types of limiting assumptions: facts such as 'I don't have the required qualifications'; possible facts such as 'my family would not be supportive'; and bedrock assumptions about self and how life works, such as 'I won't be able to do that because I'm not good enough' or 'people like me don't do that'. Bedrock assumptions are deep rooted and will often take time to come to the surface. Often they act as barriers to career development and undermine a person's confidence and self-esteem. These assumptions develop over long periods of time and are so significant that they inform our beliefs and what we see as 'true'. Identifying the bedrock assumption in Step 3 is vital. It lies beneath fact and possible fact assumptions. The Thinker needs time to identify and articulate it and may in some situations be reticent to do so. It is vital that the Listener recognises the bedrock assumption and remembers it.

Step 4. 'If you knew that, what ideas would you have towards your goal?' Here the Listener asks the Thinker to find the positive opposites to their limiting assumptions. The ultimate goal in Step 4 is to enable the Listener to design the Incisive Question in relation to their bedrock assumption. Some of the positive opposites in relation to the examples shown in Step 3 could be, 'if you knew you could take a course to get the required qualifications' (fact), 'if you knew that people in your family

would support you' (possible fact), 'if you knew you were good enough' (bedrock) or 'if you knew people like you do' (bedrock). Such questions encourage the Thinker to challenge their limiting assumptions and can help them begin to alter their perspectives. It is important to emphasise that the Thinker needs to articulate these questions in their own words, as limiting assumptions are also particular to the individual concerned, based on how they see the world, not how the Listener sees it. The Listener needs to encourage the Thinker to choose the most appropriate words for the positive opposites. In Step 4 the Listener asks the Thinker to identify the positive opposite to their bedrock assumption and to state this in relation to their goal for the session. This forms the Incisive Question, described as such because it cuts through the limiting bedrock assumption, removing it and replacing it with a new, freeing assumption. This releases the Thinker to think positively about their goal and their future.

Step 5. Writing down the Incisive Question. The Incisive Question is so important it needs to be written down. Unless this is done the danger is that it will be forgotten and that discussion in the CTS could lose its focus and positive impetus. It must be written in the Thinker's own words. The Listener then poses the Incisive Question a number of times, until the Thinker has voiced all their new positive ideas in relation to their goal.

Step 6. Appreciation. This is unusual and could be unexpected for many career counsellors and clients. Sharing limiting assumptions is sensitive and challenging; it demands trust and openness on both sides. Kline (1999) states that "Appreciation keeps people thinking" (p. 62); this last step asks both participants to share a positive quality found in each other that they have valued during the session. This is with a view to encouraging the Thinker to continue to focus on the positives in relation to themselves and their future and to keep thinking once the CTS has finished.

SHIRLEY

Shirley's professional background is in human resource management. For several years she ran a graphic design company in partnership with her husband. After the company folded due to the impact of a recession, Shirley had to look for work and found an administrative post in a Christian organisation. She worked for them for 15 years, progressing to Assistant Director and head of human resources. Over time she became Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualified.

At the time of the CTS in 2007, Shirley was finding work extremely challenging, in particular she was experiencing difficulties working for a new chief executive, whose ways of working were very different from hers. She wanted to think about her future, in particular whether to stay in the organisation or to start working in a freelance capacity. Working freelance was an idea that had appealed to her for some time for a range of reasons, but it was also something she was very unsure about.

Remembering the detail of the CTS was difficult, but Shirley's memory was very clear about some aspects of it. In particular she spoke of the session as "the gift of time to think" and how the CTS helped her to reframe some of the barriers she was facing by challenging some of her limiting assumptions. During Step 3 of the CTS Shirley was able to articulate some of her anxieties about starting to work in a freelance capacity. She saw working in this way as "me in my dining room" (possible fact) and expressed concerns about isolation (possible fact) and no longer being part of a team (fact). Of particular significance was her view that it would not be financially viable for her and her husband to work in a freelance capacity (possible fact) and this would make being freelance impossible for her (bedrock assumption).

In Step 4 we co-constructed the positive opposite to one of the possible facts: "if you knew that your husband was not going to continue freelancing, what difference would that make?" Shirley spoke of this as follows: "it allowed me to think about it. There was magic in that question, there was flexibility – suddenly a barrier was no longer there. It gave me permission to think about it for the first time." She spoke of freedom to think differently; this was a clear example of how the CTS process can begin to cut through a person's limiting assumptions and enable them to think about the future more positively. Similarly, in response to one of several supplementary questions in Step 4 "if you knew you could be freelance, how would that change things?" she replied it would make me feel "confident".

Reflecting on the impact of the CTS, Shirley spoke of it as a vehicle for thinking about the future in a different way: "After the Thinking Session I felt prepared to give it (freelance) a go. It gave me freedom, a different mind-set, a different attitude, way of thinking … (it) changed my perception of my ability to do this." She felt that it gave her "more of an abundant attitude" and greater self-confidence. Following the CTS she said she began to feel "able to sell my wares."

Shirley raised the issue of the lack of focus on action planning in the CTS and initially we both questioned this. However, we also both agreed that it might have been too early in the thinking process to consider this. Having more time to think things through before taking action felt beneficial, whereas a discussion about possible action could have closed the discussion down, leading to the possibility of drawing to a premature conclusion that it could all be too difficult after all. Interestingly, neither of us remembered the Incisive Question. Within a year of the CTS taking place, Shirley's husband unexpectedly went into employment and she left her organisation and began to work in a freelance capacity.

APPLICATION TO PRACTICE

Work on the CTS model is still in its early stages and it is too early to say how helpful it could be in practice. However, Shirley's case shows that it could be useful when people are considering a major career change. Here an examination of limiting assumptions could help clients to reframe their existing understandings

about themselves and their possible futures, in order to begin to move forward with their lives.

Utilising the CTS in career counselling undoubtedly presents challenges, particularly in contexts where time is at a premium and solutions and outcomes are expected. It is clear that the CTS cannot be rushed and needs to take place in a comfortable, undisturbed and confidential setting. In some aspects the CTS appears similar to other 'staged' or process models for intervention (for example, Egan, 2007; Reid & Fielding, 2007). However, there are also some very clear differences; in relation to challenging limiting assumptions it appears to be unique in this field.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the CTS model, which is in the early stages of its development. Based on this initial study, it seems that the CTS might have something to offer to career counselling as a method of qualitative career assessment; indeed potentially it could have something unique to offer in relation to enabling clients to challenge their limiting assumptions. However, for this to be shown, more research is needed for its potential to be assessed more accurately. It is clear that one model will never meet the needs of all clients, but at this stage it seems likely that the CTS could be useful for some. Identifying which particular individual clients would benefit from it will continue to be part of the professional skills and judgement of the career counsellor concerned.

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Barbara Bassot
Canterbury Christ Church University
England

JACOBUS G. (KOBUS) MAREE

16. THE EARLY RECOLLECTIONS TECHNIQUE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the use of the early recollections technique as a qualitative career assessment during career counselling. First, I discuss the theoretical background to the technique and then the groups who could use the technique to help them identify major life themes and advise themselves on career-life questions. Next I explain what the technique entails and how it could be applied in practice on the basis of a case study. I conclude that the technique offers a promising strategy for career intervention counselling.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE TECHNIQUE

Career Construction Counselling

Savickas (2009a) blended the psychodynamic approach with differential and developmental approaches to career counselling to help clients redesign their lives when circumstances impose change on them and they face repeated transitions. His approach (i.e., career construction) includes the use of the early recollections technique in career counselling, which has been found to be useful in helping clients find meaning in life as they draw upon their life stories (i.e., apply biographical reasoning) to find holding environments and achieve success in life. Manifest recollections often represent dormant, emotionally loaded experiences (Freud, 1910/1957). Dreikurs (1923) maintains that a person's earliest recollections always have meaning and reveal his or her life style. Manifest memories represent the story of a person's life (Adler, 1937; Androutsopoulou, 2013). Seen from this perspective, early recollections often indicate the progression of events that constitute clients' career-life stories (Adler, 1931, 1937).

When career counsellors listen to clients' early recollections, they try to identify major life themes in them. Every story has linear incidents (plot) and underlying themes (timelines). Career counsellors have to identify clients' pain and pre-occupations and help them "actively master what they have passively suffered" (Savickas, 2011, p. 33). Clients' current career counselling questions have to be fitted into the larger pattern of meaning in their lives (Savickas, 2009b). Savickas (2009a, b) maintains that people use their stories to 'hold' themselves, to deal with change in their lives. Career counsellors' main aim is thus to help clients tell and listen to their

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 135–141.

own stories, identify their life themes and actualise these life themes in their work so that they can use work to heal others and, in the process, themselves too.

POTENTIAL CLIENT GROUPS AND USE OF THE TECHNIQUE

Use of the Technique

Career counsellors are reminded that it is unwise and actually unethical to adopt an all-knowing attitude when interrelating with clients in career counselling contexts. Clients, ultimately, have to find advice or guidance from within, build on their own strengths and turn their weak points into strong points.

Advantages of the early recollections technique. Early recollections can be used both as part of an assessment and as a clinical instrument in career counselling (Androutsopoulos, 2013). They promote independence (clients need to make sense of the content of these recollections and then embark on self-initiated action), they can be used to embrace and transcend natural resistance to change, and they can prevent clients from using their customary means of controlling relationships. Moreover, recollections promote flexibility and creativity, and the use of 'headlines' or labels to express the essence (main theme) of these 'stories' (recollections) helps counsellors and clients extract clients' major life themes.

Functions of recollections. Three early recollections (Maree, 2014) are requested from clients and used to gather information and transform career theory into practice. The numerous loose 'dots' that constitute their life stories are thus connected (Savickas, 2011). While the first recollection is linked to clients' 'central life problem', the second and third recollections are normally associated with subconscious solutions to clients' central life problems – their own advice from within, so to speak. That said, the second recollection (story) may sometimes either confirm these problems or (like the third recollection) propose a solution to the problems.

These seemingly simple stories (recollections) are deeply profound and can help career counsellors guide clients towards identifying their preoccupations which are polar in nature (located on the opposite ends of an opposing concept). We, as career counsellors, use the thesis and antithesis paradigm. Every thesis has an antithesis just as everything in life has contrasting parts (contradictions). Our task is to help clients turn their pain into healing, hope and happiness first and then into social contributions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TECHNIQUE

Career counselling sessions should commence with the counsellor asking the client: "How can I be useful to you?" Likewise, sessions should be concluded by returning to this question (Savickas, 2011). The question regarding early recollections should

ideally be asked only once an atmosphere of trust has been established between career counsellor and client.

The early recollections question is typically asked in the following manner: "What are the first things you remember about your life? I am interested in hearing three stories about things you recall happening to you when you were young." (In most cases, clients will be willing to talk about things that happened later in their lives, and counsellors should respect and accept their preference.) The client's response should be carefully noted and written down. The first verb used is of special importance as it reveals action – the client's thematic, repeated motion or way of moving in the world.

Kopp and Dinkmeyer (1975) maintain that clients should be asked about a specific incident at a given time that stands out for them. Clark (2002), too, argues that counsellors should distinguish between recollections and reports, which indicate either a single or a repeated event (such as "We always went to our farm on a Sunday afternoon"). Sweeney (1975) recommends that counsellors should determine whether clients are active or passive, give or take, observe or participate, and whether they are alone or with others. The kind of emotion that characterised the event, whether colour (indicating a sense of creativity) (Sweeney & Myers, 1986) and detail are used, and the existence of feelings of inferiority or superiority, for instance, should also be clarified. Repeated words or expressions should be noted carefully. Once clients have recounted their recollections or stories, the career counsellor says: "Let us now pretend that each of these stories will appear in tomorrow's newspapers. Each story will have a headline, and each headline will have a verb. I want you to write these three headlines." Lastly, clients are requested to think of an overall heading for all three stories.

During feedback, the career counsellor points out that, although these recollections ('secrets') may seem superficial, they actually reveal life-long themes, are replete with meaning and convey clients' advice to themselves; for instance: "It seems your first story has a theme of having been rejected". Most clients are capable of identifying these themes themselves.

Making Sure That Clients Hear What They Tell Themselves by Often Repeating Their Own Words

Counsellors should often repeat clients' own words and expressions. Clients should be invited to say these words and expressions out loud to make them more authentic. They should therefore listen carefully to their own advice regarding ways in which to become more visible or make others take them more seriously.

Observing Participants: "The Body Never Lies"

Clients should be observed carefully at all times. Remarks, sighs, shifts in the position of the body or the direction of the gaze should be written down in detail

(Savickas, 2009b). Body movements and other non-verbal cues help counsellors 'read' their clients and should be incorporated into the career counselling session.

Using Metaphors to Wrap Up the Career-Story Interview

Metaphors can be created quite easily by listening carefully to what clients say during the interview (Yapko, 2003). An example of such metaphors is "You are a magnificent painting about to be revealed".

CASE STUDY

Participant and Context

The participant was a purposefully selected 33-year-old white, English-speaking man, James (a pseudonym). James had a Master's degree in Theology as well as a Master's degree in Educational Psychology. He volunteered to act as the 'client' during a live demonstration (which formed part of a course on Career Construction Counselling in 2014).

Three Early Recollections

In answer to the question: "How can I be useful to you?", James replied: "I am currently conducting research to write my Master's degree dissertation. I feel disappointed because my supervisor recently referred me to another person to supervise my research. This occurrence mainly happened because the previous supervisor was not in approval of my desire to use my own, preferred, creative research methodology during my research. More particularly, my first supervisor did not approve the use of Ericksonian hypnotherapy (which entails progressive relaxation) as an intervention." (SIGHS, SMILES FAINTLY) (ANOTHER SIGH) "I do not take kindly to being boxed in." James' three earliest recollections and their interpretation appear below.

1. *Tricycle ride offers vision of freedom* (SIGHS) "When I was three or four years old, in the front yard of our house. I was on my own tricycle, ***cycling*** in circles (it was the first time I was riding the bike). While I was riding the bike, I specifically remember saying out loud 'One day I'm going to ride on this bike to the big school'. That made me feel very excited." (SIGHS) "It seems as if this story does not indicate any progression. Just driving in circles."
2. *Seeking missing dog under green couch* (PONDERING SMILE) "This is quite a random memory which, seemingly, has no purpose, no theme." (SIGHS) "I was aged three or four." (LOOKS UP) "It happened in our living room while my grandma was babysitting us (my older sister and I). I specifically recall looking for my growling dog under the green couch." (SMILES) "I can't

specifically remember what happened. I just heard my dog and started looking for it."(SMILES INSIGHTFULLY AND CONCLUDES) "I repeated the word ***specifically*** quite a lot."

3. *Creativity produces surprise in laundry room* (SMILES) "I was five years old. My brother and I asked my mother if we could help with the washing. She was probably lost in thought, her thoughts somewhere else, so she said 'yes'. I can't recall throwing the stuff into the machine, but I can remember seeing the beautiful, floating bubbles and the stuff coming out of the machine; the washing water flooding almost the whole house. I can also remember/recall the excitement about the wonderful stuff coming out of the machine; the foam."

Analysis of the Three Earliest Recollections

James's response to the initial question reveals his current problem as well as his plan for solving the problem. He needs a creative strategy to help him make meaningful progress with his studies. Having felt "boxed in" (a central life problem) by his first supervisor, he is seeking freedom to deal with challenges in a creative and innovative manner (another central life theme). His desire to "one day" ride to the big school (metaphor for gaining education) instead of riding in circles emerged as another central life theme.

James's first verb is **'cycle'**. He is very excited about moving fast and rhythmically, but the change in supervisors once again reflects his moving in circles, which is the real reason for his consulting the career counsellor. Frustrated and obstructed, he feels unsure and concerned about the future progress of his research.

When asked to reflect on the second story, James commented as follows: *"I am looking for something that I had lost … trying to find it under the green couch."* The colour green suggests James' sense of creativity and need for rest. Searching for the dog (symbol of trust) in his recollection could be interpreted as giving the following advice to himself: Proceed with the Ericksonian hypnotherapy (green = relaxation; couch = 'let go') to help you move forward, find peace of mind and restore your faith and trust in your studies and your supervisor. Moreover, he reminds himself to unwind, relax and take greater care of himself in order to help him deal with his own passive frustration and aggression.

When asked to reflect on his third story, James commented as follows: *"I am a creative person who prefers to think and act in an innovative, creative manner. I love it when I see the results of my creative intervention. Yes, even though I am still an emerging psychologist, and will still need exercise to perfect my skills, I am convinced that I can contribute to helping (cleansing) others (doing the washing) by using a creative strategy. That is what energises and excites me."* James then revealed that he had left his original church to become a part-time preacher in an alternative congregation where there was a less formal structure (with room for creativity) and where the congregation comprised creative people who, like himself, were 'out-of-the-box' thinkers.

Summarised, James was very disappointed and angry at having been forced by a person with a narrow mindset to start over again with his research (drive in a circle). His advice to himself was to let go, unwind and in that way deal with his anger and also strengthen his intention to use a creative research methodology to deal with his research participants' deepest needs.

When requested to provide an overall heading for all three stories, James thought about the question for a while and then came up with the following heading: Changing the cycle. Taking care of his need to relax and giving free rein to his sense of creativity should help him deal better with his pain rather than just 'accepting' being boxed in by rigid structures and formalism.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE INSTRUMENT

The use of the early recollections technique to help clients identify major life themes (preoccupations) is hardly new. In fact, Adler (1937) and others had already written about the technique in the early years of the 20th century. However, Savickas (2011) was the first to show how this approach could be used in career construction counselling to identify clients' main life themes. Numerous researchers (see, for instance, Adler, 1931; Hartung, 2011; Langs, 1967; Maree, 2014; Mosak & Di Pietro, 2006) have conducted research, both qualitative and quantitative, on the use of the early recollections technique and have reported positively on its reliability and validity. However, further research is needed on the long-term impact of the early recollections technique during the counselling process in individual as well as group settings.

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Jacobus G. (Kobus) Maree
University of Pretoria
South Africa

PART 2

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: INSTRUMENTS

C) KINAESTHETIC LEARNING STYLES

We have located chapters in this sub-part of the book that describe instruments which focus on active client involvement that we believe supports a kinaesthetic learning style.

REINEKKE LENGELLE AND FRANS MEIJERS

17. CAREER WRITING

A Creative, Expressive and Reflective Approach to Qualitative Assessment and Guidance

INTRODUCTION

Career Writing is a narrative approach to qualitative career assessment whereby client (or student) groups use creative, reflective, and expressive forms of writing to foster an internal dialogue about career. It is intended to help individuals construct a career identity by uncovering life themes, assessing drives and wishes, and rewriting stories (i.e., narrative truths) that no longer serve. The starting point for this learning process is usually a crisis, which could be a situation, event, attitude or choice dilemma surrounding work. Research shows that career writing holds promise for university students in the process of career formation and orientation and can help adults facing job loss.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE INSTRUMENT

Career assessment and guidance in the 21st century must take into account the complexity and insecurity of the current labour market. It is no longer enough to develop skills and match them to existing work as was customary in the industrial age. People must develop an awareness of life themes (Savickas, 2005) and be able to construct a life story (i.e., career identity). However, where once the stories that helped us through life were 'grand narratives' shared by community – often as an extension of our geographic location, race, or religion – the individualisation of society (Beck, 2000) has made it imperative to be able to situate ourselves within more personal narratives that provide both personal meaning and a sense of societal direction (Wijers & Meijers, 1996).

Therefore practical career-assessment instruments with well-founded underlying theories that facilitate the internal and external dialogues that lead to career identity formation (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012) are needed. It is through dialogues about meaningful experiences that one begins to situate one's 'self' in a narrative that forms the precursor to career action. In this context, and based on dialogical-self theory, the self is defined as "a dynamic multiplicity of relatively *autonomous I*-positions in the landscape of the mind" (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, pp. 173–174), where there are relationships between the various selves. Seen through this lens, each person is a polyphonic novel: a combination of various voices embodied as one

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 145–151.

person (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Some selves will represent inner resources and wishes, while others may be denied or out of view (i.e., shadow selves) (Ford, 1998), but all may contribute to the construction of a meaningful narrative (McIlveen & Patton, 2007a). In terms of career identity, a beneficial narrative forms when selves (also called 'I positions') are expressed and broadened ('expanded I-positions') and where personal insights emerge ('meta positions') which make career action possible (i.e., the development of promoter positions) (Winters, Meijers, Lengelle & Baert, 2012).

In the last several decades career professionals and researchers have responded to the need for practical approaches that promote the construction of a career identity by developing a host of narrative approaches (see Cochran, 1997; Law, 2008; McIlveen & Patton, 2007b; McMahon & Watson, 2013; Savickas, 2005). These qualitative methods are ways in which career professionals can both assess clients' needs and explore directions for counselling (McMahon, Watson, Chetty & Hoelson, 2012). Career writing is a recent addition to the field of narrative approaches and involves the use of creative, expressive, and reflective types of writing to get clients and students to begin an internal dialogue about what is meaningful to them and how they might use what they learn about themselves to enhance their chances in the labour market (Lengelle & Meijers, 2014).

Career writing has much in common with other qualitative career assessment approaches in that it aims to help uncover what is emotionally salient to an individual (i.e., identify life themes) and assists people in co-constructing a narrative useful for navigating the world of work. The theory at the foundation of career writing is that it involves a cognitive, as well as an emotional learning process that helps a person from a 'first story' – a narrative of woe, stress, or indecision – towards a 'second story'. The trigger for a first story is usually a life challenge where previous problem-solving strategies no longer work. A trigger or crisis may include things like losing one's job, feeling pressure from parents to choose a particular direction of study, or having to make a career choice within an atmosphere of uncertainty. One can assess whether a client or student is trapped in a first story by identifying whether a person is "in VERB" – whether their story is characterised by victimhood, entitlement, rescue, and/or blame – an acronym aptly used to articulate narratives that perpetuate a sense of powerlessness (Baker & Stauth, 2003, p. 156).

The learning stages that career writing aims to stimulate are sensing, sifting, focusing, and understanding (for a full description of these stages, see Meijers & Lengelle in this book) and represent a process of coming to terms with the experience, thus being able to move forward constructively. Note the interesting and fitting use of words here: 'coming to terms' (coming to better *words*) in a 'constructive' way (giving shape to something). A 'second story' represents a narrative that is more 'life giving' and provides insight and direction (i.e., potential career progress). As mentioned before, learning outcomes are deemed desirable and considered beneficial in terms of the dialogical self theory (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) when those writing begin to express I positions more broadly and then eventually express

more meta positions and promoter positions. According to work done on the benefits of expressive writing (Pennebaker, 2011), beneficial narratives mean that those writing will begin to express more emotion words – in particular positive, but also some negative emotion words – more insight and cognitive words, and their written work will show an alternating use of pronouns such as he, she, we, and I. We will revisit these outcomes below when the research on career writing is discussed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

Three Types of Writing

Career writing distinguishes three kinds of writing: creative, expressive, and reflective. Creative refers to the writing of fiction or fictional autobiography. It is intended to invite clients or students to uncover life themes through the exploration of fictional characters and events, much like Savickas (2005) does in his life design work. Creative writing directly or inadvertently exposes life themes. For example, one of Lengelle's students sketched a scene in her writing portraying a work environment full of men in which a woman was helping a young female assistant. She later wrote, "my assistant is one version of a younger me: born into patriarch in the early 1960s behind four older brothers, working in careers with only men…I realize that I see my older self as the mentor for whom I longed, and that through fiction, I could return to support and care for my lost younger self. My reflection is entirely accurate. Ouch" (Lengelle & Meijers, 2014, p. 61–62). As Picasso said, "Art is a lie that makes us realize truth…" (as quoted in Chipp, 1968, p. 264).

Expressive writing is a term used by researchers who examine the effects of writing about trauma and pain (Pennebaker, 2011). Writing that promotes health includes putting into words what happened and how one felt about it. Expressive writing has been studied widely and benefits include the improvement of both psychological and physical health (Lepore & Smyth, 2002). This type of writing is of relevance to careers work because writing about painful experiences is a way of uncovering life themes; what drives us now is rooted in past memorable (and often painful) experience (Savickas, 2011).

Reflective writing refers to writing about life events in a way that explores insights and observations more directly. It may include a person expanding on a thought like 'a common theme in my family is women fearing having children as this commitment might interfere with our careers; has this kept me on the fence about making a decision on the professional front'?

For each type of writing, there are a variety of useful and structured exercises, some of which are most suited to particular learning stages mentioned above. For instance, in the sensing stage, where feelings and thoughts are first mapped out and welcomed in still chaotic permutations, proprioceptive writing described in a book on the method (Trichter-Metcalf & Simon, 2002) is useful. Here those writing are invited to begin anywhere, but to ask, "what do I mean by … (e.g.,

fearful; frustrated; wiped out; hopeful)" to broaden and deepen words and phrases that might otherwise be skipped over as if self-evident. This exercise also includes four concluding questions, which are: (1) What thoughts were heard but not written? (2) How or what do I feel now? (3) What larger story is this write part of?, and (4) What ideas came up for future writes? (Trichter-Metcalf & Simon, 2002, p. 39–41).

The writing of poetry may also be used as an exercise in expressing one's thoughts or feelings (sensing phase), though it is often better suited to the focusing and understanding phases, where word-choice becomes leaner and more deliberate – as if summing up key insights. Playwriting and dialogue writing exercises become ways of accessing, assessing, and broadening the interplay between 'selves' and frequently lead to more conscious awareness of tacit knowledge, '…when I read what my wiser-self told me, I suddenly realised, I already knew that I wanted to take this next step.'

The exercises, whether created by the facilitator or found within the rich and burgeoning field of writing for personal development (Bolton, Field, & Thompson, 2006; Hunt & Sampson, 2002) are all intended to bring about the internal dialogue and move a person through the learning phases towards a second story. With this in mind, several additional considerations are important: a facilitator is necessary to the process (though the work is suited to groups and need not be done on the one-to-one basis normally associated with career counselling). A safe learning environment is also key and the order of the exercises presented must be well thought out and deliberate.

To elaborate briefly on these three points: a facilitator must be comfortable with writing and have done personal writing; someone who works with narrative approaches in assessment and counselling would be suited, though professionals who intend to use career writing would benefit from taking a course with a focus on writing for personal or professional development (e.g., poetry therapy workshop, expressive writing workshop). Second, a facilitator must create a safe space for sharing, in particular as career writing is usually done as group work. Safety is created when a facilitator sets down clear guidelines about feedback given on writing (e.g., no judgement), speaks about issues of confidentiality, and shares personal experiences appropriately. Third, the order of exercises should keep in mind the learning stages, build towards more focus, and not start with something too direct or literarily advanced (e.g., "please write a sonnet about your future career").

CAREER WRITING RESEARCH

Initial Projects and Research

Research has also been conducted into the benefits of expressive writing in the face of unemployment (Spera, Buhrfeind, & Pennebaker, 1994) and workplace injustice (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2009). A case study and writing project conducted by one of Lengelle's students gives additional anecdotal evidence of career writing's potential

in career transitions (Lengelle & Meijers, 2014). Research on the use of career writing as a qualitative career assessment and guidance tool began at the University of The Hague of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands, several years ago and first results show that it provides benefit (i.e., leads to the formation of career narratives) among students in higher education (see below). It is also being provided as a university extension course in Alberta, Canada, and a training program for teachers responsible for careers guidance and other career professionals is being set up to evaluate its merits.

The Hague University Study and Initial Results

Two groups, one control and one experimental, were recruited for the career-writing research project with third-year bachelor students. Participants' average age was 23 and all were recruited to actively participate in the career-writing course. The control group was made up of those students who were not able to attend the actual course due to a conflict in their personal or work schedules. The career-writing course consisted of 2 two-day courses, one before and one after a five-month work placement. Both student groups were asked to write about their studies and prospective work placement for 20 minutes at the start of the research. These writing samples were collected along with a luck readiness index (Pryor & Bright, 2011). Both groups also submitted another writing sample at the end of their work placement. In addition employers were asked to evaluate students and the experimental group handed in an additional two writing samples per course (in total they handed in six writing samples and the control group handed in two). Finally, participants from both groups were asked to submit their official 'work-placement reports', which are standard university assignments intending to promote reflection.

The results of the writing analysis using Dialogical Self Theory coding and the Linguistic Index Word Count (LIWC) analysis showed that students' narratives developed in the desired direction (Lengelle, Meijers, Poell, & Post, 2014). Students in the experimental group expressed more meta and promoter positions and noticeably more meaning-oriented ones. For instance, while someone from the control group said, "I realise I need to learn time-management skills", a student from the experimental group said, "I realise I'm someone who doesn't always respond well to feedback from my work mentor, but now I see that this criticism is intended to help me". The LIWC analysis showed that students who took the career writing course switched between pronouns more readily (i.e., going from I to we, and he and you, instead of sticking to I primarily). This switching is an indication of the ability to change or develop wider perspectives, as is the appearance of more cognitive (e.g., think, the reason that…) and insight (e.g., realise, see, now know) words. Although the research group was relatively small and we had some attrition in our sample, students who completed the career writing course also showed more luck readiness and were evaluated more positively by their employers (Lengelle, Meijers, Poell, Geijsel & Post, in press).

CONCLUSION

Although more research is needed to evaluate the potential of career writing as a narrative approach that fosters identity development, initial signs of its potential effectiveness are emerging. A distinct benefit of career writing is that it can be undertaken in groups (and benefits from a group dynamic) and can therefore be a time- and cost-saving approach. Instead of time-intensive one-on-one guidance, this form of qualitative career assessment and guidance might be provided in and by institutions (e.g., schools, colleges, and as work-place professional development). Writing in the ways described constitutes a learning process, which begins with explorations (i.e., sensing, sifting) making it an instrument of qualitative career assessment. And as those writing continue to the focusing and understanding phases, and second stories begin to develop, creative, expressive, and reflective writing becomes a form of career guidance

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Reinekke Lengelle
Athabasca University
Canada

Frans Meijers
University of The Hague of Applied Sciences
The Netherlands

MARK C. REHFUSS

18. THE FUTURE CAREER AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Assessing Narrative Change Resulting from Career Interventions

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the Future Career Autobiography beginning with the theoretical background leading to its development. The instrument is then described and its use as a measure of change in individuals' career narratives resulting from career interventions. The discussion finishes with a review of how to assess the thematic results, analysis, and related research.

BACKGROUND

Self-Identity

Career counselling and vocational psychology have been guided by conceptualisations of self-identity for over 100 years, each perspective arising and being harmonious with the societal, cultural and historical times in which they were situated (Burke & Stets, 2009; Savickas, 2011b, 2011c). However, during this time, the concept of self-identity transitioned from being viewed as an object, to a subject and lastly as a project (Savickas, 2011b, 2011c). Self is constructed through the process of narrative and this making of the self through language is the project of our lives (Savickas, 2011a). The heart of self is narrative, both the written and the spoken word and it is the process by which individuals fashion and refashion the domains in which they live and by which they gain understanding of the self and their career (McAdams, 1997; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006; Savickas et al., 2009).

Theory

Narrative as the essence of identity has influenced many career theorists such as Amundson (2010), Cochran (1997), Duarte (2009), Guichard (2005, 2009), McMahon and Watson (2010), Peavy (1997), Pryor and Bright (2011), Savickas (2005, 2010, 2013), and Young et al. (2011). Narrative career theories and interventions are continuing to increase in use and be refined over time, leading to a fuller picture and application of narrative career counselling (Rehfuss, 2012; McMahon & Watson, 2011, 2012; Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Multiple compilations of narrative career

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 153–160.

interventions and approaches have and continue to arise (e.g., Brott, 2005; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Maree, 2011; McMahon & Patton, 2006; McMahon & Watson, 2011). At the heart of these narrative theories and interventions is individual story.

The telling of the story of self is the foundation of narrative as it is the process by which individuals create and gain a sense of self related to their present, past and future (McAdams, 1997; Rehfuss, 2012; Savickas, 2013). The focus of narrative interventions, therefore, is to understand and enhance the power of an individual's story (McAdams, 1997; Rehfuss, 2009; Sarbin, 1986). Most focus upon helping the person to tell fuller, thicker and richer stories of the self so that they can more clearly narrate their lives and careers. They seek to assist the individual in the task of exploring and expanding their story with denser narratives of the self. This process often facilitates the identification of a consistent story present across the person's life and career that can serve as a resource and foundation for future movements and actions (Savickas, 2013).

As individuals therefore go through this process of engaging in career interventions, their narratives of the self should expand and clarify. They should produce a fuller narrative of the self that facilitates movement and change in their lives and careers. Individuals' self-narratives about life and career, therefore, should readily reflect an enhanced and measurable clarity, delineation or expansion as a result of the career intervention process (Rehfuss, 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012).

Narrative change is described in specific career applications and interpretations, but current theories and interventions do not supply instruments needed to measure this anticipated change in individuals' stories (Rehfuss 2009). Traditional quantitative measures are not suited for measuring, recording and reflecting narrative changes in an individual's life and career stories (Rehfuss, 2009). Because narrative is qualitative in nature and essence, qualitative tools must be used to measure changes in individuals' career and life narratives. The Future Career Autobiography (FCA) was developed, therefore, as a qualitative instrument that could measure narrative change and determine the validity and efficacy of models and interventions constructed upon narrative (Rehfuss, 2012; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012).

INSTRUMENT

Creation

The Future Career Autobiography (FCA) was the first brief qualitative instrument designed to measure change in occupation and life narratives resulting from typical career interventions (Rehfuss, 2009). It was developed to identify, assess, and measure modifications in the occupational and life narratives of individuals that result from career interventions consistent with narrative and constructivist theory (Rehfuss, 2009).

The concept for the measure itself derived from Maw's (1982) exploration of future autobiographies and their influences on individuals. His work was an

expansion and clarification of the work of Ezekiel (1968) and Evered (1977). Maw's research examined individuals who had written short autobiographic narratives 10 years previously, without review of those accounts; the individuals reported enacting portions of their original narratives (Maw, 1982). Maw's research findings reflected the power personal narratives have upon our future lives. These findings suggested that when individuals write short autobiographical narratives the stories they create will often reflect the individual's core constructs, values, and self-concepts (Rehfuss, 2009). The FCA, therefore, focuses the individual's brief narratives upon goals and desires related to life and career at a future period in time. The future focus causes individuals to draw upon their past and present narrative to build a future self as they currently anticipate the self to be. Completing the FCA at two different points in time and comparing the content can identify change or lack of change in the individual's narrative.

Description

The FCA measure draws out the individual's future narrative by asking them to write a brief paragraph describing where they hope to be in life and what they hope to be doing occupationally in 5 years. The FCA itself consists of a sheet of paper titled: "Future Career Autobiography" with space for the individual's name and specific instructions: "Please use this page to write a brief paragraph about where you hope to be in life and what you hope to be doing occupationally five years from now" (Rehfuss, 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Rehfuss (2009) initially used the FCA with undergraduate college students and the last phrase stated, "five years after graduation", however he has since changed the phrase to make it usable with individuals at any point in life and career (Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). The statement seeks to draw out and facilitate creation of a brief future narrative on life and career. The FCA was purposely limited because a brief, focused, and concise narrative was the desired outcome; a short, narrative snapshot of the individual was determined to aid the practitioner and individual in quickly identifying the individual's current life and career goals and would facilitate later comparison between narratives to identify change or lack of change for the individual.

Administration

The FCA is designed to be used before and after a career counselling intervention, thus creating an initial and subsequent FCA that are then paired, compared and qualitatively scored to note any changes, expansions, or clarifications in the individual's narrative. Typical administration can take place in either an individual or group setting (See Di Fabio, 2012; Rehfuss 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012 for fuller descriptions). The administrator should indicate that the assessment will be given initially to draw out the individual's current and future story and again at a future point in time after the individual has completed all interventions. The administrator

should give 10 minutes to complete the FCA and encourage the individual to write a response of four to five sentences. Once collected the FCAs should not be returned to the individuals but kept for later review and comparison with the final version. After all interventions have been completed the same procedures should be followed and a second FCA completed by the individual.

ASSESSING RESULTS

Analysis

After completing the second FCA, each individual's initial and subsequent FCA responses should be paired for narrative comparison. This should be done with each individual one on one; however, if limited to a group setting the individuals themselves can complete the comparison with administrator guidance.

As a qualitative measure, unique rules exist that govern the comparison of the FCAs (Rehfuss, 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). The pair of FCAs for each individual should be brief and consist of four to five sentences though the second FCA may be longer in length (Rehfuss, 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012; Riessman, 1993). The easiest means of examining the content is directly on the FCA forms. Reviewing, as with any qualitative measure, should focus upon reading, rereading, and comparing the narratives (Kelle, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The administrator or individual should engage in emphasising the specific narrative on each FCA by circling verbs, underlining phrases, boxing statements and highlighting themes about life and specifically about occupation. This is first completed on the initial FCA and then the subsequent FCA. Then the two FCAs are compared side-by-side to note similarities and changes in the FCA narrative content.

The analysis can also include a total word count for each FCA as Rehfuss and Di Fabio (2012) found that word counts can serve to highlight narrative changes in an individual's stories. However, it is important to remember that the word count technique does not validate change but only serves to clarify quantitatively the degree of narrative change that has taken place for secondary descriptive purposes.

Qualitative Themes

Rehfuss' initial 2009 study of the FCA found repetition of general qualitative themes across FCAs but also eight specific qualitative themes of occupational change (See Rehfuss 2009 for table description). An individual's initial and subsequent FCAs often include repetition of the same words, phrases, desires, and thematic content related to the general areas of quality of life and desires. Quality of Life themes most often reflect these values and fall into one of four themes: Achievement, Relationships, Security, and Experiential. In addition, general themes also include two Occupational Desire themes: Positive Desires and Negative Desires. When FCA narratives differ, they typically reflect one of the eight Degrees of Change themes: 1) General Fields and

Desires to Specification and Exploration, 2) General Interests to More Specification, 3) Nondescript "Job" to Specification, 4) Disregard to Direction, 5) Vagueness to Focus, 6) Hindered to Hopeful, 7) Fixation to Openness, and 8) Stagnation. It is important to note that these themes are the occupational themes most often reflected in individuals' FCAs according to qualitative analysis and not every theme will be reflected with all individuals or populations sampled (Rehfuss, 2009). If using the FCA for research purposes inter-rater reliability and individual examples should be reported for thematic content consistent with qualitative measures.

RESEARCH

Research and Applications

The research of Rehfuss and Di Fabio (2012) strongly supports that the FCA is an instrument that identifies, assesses, and measures modifications in individuals' occupational and life narratives over time as a result of narrative and constructivist career interventions. These results are consistent with Rehfuss' initial study (2009) and with narrative theory (Cochran, 1997; Savickas, 2005, 2013; White & Epston, 1990). The FCA can be used by vocational psychologists and career counsellors to briefly assess individuals' current life and occupational narratives prior to interventions, and then used again after interventions to verify if narrative movement and change have taken place for the individual.

It is important to note that the FCA also demonstrates a lack of change in individuals' narratives who have received career counselling interventions (Rehfuss, 2009; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Such lack of change in individuals' narratives is reflected in the theme of Stagnation and highlights the need for more specific interventions that engage the individual in discussions of barriers, challenges, or indifference that may be causing immobility in the individuals' life. Further interventions should facilitate the expansion of the individuals' narrative that may be measured again at a later time using the FCA.

Research related to the qualitative themes generated by the FCA and identified by Rehfuss (2009) indicates two things. First, each of the eight reported Degrees of Change themes will not be reproduced in all samples of individuals, since each individual faces different life and career challenges and their narratives reflect these (Di Fabio, 2012; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Most individuals will only fall into one of the Degrees of Change and some will not fall into any of them. Second, though the FCA measures life change, Rehfuss (2009) identified only four Quality of Life themes and did not focus on specific differentiation within these themes. It has been demonstrated that the eight occupational change themes (2009) and the four Quality of Life themes do not adequately describe the expansion and change of personal life themes (Di Fabio, 2012; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012). Therefore, when using the FCA to measure change in life narrative, additional narrative reflections and qualitative analysis will

be required to determine the finer changes in life themes present in individuals' FCA narratives. Future research should focus on further delineation of the Quality of Life themes and what life change or expansion themes are consistently represented in the life narratives of an individual's FCAs.

The findings of three studies (Di Fabio, 2013; Di Fabio & Maree, 2013; Rehfuss & Di Fabio, 2012) support the use of word counts as a secondary form of highlighting that narrative change has taken place in an individual's narratives. Their findings indicate that as individuals engage in narrative or life design activities, their narratives become more expanded and the word counts of the FCAs increase significantly consistent with their models (Guichard, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009). The control groups in these studies also did not experience significant increases in their FCA narrative word counts with both remaining similar in content and word count across the measures. These findings support the construct that individuals' narratives tend to remain consistent over time without specific interventions or life experiences (Cochran, 1997; Rehfuss, 2009; Sarbin, 1986; Savickas, 2005, 2010). As recommended, it is helpful to include the word count technique in assessing FCAs in order to add quantitative description to the degree of narrative change that has taken place but not to validate specific narrative change.

Overall, the FCA provides a quick and brief assessment of an individual's life and occupational narrative. This measure when given prior to and after career interventions consistent with narrative theory can indicate change or lack of change in an individual's life and career story. This measure enables practitioners and researchers to identify if career interventions have been effective in helping individuals to change their stories and thus change their lives.

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Mark C. Rehfuss
Old Dominion University
United States of America

POLLY PARKER AND MICHAEL B. ARTHUR

19. INTELLIGENT CAREER CARD SORT®

INTRODUCTION

Our careers are woven into the fabric of our lives, providing structure, meaning and purpose. Defined as "the unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Hall, & Lawrence, 1989, p. 8), a career is personal, often focusing on paid employment yet extending beyond that to include any aspect of life that connects people and the societies in which they live. The emphasis on time reflects the links between past, present and future as integral aspects of a career. We use the term career to mean that everyone has a career and only one career, although that career may involve a variety of jobs, fields, and industries.

Intelligent careers (Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994) are not those of intellectuals as the name might suggest. Rather, the term was adopted in response to James Brian Quinn's (1992) influential book *Intelligent Enterprise* – one of the first to demonstrate the shift toward a global knowledge-driven economy. Given the associated pace of innovation and the demise of lifetime employment, the intelligent career framework focuses on empowering individuals to develop awareness of their identities and motivations to work, to see the workplace as an arena for developing skills and knowledge, and to understand how personal and professional contacts can support career decisions and enhance career development (Amundson, Parker, & Arthur, 2002; Ghosh, Haynes, & Kram, 2013; Parker, 2008).

Intelligent careers emphasise links between adult development and the unique combinations of experience, learning and relationship-building that contribute to happiness and success on the individual's own terms. Additionally, the intelligent career framework points toward how individual career investments contribute to the development of the organisations, occupations, industries and societies within the knowledge economy. Intelligent careers are self-guided journeys through the world of work across the life course. They are holistic, economically relevant and emphasise the uniqueness of an individual's developing career story (Parker, 2002; Savickas, 2001, 2012).

This chapter is presented in three sections. First we describe the development of the intelligent career framework. Second, we describe the Intelligent Career Card Sort® and its associated features. Finally, we describe the research evidence behind the instrument.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 161–168.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Intelligent Career Card Sort® (ICCS®) career exploration system is an online approach based on the underlying model of the intelligent career (Arthur et al., 1995). In this, employer organisations contributing to Quinn's (1992) world of 'intelligent enterprise' function through three interdependent sets of core competencies: culture that supports the organisation's mission and purpose; capabilities the organisation develops to provide goods and services; and connections with suppliers, customers, consultants, and among organisational members through which the organisation's work is pursued (Arthur et al., 1995; DeFillippi, Arthur, & Lindsay, 2006).

The three sets of core competencies are linked, so that in an ideal situation organisational culture drives the development of new capabilities, which in turn attract new connections (such as new customers), which in turn re-affirm or enhance the organisation's culture (DeFillippi et al., 2006; Hall, 1992). For example, a university setting involves: a) a relatively clear culture through which the university's scholars and staff collaborate; b) capabilities that are maintained and developed across the university's separate academic departments; and c) connections through which scholars learn about developments in their fields, departments develop curricula and staff recruit new students.

Whatever organisation they are employed by, individuals engage with and contribute to (or occasionally detract from) that organisation's core competencies. They do so through three 'ways of knowing': knowing-why; knowing-how; and knowing-whom. Individuals invest in each of these three ways of knowing in developing their career. The framework is relevant to, but independent of, any single employer.

Knowing-Why

Knowing-why engages with an organisation's culture. It involves the motivations, interests, and values people bring to their work, as well as attitudes toward family, job security, recognition, and changing employment circumstances (Parker, 2008). It also involves the working identity (Ibarra, 2003) people develop as they accumulate work experience, which can be seen as the dynamic counterpart to an unchanging inner self (Savickas, 2012).

Knowing-How

Knowing-how contributes to an organisation's capabilities. It involves investments in job-related skills and expertise. Reminiscent of human capital (Becker, 1962), it encompasses professional and occupational knowledge (Gold, Thorpe, Woodall, & Sadler-Smit, 2007) and includes both explicit and tacit understandings (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It also calls for continuous learning to ensure relevance in a knowledge-driven world (Parker, 2008).

Knowing-Whom

Knowing-whom is embodied in an organisation's connections. It entails the personal and work-related relationships that create professional networks and personal support. These relationships provide channels for information exchange and reputation-building (Parker, Khapova, & Arthur, 2009). They can also ease career transitions, provide support during career discontinuity and accelerate relational learning (Parker, Kram, & Hall, 2014).

The three ways of knowing comprise a holistic career framework to capture the uniqueness of each person, and to reflect their subjective interpretation of their career situation. It offers a 'big picture' perspective focusing on the individual rather than on any particular career problem. The interconnections among the three ways of knowing will be continuously played out and negotiated as careers unfold over time (Parker, 2000).

An extension to the above argument uses the intelligent career framework to bring together alternative social science approaches to careers, and thereby highlights an interdisciplinary approach. For example, traditional vocational guidance predicts that a person's interests (knowing-why) will influence their job performance (knowing-how). However, competing ideas about job design suggest that performing a well-designed job (knowing-how) will influence motivation (knowing-why). Leadership theories suggest that effective leadership skills (knowing-how) influence the leader's followers (knowing-whom). Conversely, mentoring theories suggest that a mentor's teaching runs in the opposite direction - that is, from a relationship (knowing-whom) to the protégé's skill set (knowing-how).

The inclusion of knowing-whom in the model affirms the interdisciplinary nature of the approach, including the influence of social reference groups (knowing-whom) on individual motivation (knowing-why) or on performance (knowing-how), and a variety of social-psychological ideas on the generation of interpersonal relationships and networks and their consequences (Parker et al., 2009). Career consultants may already have an intuitive grasp of these ideas, but the intelligent career framework, and its application through the ICCS®, provides an opportunity for clients to indicate what is important to each of them.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT AND POTENTIAL CLIENTS

The ICCS® process begins after a client is registered by a licensed consultant (or counsellor, or instructor), receives a personalised user name and password, and logs on to the ICCS® website (www.intelligentcareer.net). The client enters background demographic information and descriptive data on their occupation, industry and education. These data contribute to the statistical data base and are treated confidentially. The client then sorts three colour-coded subsets, each of around 40 cards: the blue knowing-why cards (e.g., "I enjoy helping other people"), the yellow knowing-how cards (e.g., "I want to become a better leader") and the green knowing-

whom cards (e.g., "I maintain relationships with family") (Amundson et al., 2002; Parker, 2002). The consultant can control the timing and sequence in which each subset is sorted.

As each card appears a choice must be made to transfer the item to one of three "Yes," "Maybe" or "No" piles according to how 'important' that card is to the client. The selected cards are then displayed and re-sorted until only seven remain. Clients must rank order these cards before moving to the next set. The card selection process for all three subsets takes around 45 minutes.

The end of the sorting activity signals the beginning of a robust conversation through which clients clarify the meaning of their cards and provide illustrative examples. In a direct consultant-client relationship, the consultant invites clients to describe the meaning that each selected card holds for them, and to provide relevant examples from their own experience. This can take up to four consulting sessions (one to get to know the client, and one for each of the three ways of knowing), although the process can be expedited by assigned homework. The conversation is recorded for both parties' reference on the ICCS® website. Subsequent sessions will involve working with the client to identify what they see as important career themes stemming from the conversation, and then to establish a relevant series of action steps for each theme.

The ICCS® system provides for a number of variations on the above consultant-client process. One is to engage in telephone or video consulting, where both the client and the consultant can see the relevant data as it is entered into the system. Or the consultant and client can work online sequentially, each responding to the other's input over a period of time. For course or workshop applications, a licensed consultant can assign and supervise peer-coaching arrangements where clients work with one another under the consultant's supervision. The course or workshop can be in a traditional classroom or online, or a hybrid of both options. In each case, the ICCS® website can be tailored to the particular approach the consultant uses.

The underlying assumption of the ICCS® is that the client is already involved in a knowledge-based career. It has been widely tested around the globe in MBA and executive programs where participants are already making clear investments in an adopted professional field. It has also been tested in undergraduate programs, where it complements traditional career counselling conversations about finding a job with a wider one about where that job can lead, for what personal advantage, and at what personal and social cost. It can also be used in specialised activities involving particular occupational or interest groups, people undergoing transitions, the unemployed, older workers and two-career couples. The flexibility of application stems from the design of the ICCS® in focusing and working on the client's present career situation (Parker, 2008, 2011; Wnuk & Amundson, 2003).

Various features of the underlying process help lead the individual client toward a successful experience. The card selection requires people to make choices and set priorities about what they want from their careers in a process described as active engagement (Amundson, 2003, 2006). Consultants and peer coaches each serve

as an "interested, curious, and tentative inquirer, respectful listener and tentative observer" (McMahon & Patton, 2002, p. 59) in an approach that elicits an unfolding career narrative to stimulate fresh meaning and renewed purpose (Cochran, 1997; Savickas, 2001, 2005). The action steps emanating from an ICCS® consultation can be tied to measurable outcomes and associated time targets (Parker, 2011). The insistence on meanings and examples resonates with Lent's (2013) social-cognitive approach. The consulting process described above is similar to that described for a life-design paradigm (Savickas, 2012).

The ICCS® process can also bring together data previously generated from other instruments such as values and strengths inventories (Holland, 1973, 1978) that contribute to knowing-why, 360 feedback reports (Schipper, Hoffman, & Rotondon, 2007) that address knowing-how, and network analyses that consider knowing-whom. Learning style inventories (Honey & Mumford, 1982) and personality profiles such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® can also be accommodated in the consulting relationship.

The ICCS® is presently offered in English, Danish, French, German, Italian and Portuguese. Further languages will be added in future (and we welcome inquiries from career specialists who may wish to help us with that).

RESEARCH EVIDENCE BEHIND THE ICCS®

The intelligent career framework was initially developed in response to 'boundaryless careers' – careers where opportunities were seen "to extend beyond the boundaries of single employment settings" (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994, p. 307). An important test of the theory was subsequently conducted by Lillian Eby and her colleagues at the University of Georgia, which demonstrated that each of the three ways of knowing was a strong predictor of perceived career success. Moreover, consistent with the underlying framework, each of the three ways of knowing correlated with the other two (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). Fleisher, Khapova and Jansen (2014) tested four-item scales for each of the three ways of knowing and demonstrated how intelligent career investments, mediated by career satisfaction, can lead to positive outcomes for employers.

Various qualitative studies across a range of populations have also affirmed the utility of the framework. For example, studies by Dickmann and his colleagues have highlighted how executives on international assignments developed the three ways of knowing for their own career advantage (e.g., Dickmann & Doherty, 2008; Dickmann & Harris, 2005). Comparative research on qualified immigrants identified six themes of local adaptation that aligned closely with the intelligent career framework (Zikic, Bonache, & Cerdin, 2010). A study of women miners showed how those women applied and adapted their knowing-why, knowing-how and knowing-whom career investments to gain greater industry acceptance (Richardson, McKenna, & Dickie, 2014). An examination of a high technology cluster demonstrated the applicability of the three ways of knowing to employees' participation in inter-firm projects and

their outcomes, frequently including increased loyalty to their employers (Culié, Khapova, & Arthur, 2014).

The ICCS® was initially developed through a combination of focus groups and a literature review conducted by the first author (Parker, 1996). The focus groups covered MBAs, seen as early participants in a more employability-driven, knowledge-based economy. Separate conversations were held about each of the three ways of knowing, and subsequent content analysis and factor analysis were used to suggest an initial set of ICCS® items. The literature review covered early work about or relating to the notion of boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), and in particular work about the changing nature of employment. The ICCS® was subsequently tested with professional groups of sexual abuse counsellors, contract-worker executives and Pacific Islander professionals (Parker, 2000). Each group exhibited distinctive career characteristics, but all three groups found the ICCS® a helpful vehicle to describe these differences (Parker, Arthur, & Inkson, 2004). To our knowledge no client has ever complained, after using the ICCS®, of any lack of opportunity to express what was on their mind.

Finally, the ICCS® was evaluated in the US National Career Development Association's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments (Wood & Hayes, 2013). The reviewer concluded:

> The ICCS® gives clients the freedom to choose from a number of different options within an organizing framework. It differs from most other card sorts in that it recognizes that the meanings associated with selected cards must come from clients. No assumptions are made until clients describe what the card statements mean to them and provide one or more relevant examples to support their choices. The ICCS® also demands active clients' participation and requires counselors/consultants to actively engage in the clients' career development process. (Berríos-Allison, 2013, p. 478)

In conclusion, the Intelligent Career Card Sort® offers an online career exploration process that has been applied in a range of consultant-client workshop or classroom settings. The process provides a holistic approach developed from rigorous research and tested across both practising and aspiring knowledge workers. The theoretical background involves three interdependent ways of knowing, and the sorting process and subsequent consultation elicit clients' deeper understanding and ownership of their career situations. From this understanding the consultation leads to the development of individual themes and action steps. The Intelligent Career Card Sort® is supported by considerable research about both the utility and practicality of the approach.

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Polly Parker
The University of Queensland
Australia

Michael B. Arthur
Suffolk University
United States of America

MARY MCMAHON, WENDY PATTON AND MARK WATSON

20. MY SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES

INTRODUCTION

My System of Career Influences (MSCI) is a qualitative guided reflection process for adolescents and for adults that is based on the Systems Theory Framework (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006, 2014) of career development. Reflective of the trend towards more holistic theories and models of career counselling, the MSCI enables users to identify, prioritise and story their career influences, thus enabling them to contextualise career decisions and career transitions. This chapter begins by overviewing the theoretical foundation of the MSCI, the Systems Theory Framework of career development, and its application to qualitative career assessment. Second, the development, structure, and process of the MSCI, which has two versions – the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) career assessment process for adolescents (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005a, b) and for adults (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013a, b) – are described.

THE STF AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MSCI

The STF (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2014) is not a theory of career development. Rather it represents a metatheoretical account of career development that accommodates career theories derived out of both the logical positivist worldview and the constructivist worldview. Clearly illustrated in the STF are the content and process of career development (see Figure 20.1). The content influences are presented as a series of interconnecting systems of influence on career development, specifically the individual system (depicting a broad range of intrapersonal influences), the social system (the significant others with whom the individual interacts such as family and peers), and the environmental-societal system, while the process influences include recursiveness, change over time and chance. Fundamental to understanding the STF is the notion that each system is an open system that is subject to influence from outside and may also influence that which is beyond its boundaries. Such interaction is termed recursiveness in the STF and is depicted by broken lines that represent the permeability of the boundaries of each system. The nature of the influences on an individual and their degree of influence may change over time. The final process influence, chance, is depicted as lightning flashes. All of the systems of influence are located within the context of time, past, present and future. Each of these is inextricably linked.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 169–177.

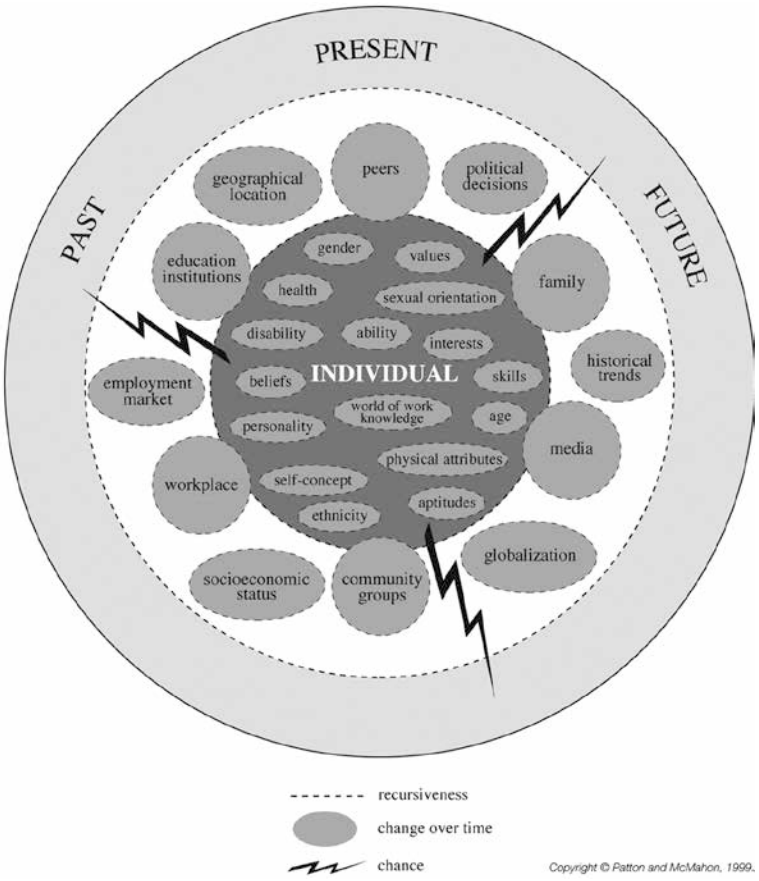

Figure 20.1. The Systems Theory Framework of career development.

The Systems Theory Framework (STF, Patton & McMahon, 2014) of career development provides a conceptual and practical map for career counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2006). The framework incorporates traditional career counselling models, but also constructivist approaches to career counselling. Moreover, the STF has been applied to qualitative career assessment and a number of instruments have been developed within the theoretical principles of the STF. For example, a semi-structured career assessment interview (McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock & Hjertum, 2003), and a narrative sentence-completion process (McIlveen, Ford & Dun, 2005) derived from the STF facilitate clients' exploration of their personal career systems. The My Career Chapter process (McIlveen, 2011; McIlveen & Patton, 2010), based on the STF, provides an opportunity for clients and for career counsellors to reflect on their lives. The most widely used and well

known qualitative career assessment application of the STF is My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005 a, b; McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013a, b), a qualitative career reflection process which bridges the gap between theory and practice.

MY SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES

The MSCI is a qualitative career assessment process that is guided by constructivist principles (McMahon & Patton, 2006) and provides clients with the opportunity to meaningfully create their own career stories through reflection (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2004). The structure of the STF stimulated the development of the MSCI qualitative assessment process that can guide individuals in reflecting on the influences on their career development. Using the subsystems of the STF as the core structure (see Table 20.1), the original trial version of the MSCI was developed and tested based on suggestions provided for the development of qualitative career assessment processes (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003) and through processes as described by the authors (McMahon, Watson & Patton, 2005).

The trialling process has demonstrated that the MSCI is theoretically grounded, client oriented, holistic, and sequential and is a meaningful learning experience for individuals (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005). Initially an adolescent version of the MSCI (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005a, b) was published. Subsequently, following practitioners' requests, an adult version was developed and trialled

Table 20.1. Relationship between the STF and the MSCI

STF	*MSCI*
Content Influences	
Individual system	Thinking about who I am
Social system	Thinking about the people around me
Environmental-societal system	Thinking about the environment and society
Past, present and future	Thinking about my past, present and future
Process Influences	
Recursiveness, change over time, chance	Representing My System of Career Influences
	My System of Career Influences – 1
	Reflecting on My System of Career Influences – 1
	My action plan
	My System of Career Influences – 2

(McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013a, b). The following description is applicable to both versions of the MSCI as they are based on a similar structure.

The MSCI reflection activity enables individuals to construct their own system of career influences through a guided reflection process. In the same way as the STF was constructed subsystem by subsystem (see Patton & McMahon, 2014 for a description of this theory development process), individuals are also invited to construct their own MSCI subsystem by subsystem (see Table 20.1). The process for individuals and counsellors maps those criteria described as important by McMahon, Patton and Watson (2003) for the development of qualitative assessment instruments. A recent review of the MSCI (Henfield, 2013) acknowledges that it adequately meets these criteria.

The MSCI is a booklet structured to facilitate opportunities for individuals to reflect on their current career development and relevant influences in their lives. Basically, an individual works through the booklet page by page. The booklet guides an individual's reflections by providing brief information, instructions and examples, and spaces where reflections can be recorded. This guided process begins with a page titled *My present career situation* in which the individual reflects on a series of questions related to occupational aspirations, work experience, life roles, previous decision-making and support networks. The individual is then encouraged to identify and prioritise influences by working through a series of pages titled *Thinking about who I am, Thinking about the people around me,* and *Thinking about society and the environment*. On the next page, *Thinking about my past, present and future*, the individual reflects on past career influences, present circumstances and anticipated future lifestyle. On each of these pages examples of possible influences are provided from which individuals may choose but they are also encouraged to add their own influences. Before moving to the next page, the individual is asked to prioritise the influences they have recorded.

The structure and process of the MSCI mirrors that of the STF. In essence, each page of the MSCI mirrors a system of the STF as illustrated in Table 20.1. Just as the sequential development of the STF is described from the intrapersonal system, through to its connection with the social system, the environmental-societal system, and the influences of past, present, and future (see McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2014), so too is the MSCI structured in this way. Individuals may visually represent the constellation of influences connecting with their career situation (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Subsequent to reflecting on each system of influence, the individual then turns to a page titled *Representing My System of Career Influences* which provides instructions for and an example of collating the influences from the previous pages and representing them on one diagram titled *My System of Career Influences*. This diagrammatic summation of the individual's reflection on their career influences is essentially a personalised Systems Theory Framework. Figures 20.2 and 20.3 provide examples of the MSCI diagrams of a 16 year old Australian rural adolescent

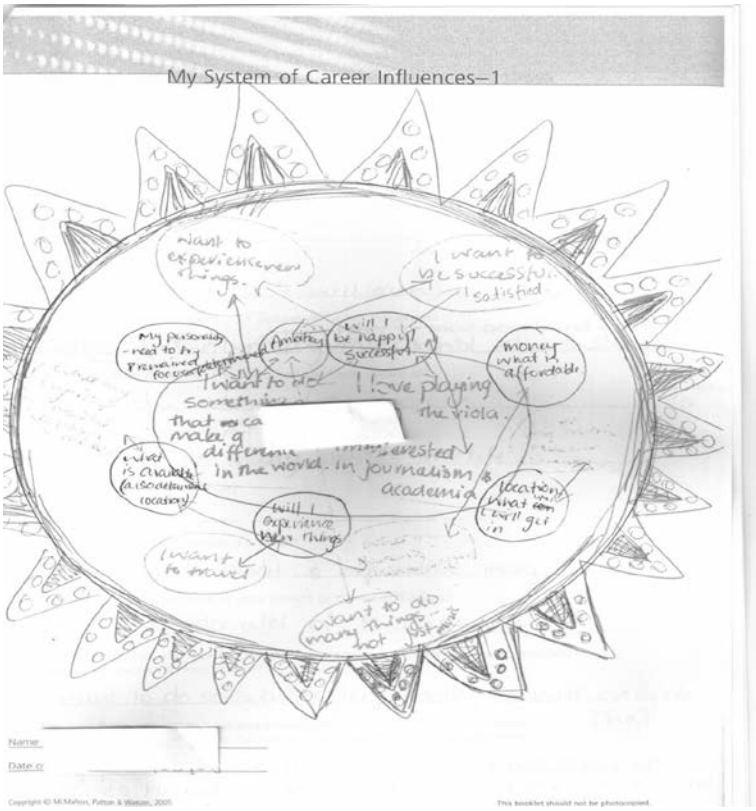

Figure 20.2. MSCI Diagram of rural Australian adolescent girl

girl and a 25 year old South African Caucasian Afrikaans male which demonstrate their highly personalised nature.

In the next step of the process individuals are provided with the opportunity to reflect on insights gained on a page titled *Reflecting on My System of Career Influences* which provides space for individuals to write responses to a set of reflective questions and through telling their career stories, thus enabling them to elicit meaning and learning. Following this, a page titled *My Action Plan* is provided for individuals to record the next steps they will take in their career decision making. For example, individuals are invited to discuss their MSCI with others in their systems of influences and to also consider action planning within their broader system of influences. In acknowledging that career development is a fluid and lifelong process, the final page of the MSCI provides an opportunity for individuals to revisit their current reflection at a later date, to complete it again, and to reflect on the change over time of their system of influences.

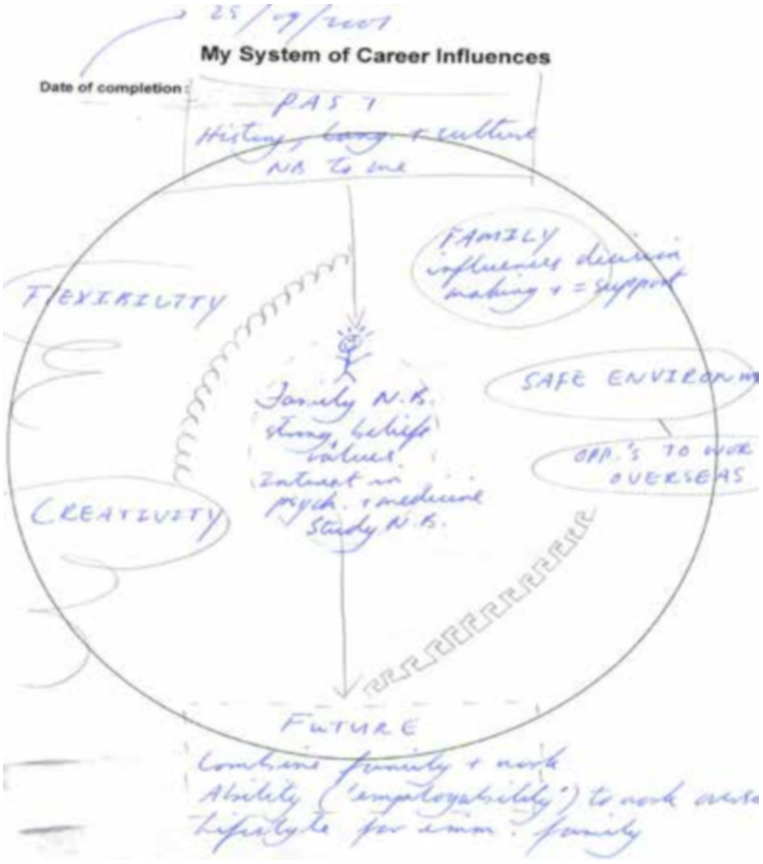

Figure 20.3. MSCI Diagram of South African Caucasian Afrikaans male

Comprehensive Facilitator's Guides accompany both the adolescent and adult versions of the MSCI. The MSCI Facilitator's Guides (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005b; McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013b) provide career development facilitators with a review on constructivist assessment, a theoretical overview of the MSCI, a guide for using the MSCI with individuals as well as in classroom or group settings, case studies and learning activities, and a detailed description of the development and trialling process. The trialling and development of the adolescent version was conducted in both Australia and South Africa in three stages over a four year period. The trialling and development of the adult version was conducted by career counsellors in Australia, South Africa, and England with a range of clients in settings including large public sector organisations and private organisations.

The MSCI is suitable for use with individual clients, with groups, and in classroom settings. Working with individual clients becomes a collaborative process in which the career counsellor can be seen as a facilitator, encouraging a process that is meaningful to the client. Similarly, in a group setting, the counsellor or guidance teacher can facilitate a group discussion of different perspectives. A recent review by Henfield (2013) concluded that:

> In general, the purpose of the MSCI is to help individuals learn more about themselves and how multiple factors – sometimes outside of their control – influence career decisions; the assessment seems to do quite well in this regard. If more specific direction is needed … the onus seems to be on the facilitator as MSCI is intended to be a tool used to foster the relationship between counsellor and client, which is in line with qualitative tradition. Further, the instrument seems to have the potential to be effective with diverse populations … (pp. 501–502)

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

A strength of the MSCI is the lengthy cross-national trialling and development process that was conducted for both versions. The results of the trialling processes are provided in the Facilitator's Guides. An important outcome of early trialling was the finding about the need to teach young people to think systemically. Thus, three case studies are provided in each of the Adolescent and Adult facilitator guides that facilitate the process of assisting individuals to think systemically. The extensive trialling and subsequent research highlights the MSCI's application to diverse groups including disadvantaged South African adolescents (McMahon, Watson, Foxcroft, & Dullabh, 2008), female black South African university students (McMahon, Watson, Chetty, & Hoelson, 2012), rural Australian adolescents, blue collar Australian adults (McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013a) and Chinese university students (see Chapter 27 by Yim, Wong, & Yuen, 2015). For example, in South Africa the MSCI has been used effectively with disadvantaged adolescents from a children's home who described the influences on their career development (McMahon et al., 2008). In other South African research, McMahon et al. (2012) demonstrated how the MSCI not only facilitated the telling of an integrative story by a female black South Africa university student but was also useful in identifying the nature of career assessment that would be useful to her. The MSCI has also been translated into a number of languages including Dutch, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, and Cantonese and used for research purposes.

CONCLUSION

There is growing awareness in career counselling of the need to contextualise career decisions; narrative and storied approaches to career counselling offer a means of

doing so. My System of Career Influences offers a reflective process that enables individuals to visualise and story their careers. Moreover, emerging evidence suggests the applicability of the MSCI to diverse groups and in diverse settings.

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Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland
Australia

Wendy Patton
Queensland University of Technology
Australia

Mark Watson
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
South Africa

PART 3

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: USING QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT QUALITATIVELY

Part 3 of this book, *Qualitative Career Assessment: Using Quantitative Career Assessment Qualitatively***,** presents chapters that consider the potential complementarity of qualitative and quantitative career assessment instruments. Rather than depicting an unhelpful divide between qualitative and quantitative career assessment, Part 3 considers their unification in practice through their shared goal of assisting clients with career decision making in order that they might move towards preferred futures. Contained in this part are chapters which approach the complementarity of qualitative and quantitative career assessment through particular theoretical frameworks, with one chapter also specifically considering the cultural context in which assessment is conducted.

JAMES P. SAMPSON, JR., GARY W. PETERSON, DEBRA S. OSBORN AND SETH C. W. HAYDEN

21. USING CAREER THEORY TO INTEGRATE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative and quantitative career assessment are based on differing philosophies of science, with qualitative assessment based on postmodern assumptions and quantitative assessment based on modern assumptions. Taken literally, the philosophical assumptions of both approaches are incompatible; if career practitioners accept the assumptions of one, they must reject the assumptions of the other. However, taking an all or nothing stance in selecting career assessments to support the career counselling process is unnecessary (Sampson, 2009) and may not be in the best interests of the client. We support a more pragmatic strategy that views qualitative and quantitative career assessment as potentially complimentary (McMahon & Watson, 2012) where career practitioners and clients are free to choose assessments with features that best meet specific client needs. Instead of focusing on philosophical assumptions, we advocate focusing on intervention outcomes and the processes by which these outcomes occur. Let's determine what we want to achieve first and then determine the best way of getting there.

The most common outcome of career counselling is for the client to make informed and careful decisions about occupations, education, training, and employment, and then take action to implement these decisions (Sampson, 2008). This outcome evolves over time through a series of choices with the decision-making capacity of the client potentially improving over time with experience and support from significant others (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004). Career interventions contribute to outcomes through specific outputs, such as clarifying knowledge of self, generating options, gaining knowledge of options, gaining knowledge of decision making, and information seeking behaviour (Sampson et al., 2004). Learning is the common denominator of all of these outputs. This learning is an iterative process of obtaining insights from assessments and information sources, and then reflecting on what has been learned in a social context. Both qualitative and quantitative career assessments can promote the outputs of clarifying knowledge of self, generating options, promoting information seeking behaviour, and clarifying readiness for career decision making. Individualised interpretations from career assessments have been shown to contribute to positive career intervention outcomes (Brown &

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 181–190.

Krane, 2000).The misuse of quantitative career assessments in a quick and simplistic matching process that restricts rather than promotes exploration (Sampson, 2009) should not preclude the appropriate use of quantitative career assessments in general.

Efforts to integrate qualitative and quantitative career assessment are emerging. The Integrated Structured Interview process (McMahon & Watson, 2012) shows how data from the Self-Directed Search (Holland & Messer, 2013a), a quantitative career assessment, can be integrated with a story telling approach using story crafting (McMahon & Watson, 2010), a qualitative career assessment. One strength of this approach is the career theory that guides the intervention. The use of career theory helps career practitioners to select career interventions that link theory-based concepts with client needs (Sampson, Dozier, & Colvin, 2011).

The goal of this chapter is to describe another example of theory-based integration of qualitative and quantitative career assessment. The theories we will use are the cognitive information processing approach to career problem solving and decision making (CIP; Sampson et al., 2004) and the RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997). In addition to using career assessment to clarify knowledge of self, generate options, and promote information seeking behaviour, we will also use career assessment to clarify readiness for decision making. Sampson, McClain, Musch, and Reardon (2013, p. 99) noted that "Readiness for career decision making reflects an individual's state of preparation for engaging in the learning processes necessary to explore and decide among various occupational, educational, training, and employment options." The chapter begins with an examination of how key constructs of CIP theory and RIASEC theory potentially contribute to outputs from qualitative and quantitative career assessment interventions (clarifying knowledge of self, generating options, promoting information seeking behaviour, and clarifying readiness for career decision making). The chapter continues with an example of how CIP theory and RIASEC theory can be used to integrate two qualitative and two quantitative career assessments, and concludes with a discussion of how staff training and supervision can contribute to success in integrating qualitative and quantitative career assessment interventions.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT OUTPUTS

Career theory has the potential to make contributions to career assessment intervention outputs related to clarifying knowledge of self, generating options, promoting information seeking behaviour, and clarifying readiness for career decision making. This section begins with an examination of CIP theory and follows with RIASEC theory.

CIP Theory

The Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991; Sampson et al., 2004) provides a parsimonious framework and heuristic for

career problem solving and decision making. Two key assumptions of CIP theory include: (1) career problem solving and decision making involve the interaction of both affective and cognitive processes; and (2) the goal of career counselling is the enhancement of information processing skills (Peterson, Sampson, Lenz, & Reardon, 2002). Thus, career assessment should be comprehensive and multidimensional to capture the breadth and depth of presenting career issues, and it should be conducted with the ultimate aim of seeking to assist clients in becoming effective career problem solvers and decision makers.

Two fundamental structural attributes comprise CIP theory: (a) the pyramid of information processing that contains the components of the theory, and (b) the CASVE cycle (Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, and Execution) that entails the process of career decision making. The pyramid includes three hierarchical domains. Two knowledge domains lie at the base of the pyramid and include self-knowledge and occupational knowledge, which provide the data required to carry out the career decision making process. The middle level of the pyramid consists of the information transformation components or skills (i.e., the CASVE cycle) in the form of a recursive cycle. This domain transforms the initial career problem into an appropriate solution and then implements a plan to carry it out. The apex of the pyramid consists of the executive processing domain which regulates the lower order domains through controlling, monitoring, and sequencing of information-transformation mechanisms. The executive processing domain also includes attitudes and thoughts regarding the activity of career decision making itself, such as one's self-efficacy as a career problem solver and decision maker. Deficits in any of the domains can preclude effective decision making. To this point, there are distinct, theory-driven qualitative and quantitative assessments for each domain of the pyramid to ascertain the extent to which a client possesses sufficient skills, knowledge, or attitudes (SKAs) to carry out the career decision-making process to arrive at a satisfying career choice and to successfully implement it.

For the purposes of this chapter, the mid-range of the pyramid consisting of five generic information processing skills (CASVE) is particularly emphasised. Each phase involves unique assessment strategies to identify SKAs that clients should acquire to enable successful progression through the decision cycle. The first phase is Communication (C) which entails becoming in touch with or mindful of the internal and external signals that alert one to a gap (or discontinuity) between a present state of decidedness and a desired state. Assessing readiness for decision making is a vital component of this phase. The second phase, Analysis (A), consists of examining the knowledge bases of the pyramid, self-knowledge and occupational knowledge. This phase typically includes the assessment of interests, abilities, and values to enhance self-knowledge, as well as the use of card sorts to explore the extent of a client's familiarity with occupations. The third phase, Synthesis (S), concerns the formulation of viable options (elaboration) and narrowing them (crystallisation) to a select few. Here, the findings from assessments used in Analysis are applied to the identification and selection of alternatives. The further use of card sorts to identify occupational

preferences along with occupations finders, computer-assisted career guidance systems, field trips to work sites, and shadowing are examples of interventions to help clients arrive at viable options. The fourth phase, Valuing (V), consists of examining each of the final selected alternatives identified in Synthesis in terms of a four-part critical question: What are the implications of this choice for me, my significant others, my cultural group or society, and for the meanings I would derive from this kind of work? The use of assessments related to the identification of dysfunctional thoughts, family preferences, or cultural awareness can facilitate the valuing process. The final phase is Execution (E), which entails formulating a plan to implement a first choice and carrying it out. A decision is made when an individual deliberately moves toward an educational and/or career goal such as applying for admission to an educational or training program or seeking employment in a chosen field.

The assessment of readiness. Returning to the communication phase of the CASVE cycle, the assessment of readiness for career problem solving and decision making entails the measurement of two independent constructs: the capability of an individual to make an appropriate choice while taking into account the complexity of family, social, economic, and organisational factors that influence an individual's career development (Sampson, Peterson, Reardon, & Lenz, 2000). In this two-factor model, capability alludes to internal factors affecting an individual's ability to make an appropriate choice, whereas complexity represents external contextual factors that bear on the choice. In a state of high readiness, one's level of capability to manage the decision-making process exceeds the level of complexity of the social context, whereas in a state of low readiness, the level of complexity exceeds one's capability of managing the choice process.

In CIP theory, the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI, Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996a) is used as a measure of capability, while the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW, Peterson, Leasure, Carr, & Lenz, 2000) is used as a measure of complexity. The CTI, a quantitative assessment, contains 48 items written as negatively worded, career-related thoughts. Items include statements such as "I can't think of any fields of study or occupations that would suit me" and "I get so depressed about choosing a field of study or occupation that I can't get started." Higher scores indicate greater negative thinking and hence lower capability to engage in career problem solving and decision making. The CTI provides a total score and three subscale scores, Decision Making Confusion (DMC), Commitment Anxiety (CA), and External Conflict (EC). The DMC scale measures the lack of ability to begin or continue the decision making process while the CA scale reflects difficulty in making a first choice among options or the extent of general anxiety about the outcome of a decision. The EC scale assesses a client's difficulty in being able to balance his or her personal opinions with those of significant others. Subscale scores are helpful in providing information concerning the types of negative thoughts a client may be experiencing that may impede the ability to progress through the phases of the CASVE cycle. In relating CTI scores to the CASVE cycle, the DMC scale concerns the ability to form viable options in progressing through the communication,

analysis, and synthesis phases, while the EC scale informs the valuing process. The CA scale relates to moving from arriving at a first step in the valuing phase to its implementation in the execution phase.

The DSW, a qualitative appraisal of complexity, is a two-page assessment tool that first asks a client to write the career problem and then to list all thoughts, feelings, circumstances, people and events that bear on the decision at hand. The second page provides a client with a large circle. Clients are then directed to draw a smaller circle for each item on the list within the large circle in proportion to its importance on the decision. The DSW is in effect a problem mapping task that enables clients to gain a clearer picture of the elements that exert an influence on the presenting career problem. In the inquiry following the administration of the DSW, the career practitioner explores with the client: (a) how each element influences the decision, (b) the level of influence possessed by each element, (c) how the respective elements are interrelated, (d) interpretation of the decision space in relation to other assessments, and (e) the development of an individualised learning plan (ILP) with the client that outlines the steps to be undertaken by the client to arrive at a career choice and to implement it. The DSW also assists the career practitioner in coming to a greater understanding of the personal, social, and circumstantial factors surrounding a client's decision that need to be addressed in the development of the ILP.

The development of the ILP requires the integration of both quantitative and qualitative assessments. In this case the CTI provides precise information regarding the extent (i.e., how much) of dysfunctional thinking that may impede career problem solving and decision making with respect to certain theoretical constructs, whereas the DSW provides kinds of information about one's social context regarding their influence on career decision making. They both lead to specifying interventions that create a pathway for clients to follow in attaining a state of readiness, and ultimately toward achieving the goal of making and implementing an appropriate career decision.

RIASEC Theory

If Cognitive Information Processing theory (CIP) is viewed as a comprehensive, over-arching theory of vocational choice, RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997) informs the analysis and synthesis phases of the CASVE cycle. Basically, the Holland typological theory relates personality characteristics to occupations on the basis of the old adage, "birds of a feather flock together." The fundamental proposition undergirding Holland's work is that when individuals are classified on the basis of measured traits as belonging to a certain occupational category, they can be linked to many occupational alternatives within that category. The empirical matching process enables individuals to quickly identify themselves as belonging to an occupational subgroup and to develop an array of corresponding occupational alternatives for consideration. A key assumption in RIASEC theory is that most individuals can be placed into one of six personality types: Realistic, Investigative,

Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). The relationship among these six personality types is portrayed in the form of a hexagon in which adjacent occupational groups on the hexagon have more in common in terms of personality characteristics than groups that are alternate or opposite.

Returning to CIP theory, in the analysis phase of the CASVE cycle, RIASEC theory provides a visual model in the form of a hexagon to assist clients in clarifying the relationship between their interests and occupations. The use of the Self-Directed Search (SDS, Holland & Messer, 2013a), a quantitative assessment, measures the respective six dimensions of the Holland hexagon, namely RIASEC. The SDS includes 264 items to measure strength of interest in each of the six RIASEC categories. Item contents refer to activities, competencies, occupations, and self-estimates of abilities. Here, individuals are able to identify and compare strong versus weak interest areas. The use of a card sort can also be used as a cognitive mapping task to assess occupational knowledge (Peterson, 1998). Here, 36 cards are used, six from each domain of the Holland Hexagon. With this use of a card sort in a qualitative way, clients reveal their schema of the world of work and their place in it as well as familiarity with occupations in the sort.

In the synthesis phase of the CASVE cycle in which viable occupations are identified, the use of the SDS provides an individual with a Holland Code which consists of the top three interest areas in descending order, e.g., SAE or ICR. The Occupations Finder (Holland & Messer, 2013b) contains a listing of occupations by three-point codes. Individuals can then find potential occupational matches to their three-point Holland Code identified in the SDS for further consideration and exploration. Further, career practitioners may also use card sorts in a traditional manner in which clients sort cards into three piles, "Would choose," "Might choose," and "Would not choose," for further exploration. A career practitioner may then follow up with the client on the results of the occupations clients identify in the Occupations Finder as well as those in the "Would choose" pile in the card sort to expand a client's list of potential occupations. This list is then narrowed to a select three to five through crystallisation. Again, both quantitative and qualitative assessments are integrated to facilitate the clarification of interests in the analysis phase and the expansion and narrowing of viable occupations in the synthesis phase.

A THEORY-BASED EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

Career assessments based on CIP theory and RIASEC theory can be integrated in a career counselling intervention. The following example uses the Career Thoughts Inventory (CTI; Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996a), the Decision Space Worksheet (DSW; Peterson, Leasure, Carr, & Lenz, 2000), the Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland & Messer, 2013a), and a card sort (Peterson, 1998). The DSW and the card sort are qualitative career assessments, while the CTI and the SDS are quantitative career assessments.

Bonnie walked into her campus career centre for help in deciding on a career and a program of study. As she talked with the career practitioner (CP), she made several comments about her frustration with "not being able to figure this out by now" and how overwhelmed she was. The CP presented the client version of the CIP model to help structure the process (www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/designing_career_services/basic_concepts/index.html). After explaining each component, she asked Bonnie, "In which area do you think it would be helpful to spend some time?" Bonnie said, "All of them!" The CP suggested that they begin with the top of the pyramid, and see what thoughts she might be having about her career decision. Bonnie agreed, and the career practitioner administered the Career Thoughts Inventory. Bonnie's t-score results revealed a significant amount of negative career thinking: Total (72), Decision-Making Confusion (75), Commitment Anxiety (45), and External Conflict (65).

The CP explained the results by re-stating the purpose of the inventory, reviewing the overall scores, and asking Bonnie to talk about some of the items that she strongly agreed with. The CP then said, "So it seems that some of the thoughts you are having might be getting in the way of your being able to make a decision. I wonder if there are other factors that might be impacting your choice, such as finances or others' expectations?" Bonnie agreed that there were, and the CP introduced the DSW as a way to explore what these factors were. The DSW results showed that the largest portion of the space was taken up by a fear of failure, followed closely by family members who were influencing her decision, both positively and negatively. Discussion about the DSW revealed that the two aspects were closely related – she was afraid of disappointing these family members if she made the wrong choice. The CP also discussed the amount of 'negative' or white space around the circles, which was minimal, and pointed out how there might be very little space left for Bonnie to consider other factors because these two were taking up so much room in her thoughts. The CP asked if Bonnie thought it would be helpful to learn how to manage these thoughts, and with Bonnie's agreement, introduced her to the CTI Workbook (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996b) and cognitive restructuring. At this point, the time for closing the session was near at hand, and so they made a plan to meet the following week to focus on her progress with the workbook and to begin the career exploration process.

The next week, Bonnie and the CP began with a brief check in, and Bonnie said, "I had no idea how much I was using the words 'always,' and 'never,' and the 'shoulds.' I know I'm still doing that, but tracking on it this past week has made me more aware of it." The CP asked if Bonnie had been able to restate those thoughts, and she said that she had. They reviewed some of the workbook and agreed that she would continue working on it, but would also begin looking at her interests to see related careers and possible majors. Bonnie then completed a card sort to explore her familiarity with occupations to identify occupational preferences. Bonnie also completed the SDS and received a Holland summary code of SIE and a moderately flat profile, with Social being the primary code with a high score of 50, and the other two codes being at 28 and 25. The CP asked Bonnie to read the description of

the Social code. She said, "That sounds just like me – but…" and her voice trailed off. "But?" asked the CP. Bonnie continued, "But 'those people' we talked about last week would be so disappointed if they knew I went for a helping career instead of banking or engineering." This statement linked back to the CTI, the DSW, and the card sort, showing how the four can be inter-related, both in understanding the career concern, and in ongoing structuring of interventions. While career counselling strategies going forward included Bonnie's researching some careers of interest, and volunteering to build self and occupational knowledge, the CP and Bonnie often returned to the issue of managing her negative career thinking throughout the process.

SUCCESS IN INTEGRATING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT

The success of qualitative and quantitative career assessment interventions is influenced by effectiveness of staff training and staff supervision. The following section examines specific strategies for staff training and supervision when both qualitative and quantitative career assessments are used in career counselling.

Staff Training

Given the complimentary aspects of integrating qualitative and quantitative career assessments in providing services (McMahon & Watson, 2012), the process of training staff in this practice is worthy of consideration. Career assessments associated with CIP and Holland's RIASEC theory such as the CTI (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1996a), DSW (Peterson, Leasure, Carr, & Lenz, 2000), and SDS (Holland & Messer, 2013a) each merit extensive examination regarding their appropriate utilisation within career counselling. Integrating the individual assessments to create a comprehensive depiction of the client's situation to inform career interventions can require additional support. Given the differing philosophies undergirding qualitative and quantitative career assessments, staff training sessions can focus on the etiology of both types of methods for examining elements of a career decision. Having presentations in which information related to theory and practical implementation of career assessments such as the CTI, SDS, DSW, and card sorts along with strategies for their integration can assist in expanding understanding of their effective application to career counselling.

Staff Supervision

Supervision of staff is an additional context in which skill development in the practice of integration of qualitative and quantitative career assessments can occur. Supervisors can provide guidance in this practice by structuring discussions of service delivery around interconnected elements of differing assessments such as

the CTI, SDS, and DSW in addition to providing resources such as articles, book chapters, and online training on this topic. Structuring supervision activities such as role plays around the appropriate combined use of qualitative and quantitative career assessments can assist supervisees in their understanding of the benefits of utilising diverse career assessments. Commitment to this practice is essential in providing holistic career services.

CONCLUSION

This chapter assumes a pragmatic stance that views qualitative and quantitative career assessment as complimentary rather than contradictory. Career practitioners and clients are encouraged to choose assessments that are most likely to meet identified client needs regardless of the philosophical basis of the assessment. While this chapter used the Cognitive Information Processing approach to career problem solving and decision making (CIP; Sampson et al., 2004) and RIASEC theory (Holland, 1997) to show how qualitative and quantitative career assessment could be integrated, other theoretical perspectives and related assessments could also be similarly applied in practice. Effective staff training and supervision are essential irrespective of the theory or assessments being used.

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James P. Sampson, Jr.
Florida State University
United States of America

Gary W. Peterson
Florida State University
United States of America

Debra S. Osborn
Florida State University
United States of America

Seth C. W. Hayden
Wake Forest University
United States of America

ROBERT G. L. PRYOR AND JIM E. H. BRIGHT

22. CHAOTIC CAREER ASSESSMENT

Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment

INTRODUCTION

One of the enduring issues in the history of assessment in psychology is that of the idiographic-nomothetic debate articulated by Allport (1937). The issue became symptomatic of differences in approach by psychologists to the study of human behaviour and in particular personality. An idiographic approach places emphasis on the individual qua individual and focuses attention on subjectivity, individuality, uniqueness, idiosyncrasy, personhood, specificity and situations as influences on thinking and behaviour. The nomothetic approach conversely draws attention to individuals as members of identifiable groups and understands individuality in terms of comparisons of individuals across groups. Such groups are conceptualised in terms of generalisable dimensions such as reasoning abilities, vocational interests and personality traits. In assessment terms, an idiographic approach, most typically identified with qualitative assessment techniques, seeks to understand individuals by entering into their world without preconceived notions of how that world is structured or understood. Assessment in this sense is more like exploration and discovery than measurement per se (Peavy, 1996).

More recently the emphasis in career development on narrative approaches to counselling can be understood in idiographic terms as counsellors assist individuals to make meaning and identify life themes and purpose (Savickas, 2005). On the other hand, nomothetic assessment from its beginnings in psychometrics has sought to identify and measure characteristics generalisable across individuals and to provide quantitative results by which individuals can be compared to one another. The result has been, on the one hand, major developments in the application of statistical techniques to the study of psychology and, on the other, impressive taxonomies of humans' psychological characteristics such as the hierarchical model of cognitive abilities (Vernon, 1950), the Big Five personality traits (Digman, 1990), Holland's hexagon of vocational interests (Holland, 1997) and the Triarchic Model of Intelligence (Sternberg, 1985).

In contemporary career development it is still probably true to say that preferences for qualitative or quantitative assessment continue to reflect differences in how career practitioners seek to understand human behaviour and career development in particular. Most commonly this is identified in terms of the dichotomy between

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 191–198.

modernist (quantitative) perspectives and postmodernist (qualitative) perspectives (Isaacson & Brown, 2000). From time to time calls are made to integrate such approaches (Jacques & Kauppi, 1983; Pryor & Bright, 2004; Sampson, 2009). The current authors (Bright & Pryor, 2007; Pryor & Bright, 2011) have suggested that the Chaos Theory of Careers (CTC) may provide the theoretical framework within which such integration can be achieved. The Chaos Theory of Careers views reality in terms of complex dynamical systems characterised by the interplay between structure and development, stability and change, predictability and chance. Individuals are nested patterns of complex dynamical systems and are themselves nested in other systems such as family, geography, study, employment, the labour market and culture (for further examples refer to Patton & McMahon, 2014). As individuals interact with the world at large, patterns of interaction emerge which chaos theory has identified as attractors (Pryor & Bright, 2007). These attractors are characteristic ways in which individuals think, feel and behave. The results of the operation of such attractors are fractal patterns which are traces or records of the effects of attractors. It is these fractal patterns that psychologists and career counsellors have typically sought to identify through both qualitative and quantitative career assessment. However, in the past career assessment has underestimated both the complexity and changeability of what it has attempted by various means (quantitative and qualitative) to assess (Krumboltz, 1998; Leong, 1996).

ASSESSING FRACTALS

The CTC draws attention not only to complexity and change, but also to the systemic nature of reality. Systems theory generally focuses on understanding reality in terms of interconnections and holistic thinking. Vondracek, Schulenberg and Lerner (1986) wrote about the focus of a systems perspective that

> "… influences between the individual and the context are reciprocal. This reciprocity of influence is perhaps, the single most important characteristic of the systemic perspective, because it allows for the consideration of how ongoing interaction of individuals and their contexts results in change or stability." (p. 157)

Pryor and Bright (2011) suggested that trying to identify fractals for career assessment purposes can best be achieved, insofar as this is ever possible since complexity always limits human knowledge and control, by using a multiple perspective approach which in effect combines idiographic (qualitative) and nomothetic (quantitative) techniques. In doing so the CTC also fulfils a call made originally by the Ancient Greeks and revived by Prigogine (1977) of the need for science to integrate structure and change which translates into the career development domain as being (stability) and becoming (change), since these are the defining characteristics of complex dynamical systems.

The Twin Perspective Approach to Assessing Complexity

Complexity defeats us all. Chaos theory draws attention to the limits of human knowledge and control. This in turn demands that we endeavour to find a variety of ways to catch glimpses of the complexity of real life systems and their functioning. This is what career assessment is trying to do. Thus Bright and Pryor (2007) suggested a twin perspective approach to career assessment focusing on both stability (convergent) and change (emergent). A convergent perspective focuses on knowledge that is common to people and circumstances. It is predictable and replicable. Convergent assessment techniques focus on probable outcomes and use analysis, inter-individual comparison, choice by elimination and logic to derive specific options (Pryor, Amundson & Bright, 2009). Conversely, an emergent perspective focuses on knowledge that is unique to individuals and their situations. Attention is directed to intra-individual differences. It is not predictable in advance but discernible as it develops and becomes evident (Morowitz, 2002). Emergent assessment techniques seek to develop imagination, intuition, creativity and openness. The goal is to generate and explore possibilities and to stimulate a basis for change to discover meaning and purpose. Table 22.1 presents a summary of the two perspectives as they relate specifically to career assessment.

The danger in practical career assessment terms of presenting these two perspectives separately is that it could suggest that they should be used separately. Some such as Savickas (2011) have made similar suggestions to this in relation to quantitative and qualitative techniques by making a distinction between 'vocational guidance' (using quantitative measures) and 'career counselling' (using qualitative techniques). For a CTC career assessment approach such a distinction is unnecessary and unwarranted. The challenges of assessment within complex dynamical systems require that both convergent and emergent perspectives be used conjointly with one complementing rather than competing with the other. The following is a description of one way in which this can occur.

Table 22.1. Characteristics of convergent and emergent assessment perspectives

Convergent Assessment Perspective	*Emergent Assessment Perspective*
Focuses on order and stability	Focuses on change and chance
Probable outcomes – occupational options	Possible outcomes – creating careers
Qualities shared (e.g., interests, abilities, occupational information)	Individual qualities (e.g., themes, meaning, purpose)
Comparison with groups - matching	Comparison within the person - discovering
Quantitative results – metrics	Qualitative results – patterns, narratives
External/ Objective Criteria	Internal/Subjective Criteria
Data relating to the world	Data relating to the self

ASSESSING VOCATIONAL INTERESTS – CONVERGENT AND EMERGENT PERSPECTIVES

The domain of assessing vocational interests has almost exclusively been the domain of quantitative assessment for most of the last century beginning with the epoch making work of E. K. Strong and subsequently with the influential work of John L. Holland. In an attempt to provide a more flexible approach to vocational interest assessment Pryor (1995) constructed the Congruence Interest Sort (CIS) by developing a pool of work and leisure activity items designed to assess the eight dimensions of Roe's (1956) interest classification taxonomy. These items were then administered to a sample of school leavers and adults after which, using standard psychometric item analysis procedures, 64 items with the best item-scale homogeneity and contribution to scale reliability were chosen – eight items homogeneously loading on each of the eight interest dimensions (Pryor, 2007).

Each activity item (such as "Spending time at the beach") is presented on a separate card and the person is asked to place the card in a pile under the headings of five other cards according to how much they like or dislike each of these activities. The five sort cards are labelled: most unattractive (I hate doing this activity); moderately unattractive (I dislike doing this activity); neither attractive nor unattractive (I have no strong feelings about this activity); moderately attractive (I like doing this activity); and extremely attractive (I love doing this activity). The person is simply asked to sort the cards according to how much they would like or dislike doing this activity if they had the opportunity to do it. The sorted cards are then scored from 1 to 5 (from extremely dislike = 1 to extremely like = 5) for each of the eight interest scales. The three highest scale scores are then used as a basis for comparison with the dominant interests of those working in various occupations using an occupations listing (Pryor, 2010). Comparisons are made on the basis of using each two-dimension code derived from the three highest interest scores resulting in six two-dimension codes with which to derive occupation options from the occupations listing. In this way the person is encouraged to search on a wider basis than just using a single three-dimension code. As a result of this process the person derives a list of occupations that they would like to explore further using various sources of occupational information including inter alia, online databases, government statistics, websites of major employers, industry associations and employee groups, and contacting those working in various occupations through informal networks or human resources departments of employers.

As can be seen from this brief description, the Congruence Interest Sort (Pryor, 1995), if used in this way, assesses individuals in a quantitative way to yield convergent information about what is typically liked among commonly preferred activities (derived from psychometric analysis) and compared with various criterion groups of workers' interests across a wide variety of occupations (Pryor, 2007). To establish the stability of the assessment scales used, the CIS interest scales were themselves subject to alpha reliability analysis and yielded scores across the eight

scales from. 69 to. 83. The obtained results for each person are then used in a predictive manner to deduce logically that if the person's interests are similar to those who work in various occupations then these are occupations which the person too may find interesting.

However, the Congruence Interest Sort can be used in more qualitative ways to derive more emergent information. Six different techniques are outlined below to illustrate the qualitative uses of the CIS cards as approaches to assessment complementary to a quantitative approach.

Themes Exercise

After the client has sorted the CIS cards in the usual manner into five piles of varying attractiveness, the career counsellor asks the client to read through each pile of sorted cards looking for themes and similarities within each pile. The counsellor makes a record of any suggestions and also the degree of confidence or enthusiasm clients have for their identified themes. These themes can then form the basis for further discussion. For instance, clients may identify that most of the cards they rated as extremely attractive are activities that pose few challenges to them, whereas many of those in the unattractive pile appear to be beyond their self-appraised level of competence. A discussion about self-limitation, experimentation, self-efficacy and reality checking might ensue. This exercise allows the client to organise the cards according to their own constructs, which may provide more personally relevant information about the specific interests or barriers of a client.

Personal Constructs Exercise

The Personal Constructs Exercise is derived from Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, 1955) with the aim of understanding an individual's personally relevant dimensions of perception of themselves and their world. Once all the cards have been sorted into the five piles of attractiveness, two cards from the 'extremely unattractive' and one from the 'extremely attractive' pile are compared. Similarities between the two cards from the same pack are noted as are differences between those cards and the card sorted as extremely attractive. The client is asked to label each bipolar dimension they identify. The client's responses are recorded and the exercise repeated until the client is unable to come up with any new dimensions (or the exercise can be prematurely halted to manage time, the quantities of dimensions to be discussed or to maintain rapport). A discussion of the bipolar dimensions can then draw out the client's sense-making perspectives and ideas. The exercise adds depth to the interest categories derived by nomothetic methods by providing a more detailed and specific understanding of the personal relevance, thought dynamics and constraints driving the client to make the choices they do.

The Contingency Exercise

The contingency exercise invites a client to reconsider their decision-making in an artificially induced changing environment. Pryor, Amundson and Bright (2009) point out that career counselling is about change and encouraging appropriate, helpful and positive change for clients. Nomothetic assessment tends not to address the experience of change; however idiographic assessment is well-placed to capture a client's reactions to change. After the cards have been sorted into the usual five piles, the career counsellor can introduce some perturbation into the system by asking the client to consider hypothetical scenarios with "what-if" questions. For instance "what if you acquired a significant lower back injury and restriction – how might that affect the sorting of your cards" or conversely "imagine you were pain free". The career counsellor can also ask the client to imagine their own alternative scenarios – both likely and unplanned. This exercise can inform discussions about flexibility, strategy, self-efficacy, persistence, luck, optimism, creativity and reinvention.

Wildest Dreams Exercise

The wildest dreams exercise invites the client to consider the cards they have just sorted into the five standard piles, and to explore how their sorts might alter if they were able to pursue their wildest occupational dreams. Changes to the sort are noted by the career counsellor and can form the basis of further discussions about potential barriers – real or imagined, strategy, self-limited thinking, optimism and fear of both failure and success.

Significant Others Exercise

The significant others exercise explores how other people who play an important role in the client's life perceive the client. Often significant others can be influential in a person's career decision-making (e.g., parents, teachers and friends: Bright, Pryor, Wilkenfeld & Earl, 2005; Patton & McMahon, 2014). The career counsellor invites the client to step into the shoes of their nominated significant other and to sort the cards into the standard five piles as though they were that person sorting them according to what they think the client is interested in. The exercise forces the client to adopt a different perspective which in itself can reveal discrepancies or implicit interests that have not been fully expressed. It can address Taleb's (2007) third knowledge quadrant – what you don't know you know. It can also reveal possible problems associated with mismatched expectations or sources of undue influence and limitation.

The Guided Story Exercise

The guided story exercise invites the client to tell a story about their career incorporating all of the cards from a particular pile. As with many of these exercises,

starting with the extremely unattractive pile can be most fruitful as people are often more definite about what they do not like rather than what they like (Tversky, 1972). Themes that emerge from the story as well as the context into which each card is placed can reveal a lot about a client's decision making and interests.

CONCLUSION

Assessment based on the Chaos Theory of Careers (Pryor & Bright, 2011) aims to achieve a complex understanding of a person's fractal pattern. Individuals do not exist in isolation, they are embedded within and interact with other dynamical complex systems – other people's attractors, and the emergent attractors that develop from the complex interactions of groups of people in and across organisations, communities and countries. Fractal patterns are infinitely complex, consequently any form of assessment will be incomplete and almost certainly inadequate in isolation. Thus chaos approaches to assessment avoid what Savickas (2005) called the 'epistemic war' between modernist and postmodernist, quantitative and qualitative approaches. Both nomothetic (convergent) and idiographic (emergent) approaches to assessment are required and are complementary. We agree with Snowden (2011) who, in considering the use of narrative, argues that "the goal is to utilize the rich context of narrative to inform sensemaking, and also to create objective data in which cognitive bias is minimized and we can place some reliance on the conclusions drawn" (p. 228).

We have described how the Congruence Interest Sort can be used in both quantitative and qualitative ways, but more importantly in complementary ways that provide a richer picture of the individuals' vocational interests. Further we sought to introduce qualitative techniques that coherently can be located within a chaos-based approach to assessment and to demonstrate more broadly how chaos-based assessment uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to inform individuals' career development.

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Robert G. L. Pryor
Australian Catholic University
Australia

Jim E. H. Bright
Australian Catholic University
Australia

MARK WATSON AND MARY MCMAHON

23. INTEGRATIVE STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The history of career assessment and the dominant role of quantitative career assessment in that history have been described in several chapters of this book. Integral to this discussion of career assessment are two potentially conflicting perspectives. The one is evident in the prevailing emphasis on quantitative career assessment that is philosophically grounded in a logical positivist approach that emphasises objectivity and linear cause/effect processes in measurement. The other perspective is the increasing focus on constructivist and social-constructionist approaches that emphasise narrative forms of subjective assessment (e.g., Amundson, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009). The latter movement reflects the recognition that the world of work is far more complex in the present century than it was at the start of the last century. Individual careers must now develop within a context of rapid and sustained change and an ever expanding global market.

These differing perspectives have led to an ongoing debate as to the adequacy of quantitative career assessment approaches with an increasingly diverse clientele and an increasingly fluid and complex work world (e.g., Savickas, 1993). The debate is not new. In the middle of the last century, Donald Super (1954) called for career practitioners to "use both methods, sometimes emphasizing one, sometimes the other" (p. 16). It is a call that has largely been unheeded, leading to what Watson and McMahon (2014) describe as "an unhelpful divide" (p. 631). There is a need to address the seemingly dichotomous positions of quantitative and qualitative career assessment, to explore complementary ways of career assessment (McMahon & Watson, 2012). This chapter describes the development of a qualitative Integrative Structured Interview process (McMahon & Watson, 2012; Watson & McMahon, 2014) and illustrates its potential use with specific quantitative career assessment instruments, Holland's (1985) Self-Directed Search (SDS) interest questionnaire and Super's (1970) Work Values Inventory-Revised (SWVI-R; Zytowski, 2006).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Integrative Structured Interview (ISI) process is grounded in a narrative career counselling approach known as storytelling which has been developed by McMahon and Watson (2010, 2011a, 2011b). The storytelling approach is itself grounded in

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 199–205.

the metatheory of the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2014). This approach allows for a reflective process in career counselling in which clients can contextualise their career development by telling stories that would encourage the core constructs of narrative career counselling such as meaning making, connectedness and agency. Importantly, the storytelling approach also emphasises learning which is central to the application of the STF (Patton & McMahon) and is embedded in storytelling through which clients can construct their own sense of future career development from the stories that they tell. This construction encourages clients to reflect and learn from their career development through a process of contextualisation, i.e., clients create a framework that helps them better understand their life experiences and the career development influences around them. Given the many influences in individuals' lives, clients' career stories are invariably complex and, while these stories may be rich in detail, they can also make it difficult for clients to connect and make sense of these stories. McMahon and Watson (2012) make the point that career assessment can similarly become disconnected from clients' understanding of their career life experiences. This calls for career assessment to be contextualised and it raises a critical question for career practitioners to consider: "how can a meaningful story be constructed around a career assessment process?" (McMahon & Watson, 2012, p. 444).

There are guidelines for career practitioners on how to incorporate qualitative career assessment within the career counselling process. McMahon and Patton (2002, 2006), for instance, have suggested nine guidelines. Briefly, these guidelines focus on three steps: personalising the process for clients; introducing assessment into the career counselling process; and conducting the career assessment process. Watson and McMahon (2014) point out, however, that there are no similar guidelines for career practitioners in adopting a qualitative approach to quantitative career assessment. The ISI provides a structured model that could assist career practitioners in this regard.

THE INTEGRATIVE STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

The ISI follows the nine guidelines suggested by McMahon and Patton (2002) in its encouragement of clients as active agents and career practitioners as facilitative guides (Watson & McMahon, 2014). The goal of the ISI is to create a narrative process within which clients can contextualise quantitative career assessment scores. In so doing, the ISI addresses a persistent criticism of quantitative career assessment, i.e., that it provides decontextualised scores and thus largely defines clients psychometrically. As the ISI reflects the storytelling approach, which itself is grounded in the STF of career development, clients are able to integrate and contextualise their story in terms of their past, their present and their future. Client agency is demonstrated in clients' reflection and meaning making of their career development stories to date, as well as in their constructing of future stories from the learning process that their active agency has encouraged.

In essence, the ISI provides a series of questions that encourage story crafting (McMahon & Watson, 2012; Watson & McMahon, 2014). These core questions can be adapted to the specific quantitative career assessment measure that the career practitioner has administered. At present, this process of adaptation has been illustrated in the career literature in relation to Holland's (1985) Self-Directed Search (McMahon & Watson, 2012) and Super's (Zytowski, 2006) Work Values Inventory-Revised (Watson & McMahon, 2014). These adaptations of the ISI core questions are summarised in the following subsection of the chapter. The generic questions of the ISI process can be grouped into six interrelated areas. The career practitioner would explore these areas with the client after initially reporting on the results that emerged from an earlier quantitative assessment process. These six sections of the ISI are briefly described below. The specific questions suggested for each section are illustrated in the following subsection of the chapter.

The initial step of *Crafting a story about the quantitative scores* encourages the client to engage with the quantitative scores that the career practitioner has reported. In providing personal explanations for their scores, clients begin to construct a subjective meaning to the scores. The second section, *Crafting a story about the relative value of the quantitative scores*, allows clients to consider the nature of the scores in terms of the overall psychometric test profile. Thus clients continue to construct their subjective meaning of the scores in relation to their self-understanding and the value they would place on the scores. The client may consider how different the scores are from each other and whether some scores have emerged as stronger or more important than others. In the third section of questions, *Crafting a story about the quantitative scores in life contexts*, clients move from a holistic understanding of the scores in relation to each other to a broader contextualisation of the scores in relation to the multiple life roles they play and the relationships they have.

In the fourth section, *Crafting a story about the quantitative scores in work contexts,* clients are provided with the opportunity of relating the quantitative scores to the specific context of their working lives. This context is defined in terms of the past, the present and the future, and it is inclusive of all forms of work (paid, unpaid, voluntary, or home-based). In the second last section of the story crafting questions, *Crafting a story about the quantitative scores through personal reflection*, clients are encouraged to implement an important step of narrative approaches to career counselling, that of reflection. Specifically, clients consider the contextualisation of their quantitative scores up to this point of the process and how that contextualisation could be understood in terms of their personal qualities, and their strengths and weaknesses. In the final step of the ISI, *Crafting an integrative future story using the quantitative scores and past and present experience,* clients are encouraged to consider their contextualisation of the quantitative scores in terms of constructing a future career story. The following subsection considers the application of these six groups of questions of the ISI to two specific measures, the Self-Directed Search and the Work Values Inventory-Revised.

APPLICATION OF THE INTEGRATED STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

A detailed description of the application of the ISI to Holland's (1985) Self-Directed Search (SDS) and Super's Work Values Inventory-Revised (SWVI-R; Zytowski, 2006) is available in the literature (McMahon & Watson, 2012; Watson & McMahon,

Table 23.1. Integrative Structured Interview Process for the SDS

Crafting a story about the code letters
1. What is your three letter code? 2. How would you explain each of these letters? 3. How would you explain the order of your three letter code?
Crafting a story about the code order
4. If you were to locate your letters on a scale from 1 – 10 where 1 was least important and 10 was most important, where would you locate the first letter, the second letter and the third letter? 5. How do you interpret the location of your letters on the scale? For example, are they close together, evenly spaced, or far apart?
Crafting a story about the code letters in life contexts
6. In what ways is the first letter of your code evident in your life? 7. In what ways is the second letter of your code evident in your life? 8. In what ways is the third letter of your code evident in your life? 9. What relationships do you see between your three letters and various facets of your life, such as your work, learning and other life roles?
Crafting a story about the code letters through personal reflection
10. What personal qualities have you identified in your reflection so far that are most important to you?
Crafting a story about the code letters in work contexts
11. If in general the dominant letter for your profession is …, what proportion of your work would reflect that letter? What work responsibilities do you have that accord with that letter? What letters would describe the other major responsibilities of your work role? 12. Of all your work responsibilities, which do you find most satisfying or rewarding and which are least satisfying and least rewarding and how do you relate these to your three letter code?
Crafting an integrative future story using the SDS code and past and present experience
13. Based on your reflection in the previous questions, what could you look for in future work opportunities in order to achieve greater work satisfaction?
© McMahon & Watson, 2010

2014). The present chapter provides the reader with two tables that illustrate the specific questions that could be asked for each of the six story crafting sections of the ISI.

Table 23.2. Integrative Structured Interview Process for the SWVI-R

Crafting a story about the work value scores
1. What are your highest ranked work values? 2. How would you explain each of these work values? 3. What are your lowest ranked work values? 4. How would you explain each of them?
Crafting a story about the rank order of the work value scores
5. How would you explain the overall rank order of your work values? 6. If you were to locate each of your 12 work values on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 was least important and 10 was most important, where would you locate them? (Note: The counsellor could use a flip chart, whiteboard, or a prepared scale) 7. How do you interpret the ranking of your work values on this scale? For example, are they close together, evenly spaced, or far apart?
Crafting a story about the work value scores in life contexts
8. In what ways are your highest work values evident in your life? 9. In what ways are your lowest work values evident in your life? 10. What relationships do you see between your highest and lowest work values and various facets of your life?
Crafting a story about the work value scores in work contexts
11. Of all your work responsibilities, which do you find most satisfying or rewarding and which are least satisfying and least rewarding and how do you relate these to your rank-ordered work values?
Crafting a story about work values through personal reflection
12. What work values have you identified in your reflection so far that are most important to you? 13. What work values have you identified in your reflection so far that are least important to you? 14. What other work values that are not listed are you aware of that you would like to consider in your career planning?
Crafting an integrative future story using the SWVI-R work value scores and past and present experience
15. Based on your reflection in the previous questions, what could you look for in future work opportunities in order to achieve greater work satisfaction?

The ISI and the SDS

Table 23.1 provides 13 questions across the six ISI sections that encourage clients to craft a story based on the quantitative assessment of their interests using their three-letter code of the SDS (Holland, 1985) in a structured interview process.

The ISI and the SWVI-R

Table 23.2 provides 15 questions across the six ISI sections that encourage clients to craft a story based on the quantitative assessment of the work values using their scores on the SWVI-R in a structured interview process.

While Tables 23.1 and 23.2 describe the same set of generic questions of the ISI process, they also illustrate how these questions can be tailored to the specific purpose of a quantitative measure.

CONCLUSION

The ISI represents a response to challenges faced by both quantitative and qualitative forms of career assessment. Quantitative career assessment has been criticised for its lack of contextualisation and its limited interpretation of an individual's career development. In the language of narrative psychology, quantitative career assessment, while cost-effective and highly structured, provides a 'thin story' of an individual's career development. The ISI provides an opportunity for the career practitioner and the client to enrich that story, to thicken it. The ISI also responds to challenges faced by more qualitative, narrative career approaches by providing a practical means of implementing story crafting in a structured manner. As such the ISI responds well to the persistent criticism that narrative career counselling approaches are more theorised about than practically applied (McMahon & Watson, 2012; Reid, 2006; Watson & McMahon, 2014).

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Mark Watson
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
South Africa

Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland
Australia

GIDEON ARULMANI

24. THE CULTURAL PREPAREDNESS APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT: THE QUESTION IS THE ANSWER

INTRODUCTION

An important proportion of the engagement between a career counsellor and a client focuses on bringing together information that would sharpen self-awareness for effective career decision making. The methods used to collect and organise this information could be influenced by the philosophic and theoretical models to which the career counsellor is committed. The rationale underlying methods of assessment and measurement have been the subject of extensive debate and the field has differentiated into the quantitative (psychometric) and the qualitative (non-psychometric) positions. This chapter presents a brief critique of these methods and provides an example of a blended approach to assessment for career guidance drawing upon the cultural preparedness model.

QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Based on trait-factor theory, the older, quantitative school was established on the premise that individuals possess a distinctive configuration of intrinsic traits and qualities which can be accurately measured and quantified. Hence, assessment methods emerging from the trait-factor position are usually quantitative-psychometric in their approach. Observations are expressed as quantities, usually in numbers (e.g., IQ = 121 or linguistic aptitude = 23/40). Tests are administered in a 'standardised' manner: testing conditions, test instructions, scoring and interpretation are expected to be uniform across test-takers and testing environments. The meaning of an individual's score is obtained by comparing performance against a "norm": the performance of a representative sample (e.g., a score of 23/40 on a test of linguistic aptitude may be interpreted as "below average" according to the norms of that test). The illustration in Box 1 provides an example of how quantitative measures would be administered.

Central to the usefulness of psychometric devices is the relevance of a test to the group on which it is used. Psychological tests are useful when they are:

- standardised and statistically validated for the group for which they are intended,
- age and gender appropriate,
- suitable to the cultural background of those on whom the test is administered,
- implemented by a person who has been trained in the administration of that test,
- scored accurately and interpreted on the basis of appropriate norms.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 207–218.

The quantitative approach reflects the logical positivist, empirical stance taken by the discipline of psychology in its attempt to emulate the physical sciences. An important feature of psychometric devices is that the limitations of the test and the ambit of its effective functioning are clearly articulated. Psychometric approaches are expected to declare the various kinds of error that are possible at the statistical level and the limits of a particular test, for example by reporting standard error and estimates of reliability and validity. *Objectivity*, therefore, lies at the heart of the quantitative method. However, a number of factors influence and even vitiate the successful implementation of psychological tests.

The validity and reliability of psychological tests are largely statistical and mathematical constructions and therefore require certain assumptions to be met if the results are to be valid and reliable. The reliance of quantitative methods on statistics has been pointed to as a limitation. This becomes particularly obvious when tests are adapted for use in contexts outside which they were originally constructed. For example, even though many psychological tests are developed using samples composed primarily of Anglo-Americans, normative data for the use of these devices with other racial, ethnic groups are rarely developed (Hansen, 2005). It is not uncommon for assessment instruments to be directly translated from the American and European versions, without re-standardising the translated versions (e.g., Leong & Hartung, 2000). On the rare occasions when translations are available, the quality of the translation and adaptation could vary (Cheung & Leong, 2003). Hambleton (2005) makes the observation that test adaptations require translators to find equivalent constructs, words, and expressions in the recipient language that accurately capture the psychological and linguistic underpinnings of the language in which the test was originally developed.

At the practical level, another trend that must be noted is that psychological assessment today is a corporatised business. Capturing markets and selling psychological test products commonly override the scientific principles upon which psychological testing rests. An often ignored reality, particularly in countries where career counselling is in its infancy, is a slackening of the rigour of training and certification for administrators of particular tests.

At the epistemological level, philosophic shifts in the world of psychology moved discourse from the functional-materialistic to the existential-humanistic position. Objectivity, the central feature of trait-factor theories, was itself questioned and psychological tests were criticised as being mechanistic and reductionist.

Criticisms of the quantitative method must also be considered at the political level. Commenting on this in her appraisal of the literature, Gottfredson (2003) points to the political stances of the time and in her opinion, "…civil rights and women's movements had made counseling psychologists reluctant to tell counselees they could not become whatever they wished to be" (p. 116). Against this background, resorting to psychological tests became politically 'incorrect'. Hence, the central assumption of the quantitative school that objectively examining a *sample* of behaviour can help to understand the *whole* of behaviour lost favour and the use of

Box 1
"They are all below average…"

EXCERPT FROM PERSONAL DIARY (ARULMANI, FEBRUARY, 1993)

Some years ago very soon after I completed a high level degree in Clinical Psychology, I was invited to assess the children of tribal families to identify their potential based on which they could be given scholarships for further education. The invitation was from the 86 year old head of the erstwhile royal family of the region who were owners of vast iron ore mines in the area. The fathers of these children were unskilled labourers in these mines and the mine owner's desire was to support the further education of the children so that their talents and potentials could be fruitfully realised. Brimming over with my new found knowledge about psychological testing I set off with my tests of intelligence, aptitude, interest and temperament. The tests were all administered in a "standardised" manner and the test instructions were meticulously followed. However, even during the administration of the tests, I noticed that almost all my young test-takers were "underperforming". Most of them could not use the various blocks and cards in my testing kit, their drawings were not "age appropriate", in fact they could not even correctly hold the pencils that I supplied. The tests were scored. As anticipated almost the entire group recorded a "below average" performance. I wrote up the various psychometric reports and handed them over. A few days later I was asked to meet the person who had commissioned the project. "From your reports it seems none of my children are worthy of a scholarship", he said to me. "Perhaps you are correct because you have taken a highly scientific approach. But before we come to this conclusion, could you visit these children in their homes and then tell me what your impressions are?" I didn't understand why that was necessary, since after all I had taken a "highly scientific approach". Anyway, I set off to the remote hamlets that were home to these children. As I approached, I began to see, scribbled on the rocks, examples of the most attractive child art – cavorting animals, soaring birds, twirling plants, dancing humans – executed in sophisticated (entirely age appropriate!) detail. The children and their families were thrilled to see me and I was treated as an honoured guest. Still amazed by the drawings I asked who had made the drawings and with what. Three of the "artists" in the group shyly came up and showed me lumps of iron ore – their drawing tools! These were the very ones who "underperformed" on my paper-pencil tests! Further, all around me I noticed an almost seamless involvement of children in what would be considered adult duties in urban environments: keeping the yard clean, caring for the livestock as well as their younger siblings, stoking the fire, were all activities that the children were quite naturally involved

(*Continued*)

in. I was introduced to one of their "board" games (the board being the floor) the complexity of which required the intellectual prowess of a chess master! I could go on with my description of what I saw in that little hamlet. But gradually the wisdom of these children's 86 year old benefactor dawned on me: my tests had "underperformed" and not these bright eyed children.

such approaches became limited in Western forms of career counselling. It must be noted here that this position faded from favour not only because of its limitations but also because of changes in wider political stances.

QUALITATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The qualitative school places the individual and the context, rather than the testing method or instrument, at the centre of the process. Qualitative approaches focus on quality rather than quantity and aim at describing rather than measuring or quantifying. They are non-numerical and rely on verbal, non-mathematical descriptions. Going back to an earlier example, the qualitative observer would not say linguistic aptitude = 23/40 but would *describe* the aptitude in terms of the person's fluency with words, sensitivity to shades of meanings and so on. Where quantitative approaches are mainly cross-sectional, qualitative methods attempt to take a longitudinal perspective and where quantitative approaches rely on psychometric testing, qualitative methods take a dialogic approach. Qualitative approaches are intentionally *subjective*.

Qualitative methods allow matters to be considered in detail and in depth. Since interactions between the counsellor and client are not limited to a set of standardised questions, the direction of an interview can be guided and thereby be more responsive to the client in real time. On the other hand, going back to the question of error, the quality of the data obtained relies heavily on the counsellor/assessor. There is a good chance that the biases, idiosyncrasies and preoccupations of the assessor influence the direction that the interview takes. The possibility that the assessor misses cues is strong. This can also contribute to error. In the case of quantitative methods, the error is known at least as an estimate. With qualitative approaches, error can remain unknown.

From a practical, implementational point of view, qualitative methods are well positioned to capture "real" experiences and identify subtleties and complexities. This can be more eloquent and compelling than data obtained through standardised quantitative procedures. However this requires a highly trained and experienced assessor, who is able to maintain objectivity while simultaneously eliciting subjective data. Qualitative approaches can generate large volumes of information which must be analysed and interpreted before this information can be considered to be "data".

This can be time consuming and, here again, a high degree of competence is required on the part of the assessor. Further, these methods imply intense engagements between client and counsellor which most often may be possible only at a one-to-one level or at best in small groups. This is a limitation that could be sharply felt in contexts where the numbers of clients who require career guidance runs into the thousands! Bringing interventions to scale in an economical, yet rigorous manner may be difficult through qualitative methods.

The qualitative school rests upon the epistemological notion of subjectivity. However, there appear to be contradictions at the theoretical and methodological levels. From the points made above, it seems that objectivity cannot but lie at the heart of qualitative assessment, albeit in a non-quantitative way. For example, the qualitative assessor is trained to maintain neutrality, to ensure that personal biases do not affect the collection and interpretation of information (e.g., Guba, 1981). This points in fact to a striving to be objective. It has been suggested that terms such as credibility and accuracy of representation are used in place of the constructs of reliability and validity used by the quantitative school (Agar, 1986). While the terminology may be different, the underlying epistemological meaning remains the same. The view could be taken therefore that differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are mainly at the methodological level. Epistemologically, both approaches strive for objectivity.

In summary, a critical evaluation of quantitative and qualitative approaches indicates that both are valuable and as with any single system, both have their limitations. It also seems that assessment as an exercise would be poorer if it rests on any *one* of these methods. The next section takes this point further.

ASSESSMENT AND THE CULTURAL INTERFACE

Underlying the points made in the previous paragraphs is the often ignored fact that culture is a powerful, yet unacknowledged, arbitrating factor. It is quite possible that a construct being measured or a method being used in a certain culture may be unknown, considered odd, or perhaps even improper in another culture. As described in the illustration in Box 1, the lack of sensitivity to cultural factors can completely subvert the assessment process, as well-intentioned as it may be. The theoretical positions discussed above are rooted in sociocultural processes that characterise the West and assume that the individual has the cultural freedom and the economic resources to be able to volitionally engage in career development. Watson (2013) points out that many of these conceptions are viable in a post-industrial work world. These ideas may not even be relevant in developing world economies where engagement with work continues to occur in pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial environments, undergirded by a collectivist form of social organisation.

At another, more practical level, clients' responses to the methods and outcomes of assessment have a distinct cultural flavour. Going by reports in the literature cited above, qualitative approaches seem to be well accepted in Western contexts.

However this acceptance does not seem to be reflected in other cultures. In India for example, formal, quantitative testing is an integral and expected part of the educational system. When families bring their high school aged adolescents for career counselling, parents as well as the adolescent *expect* aptitude testing and are confused and disoriented if the interaction ends without a set of "test-results" being produced. Families quite frequently express dissatisfaction when a career report does not carry quantitative information about the "level" of their child's aptitude and interest.

Against the background of this felt need, would-be career counsellors also expect that a course in career counselling would by default train them in psychometric tests of aptitude, interest and personality. For example, the single biggest 'lacuna' that has been pointed out about the courses we conduct in India is that we do not focus *enough* on psychometric testing. Similar findings have been noted in surveys of career guidance services in India (e.g., Almeida, Marques, & Arulmani, 2014), where psychometric evaluation is expected, valued and counted upon.

CULTURAL PREPAREDNESS AND ASSESSMENT FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

The cultural preparedness approach proposes that the manner in which individuals and groups are prepared by their cultures explains their engagement with work and career (Arulmani, 2014a). The model suggests that, while group-specific influences of enculturation establish a cultural preparation status *equilibrium,* external acculturative forces can *alter* this equilibrium.

The illustration in Box 1 shows how the assessor imposed an assessment framework for which the children in the study were *not* culturally prepared. The example also reveals various other contextually grounded observation points: the kinds of domestic chores the children were *naturally* involved in, their games, and the manner in which they engaged with each other, all these points would have yielded rich *qualitative* information had the assessor been sensitive to their cultural preparedness. Much of this information could not have been recorded by the standardised, quantitative approach that was taken. At the same time, the brief given to the assessor was to identify and articulate the potential profiles of *each* of these children, individually. Using a qualitative approach to achieve this project objective would have been difficult given the limitations of time and resources. It must also be acknowledged that the assessor was culturally prepared for a different approach to assessment, where culture is the academic and training environment in which he had been immersed. Viewed from the cultural preparedness perspective, neither the qualitative nor the quantitative methods were individually sufficient to achieve the assessment target. The cultural preparedness perspective would ask that *both* cultural backgrounds are valued and an attempt is made to meet the project's requirements as holistically as possible, always ensuring the resulting change is consonant with the group's existing career preparation status equilibrium (Arulmani, 2013).

THE STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE (SAQ):A BLENDED APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

Key Features of the Method

Based on the Cultural Preparedness model, the Strengths and Accomplishments Questionnaire (SAQ) (Arulmani, 2006, 2010) is an approach to aptitude assessment that attempts to blend qualitative and quantitative methods. The aim is to ensure that the testing method is contextually grounded and, at the same time, able to offer the assessor a framework within which objective measurements can be made. The structure of the instrument is based on the logic of Likert type scaling. Accordingly, the instrument comprises two parts: items (referred to as "activities") and response categories (referred to as "levels of accomplishment"). The items are anchored to an ordered continuum of response categories, with increasing numeric values assigned to each category. The framework for assessment is based on the Multiple Potentials Framework (MPF), that uses five factors: Linguistic, Analytical-Logical, Spatial, Personal, and Physical-Mechanical as categories (Arulmani & Nag-Arulmani, 2004). The MPF is based on an adaptation of Gardner's (1983) Theory of Multiple Intelligences. The method rests on the assumption that a person's *accomplishments* in real life reflect his/her talents and potentials. Accomplishment is defined as any activity in which the person has been consistently involved and which has been noticed by others. Items therefore comprise a list of *activities* through which a person could have registered accomplishments. Response categories reflect opportunities that actually exist in the person's life situation through which he/she can register various levels of accomplishment. Clients are required to select activities they have experienced and indicate the levels at which accomplishments have been registered for those activities.

Table 24.1 provides an example of the Linguistic section of an SAQ developed for young adults in Vietnam (Arulmani, 2014b). In this example, out of the six activities given, the client is required to choose any four based on the frequency of the occurrence of that activity in his/her life. Levels of accomplishment carry increasing numeric values. The sum of the respondent's selections is taken to indicate his/her accomplishment level for a given factor. In this example the test taker has scored 20 out of a maximum of 60 on the Linguistic factor. Scores are similarly plotted for the other factors. The aim of assessment is not to identify how *high* a person's score is. Instead the objective is to identify the *pattern* of scores across the five factors. Therefore, the SAQ lays greater emphasis on the *shape* rather than the *height* of the individual's potential profile. Interpretation of scores is not based upon norms. Instead the SAQ uses the person as his/her own norm, since the objective is not a norm-based comparison but rather a person-centred profiling. The counsellor is expected to report this profile to the client and discuss the findings with him/her. This profiling can also be a collaborative process between the client and the counsellor. Such a profile becomes the framework within which the client further

Table 24.1. Strengths and Accomplishments Questionnaire Extract from a Pilot Career Guidance Project in Vietnam (Arulmani, 2014b)

Linguistic Accomplishments			Levels of Accomplishment				
			I am involved in this activity at the personal level	I have participated in events / competitions in school	I have won prizes at school OR My work was selected for school presentations (e.g., school magazine) OR I was recognised in school for this activity	I have won prizes outside school (e.g., Youth Union or other public competitions) OR My work was selected for public presentations (e.g., Youth Union, Newspaper) OR I was recognised in public for this activity	My accomplishment has been recognised at a high level (District, Province, National) OR I got a job because of my expertise in this activity.
QU	Activities	Explanation	1	2	3	4	5
1	Transform thoughts and ideas into words	Write your ideas, thoughts and experiences into words so that people would like to read what your write. This maybe in the form of essays, articles, stories, poetry, reports	✓	✓			

(*Continued*)

Table 24.1. (*Continued*)

Linguistic Accomplishments			Levels of Accomplishment				
			I am involved in this activity at the personal level	I have participated in events / competitions in school	I have won prizes at school OR My work was selected for school presentations (e.g., school magazine) OR I was recognised in school for this activity	I have won prizes outside school (e.g., Youth Union or other public competitions) OR My work was selected for public presentations (e.g., Youth Union, Newspaper) OR I was recognised in public for this activity	My accomplishment has been recognised at a high level (District, Province, National) OR I got a job because of my expertise in this activity.
QU	Activities	Explanation	1	2	3	4	5
2	Talk to groups of people	Talk attractively so that people like to listen to you. Use language correctly. Be clear in your speech.	✓	✓	✓		
3	Debates and Discussions	Discussing questions, making arguments based on reliable information to prove a point.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

(*Continued*)

Table 24.1. (*Continued*)

4	Teach and train others	Coach others through tuitions, lectures, instructions and demonstrations. Help others develop skills to apply knowledge.	✓				
5	Using languages	Learning new languages. Translating. Checking the meanings of words. Checking if grammar and spelling are correct.					
6	Participate in drama and acting	Act out a story using words, actions or songs.					

explores the world of work. An individual with a Linguistic-Personal profile for example could explore careers such as journalism, law, social work or psychology. Someone with a Spatial-Physical-Mechanical profile could explore graphic design, architecture, civil engineering or furniture design.

Item Generation: A Blended Approach

The SAQ blends the qualitative with the quantitative and attempts to ensure that the instrument is culturally and contextually grounded. The activity list as well as the response categories are generated through qualitative and quantitative methods such as systematic observations, focus group discussions, checklists and open-ended questions. Participants for item generation include representative samples of the target group, community elders, teachers, parents, related government officials, NGOs and other welfare workers. A desk review of text books, reports and other relevant materials is also conducted. The information collected is then composed into items and iteratively presented to a relevant and informed local group that is qualified to comment on the selection of items for the final scale. Universality of relevance of the activity and response category to the target group is an important criterion for item selection. It is critical that the items and response categories finally selected lie within the potential test-taker's sphere of experience. When constructing such a device, it is also important to clearly indicate its limitations. A number of the response categories in the Vietnamese SAQ in Figure 24.1, for example, would not be relevant to other contexts. Hence the use of this SAQ is limited to Vietnam.

In summary, the SAQ is qualitative in the manner in which it allows the assessor to construct an assessment protocol that is in tune with the opportunities offered to the test-taker by his/her socioeconomic environment, schooling, and cultural background. It does not expect the individual to respond to items that may or may not be relevant to his or her situation but instead endeavours to tie in with the person's lived experience. It encourages the counsellor to dialogue with the client and guide him/her toward identifying and rating relevant aspects of his/her experiences. At the same time, resting as it does upon the psychometric logic of a rating scale, the method draws upon quantitative methodology.

CONCLUSION

An assessment by itself is a one-way communication if the exercise stops at 'assessing' and 'telling' the client. Findings need to be interpreted and explained to the client in a way that he/she understands and finds useful. A vital task facing the career counsellor therefore is to substantially help the career aspirant extract meaning from the process and results of an assessment. What is the *question* that guides the actions of the counsellor who assesses a client? Does the answer to this question emerge from a philosophic stance pertaining to assessment or does it emerge from the motivation to arrive at answers that are relevant and meaningful for the client?

If it were the latter, then it is critical that we acknowledge that different questions would be best answered by different methods. Some questions would respond best to a qualitative approach, while others may require measurement and quantification. It is with this final objective in view that this chapter carries the title that it does, for it is in the question indeed that the answer could lie.

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Gideon Arulmani
The Promise Foundation
India

PART 4

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: DIVERSE CONTEXTS

Part 4 of this book, *Qualitative Career Assessment: Diverse Contexts*, considers qualitative career assessment in contexts other than able western, middle class settings. In particular, the chapters in Part 4 focus on the use of qualitative career assessment with people with disability, people who experience disadvantage, and people in non-western international contexts. Given the limited profile of qualitative career assessment in the field of career development to date, this important and timely part of the book reminds readers of the expansion of career development and concomitantly career assessment to client groups and settings that have not traditionally been well attended to.

LAURA NOTA, SARA SANTILLI AND SALVATORE SORESI

25. QUALITATIVE APPROACHES TO CAREER ASSESSMENT WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Considering the times we are living in, we can say that change is a significant actor. Even if it has always characterised human beings' history, change is now going so fast that new ways of thinking about society, well-being, the future and work are emerging (Nota, Soresi, Ferrari & Ginevra, 2014).

During recent years, at least in Western countries, life expectancy has increased, people are faced with less illnesses, hunger and cruelty; children tend to be born in a planned way and live in multicultural contexts. Professional activities are changing, as well as working life, which tends to be characterised by the simultaneous presence of different activities which take place in different contexts, with different people. The new technologies and the virtual world play a predominant role in our society, with diverse advantages for all (Serres, 2012).

At the same time, however, we are thinking increasingly about the future in a negative way, with concern that opportunities and possibilities are decreasing. And all of this seems to affect particularly the most vulnerable populations of the youth, the elderly, those with lower educational levels, and those with health problems and disability (Nota, Ginevra & Santilli, in press).

It has been argued that to make predictions about the evolution of work and education systems, we can no longer rely on linear predictions, which are now considered inaccurate (Soresi, Nota, Ferrari & Sgaramella, 2013). The 'past dependency' by scholars and practitioners is characterised as a disadvantageous strategy. To avoid being losers, even in the context of counselling and career counselling, it is necessary to continue to innovate, to provide an intensive use of human capital, creativity, and to overcome old patterns (Moretti, 2012).

Therefore, in our opinion, those who are interested in career counselling, rehabilitation, and psychological difficulties prevention should declare their indignation at the high rates of injustice that exist, and should invest in what can be used to cope with the current times. Career practitioners should instill hope and optimism, and help their clients, especially those who are most vulnerable, to resist with determination and courage in the face of difficulties, as well as promote solidarity and cooperation.

In line with these considerations, after presenting a theoretical approach in order to anchor our reflections, we describe some qualitative procedures that career counsellors can apply to people with disability.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 221–229.

INCLUSION AND CAREER CONSTRUCTION: A CRUCIAL COMBINATION IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITY

Nowadays implementing a counselling activity, especially for the professional future of individuals with disability, has a twofold meaning: first, paying attention to contextual determinants which, if adequately stimulated and involved, could reduce the risk of marginalisation; and second, favouring preventive and supportive interventions that respect the centrality of individuals and of their rights, including the right to strongly personalised help. Engaging in career counselling and helping people with difficulties means working in favour of inclusion and of making contexts that accommodate people with all their diversities, and that aim at developing and using their human capital in order to enable everybody to learn, work and collaborate with others (Shogren, 2013). That requires effort, choices, and strategies to handle socio-cultural prejudice, to eliminate marginalising social barriers, and to strengthen all individuals' active participation (Nota, Soresi, & Ferrari, 2014).

As recently maintained by Ferrari, Sgaramella and Soresi (in press), a further important contribution in this direction has been provided by the Life Design (LD) approach (Savickas et al., 2009), which was devised to cope with issues of career construction in the current times of crisis. The LD approach suggests relinquishing linear and individual perspectives in favour of more circular and contextual conceptions as well as avoiding language and analysis that are too specific and restrictive in favour of more holistic, interdisciplinary, meta-theoretic forms. Emphasis is given to narration as a way that characterises the construction of individuals' identity systems, which develops and articulates according to the contexts people find themselves in. Within this approach it seems clear that people with and without disabilities can, through narration, redefine themselves as individuals, identify significant aspects of their life, and give new sense and meaning to their difficulties (Dunn, & Burcaw, 2013). Further, within Life Design careful attention is paid to dimensions such as hope, self-determination, and adaptability, also to people with disabilities (Santilli, Nota, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2014), as well as to recognising the role that aspects such as courage, collaboration and solidarity can play.

It is on these aspects that we would like to focus attention, as well as on qualitative procedures, which are typically recommended for individuals that present strong language and communication difficulties, and a tendency towards delegation and passiveness (Soresi & Nota, 2010; Watson & McMahon, 2014).

QUALITATIVE PROCEDURES FOR ADAPTABILITY, LIFE THEMES, HOPE, AND COURAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY

Over recent years within the Life Design approach and the theory of career construction, a small number of techniques and tools specifically for life-design counselling has been devised which, with minor adjustments, can also be used with individuals with sensory and motor disabilities and, with some modification, also

with individuals with intellectual disability. Among such instruments, of particular interest are those that take into consideration aspects such as career stories, adaptability and life themes, hope, and courage.

Career Stories and Narratives on Adaptability and Life Themes

An instrument that can be used and that has shown its validity when interacting with individuals with diverse abilities is the Career Style Interview (CSI) (Savickas, 2011). This interview gathers information in the form of stories told by the client about their life structure (roles), adaptability strategies, motivations, and personality style. Studies carried out at the *University Center for Services and Research on Disability, Rehabilitation and Integration* of the University of Padova show that this interview can be used successfully with individuals with mild intellectual disability (Santilli, 2014).

In order to encourage career narratives that can help draw out significant themes in people's lives, we also propose our '*Cards of proverbs, mottos, and thoughts*' (Soresi & Nota, 2010). More than 200 cards stimulate reflections on personal aspects that can affect individuals' perceptions of the future and planning. Based on clients' interests and problems, the career counsellor can choose specific cards. This preliminary selection is particularly important when working with individuals with intellectual disability who might not fully comprehend the meaning of some proverbs or mottos (Santilli, 2014). The selected cards (with a minimum of ten and a maximum of fifty) could be associated with themes such as: a) *internality/externality* (e.g., 'If you want something done, do it yourself' 'Everybody is the architect of his own fortune' 'Man proposes, God disposes'); b) *assertiveness/passiveness* (e.g., 'It never rains, but it pours' 'The last word is mine!' 'Right you are, if you think so' 'Be silent!'); c) *extroversion/introversion* (e.g., 'In search of an author' 'Silence is assent'); d) *decision-indecision* (e.g., 'To have too many irons in the fire' 'Without ifs and buts'); e) *coping strategies* (e.g., 'To mix business with pleasure' 'The early bird catches the worm' 'To run with the hare and hunt with the hounds' 'Barriers are made to be broken'); f) *Self-assertion/self-determination* (e.g., 'Make it happen' 'Move over' 'To be a white crow' 'My name is Bond, James Bond' 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going'); g) *optimism/pessimism* (e.g., 'Crossing the Rubicon' 'To sail before the wind' 'To go full throttle' 'Mission: impossible' 'Yes, we can'); h) *confidence and hope* (e.g., 'A wonderful thought' 'It is better to believe you are an acrobat than a dwarf' 'Nothing ventured, nothing gained'). After selecting the proverbs or mottos that are most suited, those that are not, and those that are slightly suited to the person, the career counsellor can examine events that have left a mark, the role of significant others, fears, certainties, and uncertainties.

Hope

As it has been frequently reiterated, counselling activities should instill confidence in an individual's personal resources and strengths and foster a positive vision about

the future. This is especially relevant when career counsellors work with people who face obstacles, barriers, impediments, and superficial and stereotypical views about their professional possibilities. In these situations it is important to devote particular attention to hope, the motivation that feeds on the possibility of achieving outcomes and goals (Snyder, 2000) and, for this reason, the use of qualitative procedures is particularly encouraging. We usually ask people to describe the positive and hopeful thoughts that characterise them and how they represent their future (Capozza & Ginevra, 2014). The work carried out by Lopez, Ciarlelli, Coffman, Stone, and Wyatt (2000) has inspired our interview 'About hopes and dreams' which is schematically summarised in Table 25.1 (Soresi, 2013). The answers provided can be analysed by searching for hopes for the future, for events people would like to happen and related reasons, for their capacity to detect short, medium and long term goals that characterise life and professional trajectories, and useful strategies to achieve them.

Courage

Current working environments require not only a positive vision about the future, but also the ability to cope with a more harsh and complex reality. Workers are increasingly asked to consider a request to hold a job position not in line with their

Table 25.1. Interview 'About hopes and dreams'

a) Can you write down/tell something about your hopes for your professional future?
b) During the course of our lives we can identify and set different goals for our future. Goals may concern something to pursue in the short term, such as saving enough money to buy something needed or greatly desired. Goals may also concern long-term matters, such as completing a course of study, learning a profession, starting a family, and so on.

What is your most important goal?

Try to summarise a recent event or fact that describes what you have done or are currently doing to achieve this important goal. For instance, the most important goal for somebody was to improve his relationship with his father and he described a recent conversation he had with him to achieve his goal.

In describing your goal and what you have done recently in order to achieve it, try to add a few details. You can start "your story" by saying what your most important goal is and why it is so important. You can then continue your story by describing a fact that happened and its relationship with the goal, where it happened, who was involved, your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Finally, you can describe the meaning this may have for you and for your future life.

Try to summarise a recent event or fact that describes what you have done or are involved in, your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Finally, you can describe the meaning this may have for you and for your future life.

career desires. Moreover, in present work contexts phenomena such as corruption, illegal employment, labour exploitation and business failure are occurring. These new challenges highlight the need to 'arm' people's hope with courage. The first requirement for a courageous act is the presence of motivation to overcome personal fears and uncertainties, or to engage in some activities for common benefits in spite of the risk involved (e.g., fight against crime, complain about injustice, engage in active citizenship actions; Hannah, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2011).

Considering the suggestions provided by Capozza and Ginevra (2014), it is important to emphasise the role of courage in career counselling activities, especially when involving people with disability who generally have to face a considerable number of barriers, mostly psychological in nature. We have therefore decided to describe some suggestions from the literature that can help in focusing attention on this dimension. In the Courage Interview (Muris, 2009), for example, after providing a definition of courage ("Courage is when you face something despite the fear feelings"), interviewees are asked the following questions: "Can you tell me something about this courage situation?" and "On a scale from 1 to 9, how much courage do you think you had in this situation?". Participants' answers can be discussed by trying to emphasise courageous action to reinforce individuals, or to help them reflect upon the execution of a physically risky action or how to deal with fearful and scary experiences, or with painful treatments to help others who experience similar difficulties (Capozza & Ginevra, 2014).

Another example is provided by Koerner's study (2014) that stimulated workers' narrations in order to investigate their courage. The author asked participants to describe an experience in which they experienced courage personally or from another, describing also when the experience occurred, its circumstances, other people involved, feelings and emotions, and consequences and outcomes. Finally, the author asked participants to assess on a four point Likert-type scale the degree of courage associated with the action described and to briefly explain the score given. The analysis of their answers highlighted a number of aspects of courage, such as the presence of fear and uncertainty about the possible consequences, the propensity to see the need to persevere, the ability to cope with obstacles, especially those related to management of power on the part of others, with new and creative ideas.

The instruments described above allow the active participation of individuals with disability in career counselling. Moreover, they can be used in a small group setting where everyone can learn something about individual differences (Soresi & Nota, 2010).

CONTEXT INVOLVEMENT TO FACILITATE THE CAREER CONSTRUCTION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The psychosocial vision about disability, the constructivist approach on professional identity, and the Life Design approach on future planning recognise the central role that should be given to context in order to 'carry out projects for the future'

through social and work inclusion actions. Career counselling activities, in our opinion, cannot be separated from actions aimed to favour work inclusion. For this reason, on the one hand, instruments that allow people with disabilities to show their specificities, expectations and desires, and, on the other hand, the involvement of parents, employers, colleagues and all those who might be interested in favouring these projects, are both necessary.

Thoughts, Attitudes and Attention to Cooperation of Employer and Colleagues

Considering employers and colleagues, paying attention to their thoughts and attitudes towards work inclusion could be important (Nota, Santilli, Ginevra & Soresi, 2013). Gilbrid, Stensrud, Vandergoot and Golden (2003) suggested a focus on diversity, work flexibility, workers' needs, personalisation and performance rather than a focus on disability. Further, to achieve higher levels of satisfaction in workers and employers, it is important to concentrate on the significant role that monitoring and supervising the quality of work inclusion, training opportunities and continuing collaboration with local social services could play.

In Table 25.2 the interview that we usually use at the beginning of the collaboration with employers in order to favour the inclusion of persons with disabilities is summarised. First of all, to draw their attention to workers with disability, we highlight such workers' strengths, what they can do, their interests, what they might learn and so on, thus avoiding the use of diagnostic labels and lists of difficulties that could increase negative attitudes and low expectations (Nota et al., 2013).

The psychosocial vision about disability and inclusive models suggest that alongside employability and career preparedness consideration should also be given to solidarity and cooperation which could strengthen the management of crises and difficulties. In fact, cooperation requires the ability to pursue goals consistent with those of others even within relational contexts that may easily stimulate the creation of sub-groups and strengthen competitive dynamics. Tyler and Blader (2013) argue that people who are characterised by low levels of cooperation tend to be selfish and to not consider the group as an entity. Conversely, people who are characterised by high levels of cooperation tend to promote group welfare and achieve common goals. In the work context it is possible to distinguish two forms of cooperation, mandate and discretionary cooperation. The first takes place when people behave according to norms and social roles, the second takes place when people behave in a cooperative manner, regardless of what is required by their role. Providing support, explaining in a different way, giving help, even if these are not planned work tasks, are indicators of discretionary cooperation forms. The more employers and workers promote and support discretionary cooperation, the more these people could turn heterogeneity into a real resource and the context could become more inclusive. In line with this, the prompt questions reported in Table 25.3 can be used to identify people who can help more than others to create a cooperative working environment.

Table 25.2. Suggestions to encourage positive reflections on work inclusion

Presenting a worker with disability Mister C.F., despite an intellectual disability and evidence of reading and understanding difficulties, was able to attend a vocational training school enrolled for a mechanical course. Teachers described him as systematic, persistent and friendly in his relationships with peers. He has professional experience as a warehouseman in a metal-mechanic company. Unfortunately, due to the economic crisis, the company went bankrupt and the entire staff was fired.
C.F. recalls with pleasure the experience in the metal-mechanic company because he received appreciation from his foreman and because he started establishing some relationships in that period. His superiors described him as a reliable, timely and nice person. They also described him as an accurate worker in simple tasks entrusted to him. In particular, he was employed in packaging, checking and monitoring the exit step of some products from the warehouse. Over time, he improved his accuracy in his performance; the execution time for the task had also gradually reduced. Most of all he liked (here the career counsellor describes some activities he preferred), and his colleagues looked for him especially for (here the career counsellor describes some actions for which colleagues sought his help and support)....
What activities could Mister C.F. initially carry out at your company? What tasks should Mister C.F. learn to be able to work independently? Who could supervise and support him? How could Mister C.F. be a resource for you? Who could support the inclusion of Mister C.F. at work?

Lack of employment is a social tragedy that affects millions of people today, and especially individuals with disability. It perpetuates the spread of negative stereotypes about disability among professionals, who are often not immune to negative expectations about their clients' likelihood of finding and keeping a job (Santilli et al., 2014).

We believe that to overcome such a situation and to guarantee for individuals with disability a professional life which is both rich and enriching, we need to refer to inclusive models and to the values of participation. We must go beyond diagnostic labels, which today are still full of negative elements, underline deficits and special needs, and necessarily trigger disadvantageous communication processes, hardly focused on identifying interesting abilities and characteristics (Soresi et al., 2013). It is also necessary to give voice to these individuals, to their dreams, their interests, their hopes, and the strategies they can use to favour the construction of their professional life (Ferrari et al., in press; Nota et al., in press; Savickas et al., 2009). It is just as important to help such individuals realise what they wish most, by involving the family and work contexts so that support can increase and barriers diminish.

Table 25.3. Suggestions to encourage reflection on cooperation

Thinking about your employees/co-workers and the work in which they have been cooperating. Having 100 "cooperation" tokens available, try to deliver them to people according to how they helped in pursuing important goals. If you have been actively cooperating, you can include yourself amongst people to whom tokens should be assigned. How many tokens do you attribute to each person? Why? What was the role each of them played in pursuing the goal? What skills has each of them shown? What benefits has the cooperation led to? How could cooperation be encouraged? How much would you invest in order to improve cooperation?"

We also wish to emphasise that the instruments we have presented require 'practitioners of the future' to be prepared both on the issues of inclusion and disability and on current issues such as career construction and life design. Career practitioners must be able to give emphasis to dimensions that are significant in the present times and, especially, they must act to the advantage of individuals with disability, working for the creation of inclusive contexts in which professional planning can be realised. In other words, they will have to act as change agents, and facilitators of reflection and inclusion.

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Laura Nota
University of Padova
Italy

Sara Santilli
University of Padova
Italy

Salvatore Soresi
University of Padova
Italy

TERESA M. SGARAMELLA, LEA FERRARI AND MARIA CRISTINA GINEVRA

26. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

Applications to Individuals with Multiple Health Disorders

INTRODUCTION

Relevant changes in the world of work require career counsellors to reflect on their practice in order that it keeps pace and maintains relevancy. There is the need to more directly and actively involve clients and to closely understand and address their needs.

Besides better known difficult life conditions such as outcomes from neurological disabilities or psychiatric disorders, which have already captured the attention of career counsellors, there are new, emerging and, at the same time, frequently occurring conditions to which our attention should be directed, such as eating disorders (EDs) and substance use disorders (SUDs). Although epidemiological studies suggest that an increasing number of people are experiencing these multifactorial health disorders, career counsellors seem to have a limited awareness of the high probability that they will encounter future clients with these difficulties, and will need to be ready to address their questions which often refer to their life designing and future planning (Adams, 2009; Hall, Fong, Yong, Sansone, Borland, & Siahpush, 2012).

The interest in qualitative career assessment and, in particular, the seeking of patterns or themes in individual narratives, and recognising the relevance of designing a life story within the realities of a client's life contexts is shared by several qualitative approaches (e.g., Savickas et al., 2009; Watson & McMahon, in press). In our chapter we will mainly refer to Life Design (LD; Savickas et al., 2009) which emphasises narrative procedures and the identification of themes and new meanings in order to activate deconstruction, reconstruction, and co-construction processes which are particularly relevant in identity construction and future time perspective.

As regards identity, the construction of self is the result of the interaction between individuals and their environment and career construction results in the manifestation of self and in its continuous modification due to new experiences and role models (Savickas et al., 2009). A sense of connectedness among events across past, present and future (Savickas, 1997) may influence many career-related choices (Hesketh, 2000), as well as values assigned to long-term career goals and strategy planning (De Bilde, Vansteenkiste, & Lens, 2011). In this chapter we will focus on

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 231–238.

qualitative career assessment studies and on their contribution to understanding the impact these conditions may have on the career and life designing of individuals. We will analyse eating disorders first and then proceed to substance use disorders.

EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders, namely anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating, are characterised by a set of inappropriate behaviours related to eating. Their multiple aetiology is still unclear. European data collected by the European Study of the Epidemiology of Mental Disorders as part of the World Mental Health Survey initiative (ESEMeD-WMH) project suggest that lifetime prevalence estimates of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge ED, sub-threshold binge ED, and of any binge eating are 0.48%, 0.51%, 1.12%, 0.72%, and 2.15%, respectively (Preti et al., 2009). Recent estimates for the US population range from 0.6%, to 4.5% (Hudson, Hiripi, Pope, & Kessler, 2007). Attractive people are considered more intelligent, sociable and popular (Bell, 2012) and are more likely to be employed and have greater job success (Bell, 2012; Fletcher, 2009). Pressure to be thin and attractive puts adolescent women at risk of EDs (Sabik & Tylka, 2006).

Identity, Professional Identity and Future Orientation Issues in Qualitative Studies on EDs

Studies on identity in EDs have mainly focused on social and feminist identity. Research based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982) emphasises that these women perceive their identity as a stigma in many social contexts and that some of them find a new and positive ingroup ED identity attending, for example, websites that ‘promote’ anorexia nervosa, known as pro-ana websites (Giles, 2006; Rich 2006). Ison and Kent (2010) conducted a semi-structured interview with eight young women and, using interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003), found their social identity revolved around three main themes: (a) shifts in social identity, that is changes occurring during the disorder progression, in terms of pros and cons and in being perceived as mentally ill; (b) outgroup perceptions and influences that refer to feelings about how they are perceived by others and difficulties in disclosing their disorder to family, friends and professionals; and (c) EDs as an ingroup perception which refers to how they view their diagnosis as well as the support and comprehension they provide to other people with similar disorders.

Research on feminist identity shows EDs are associated with lower attention for thinness and a more positive body image (Murnen & Smolak, 2009). A protective role against EDs has been attributed to specific identity components involving action and control over life, such as empowerment and active commitment (Sabik & Tylka, 2006), and also self-efficacy beliefs (Kinsaul, Curtin, Bazzini, & Martz, 2014). These studies suggest a complex constellation of personal and social factors revolving around the acceptance or non-acceptance of the problem. In this regard,

Patching and Lawler (2009) used a life-history interview with 20 Australian women recovering from ED and found that the meaning they attribute to their illness and recovery experiences focused on three main themes: (a) being able to feel a sense of control over their lives and rediscover it thanks to participating in life activities; (b) resolving conflicts and finding a sense of peace through social skills development and connectedness with families and friends; and (c) rediscovering their sense of self and unique identity throughout a new and self-determined engagement in the occupation. From the analysis outlined, it clearly emerges that identity issues play a relevant role in life designing and may significantly contribute to the recovery process.

Even if at a first glance career issues do not seem to play a central role, EDs strongly impact career construction. Personal factors such as difficulties in cognitive functioning, physical strength and endurance, limitations in psychosocial skills (i.e., efficacy beliefs, social skills), together with environmental constraints (i.e., stigma, prejudice, absenteeism because of treatment), may reduce career exploration activities, constrain the range of choices taken into account, and restrict participation in study and work life (Tsitsika, Tzavela, Apostolidou, Antonogeorgos, Sakou, & Bakoula, 2013).

Qualitative career assessment instruments successfully used with people with EDs underline the relevance of career issues for people with EDs. These include the Catastrophizing Interview (Vasey & Borkovec, 1992) that aims at exploring worries women have, their likelihood of occurrence, their severity and the amount of distress they might provoke, and Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), an inductive approach aimed at identifying emerging themes. Sternheim et al. (2012), for instance, explored the worries of 45 young adults with and 37 young adults without EDs using the Catastrophizing Interview. According to their analysis, career concerns represent the first worry for people without this disease and the second one for people with EDs after the disorder itself. Similarly, Braun and Clarke, using qualitative thematic analysis, found that career concerns mentioned by 54% of people without and by 28% of people with EDs referred mainly to work (i.e., being unable to carry out one's job well or not making progress) and education (i.e., not finishing one's course, not passing exams, or not making career progress). When these individuals start reducing their obsession for food their energy and time could be successfully redirected to career issues (Sonnenberg & Chen, 2003).

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) include drug addiction, alcohol and other substance use and abuse. The maladaptive pattern of substance use associated with SUDs leads to clinically significant impairments or distress and result in a failure to fulfil major roles at work, school, or home (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). According to a recent report from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMDDA, 2014) throughout Europe, more than 1.210.000 individuals have requested or were under treatment for substance use consequences, far more

than 70% of whom are under the age of forty. This condition places a serious burden on social institutions including family, education, and economic systems (Birnbaum, White, Schiller, Waldman, Cleveland, & Roland, 2011; Slaymaker & Owen, 2006).

Identity, Professional Identity and Future Orientation Issues in Qualitative Studies on SUDs.

Identity issues are a relevant theme in the SUDs literature. Identity is seen as a crucial variable in maintaining change (Moos & Moos, 2007; White & Cloud, 2008) and in a more holistic life course approach to treatment (Toriello, Bishop, & Rumrill, 2012).

From qualitative research studies it clearly emerges that the social identity of people with SUDs develops in parallel with a 'junkie' identity, that is an identity characterised by drug use injecting, together with dirtiness, disease, deviancy, dangerousness, laziness, and absence of will. Malins, Fitzgerald, and Threadgold (2006), interviewing 14 drug user women, found that they purposefully used avoidance strategies, such as dropping out of treatment because it was shared with "junkies". Excluding themselves from the 'junkie' category helped them carefully manage information about their discreditable identities (Radcliff & Stevens, 2008).

Additionally, McIntosh and McKeganey (2000), analysing 70 semi-structured interviews, found that constructing a non-addict identity was focused on three key areas: (a) the reinterpretation of their drug using lifestyle; (b) the reconstruction of their sense of self; and, finally, (c) the provision of convincing explanations for their recovery.

A recently developed semi-structured interview (Nota & Soresi, 2007) has been used by Di Maggio, Ginevra, and Nota (2013) to study time perspective (TP) in a group of 38 men (27 heroin addicts and 11 cocaine addicts) whose mean age was 34.82 year (SD = 8.47) with a long history of drug addiction. When asked to think to their future in five years, half of the participants (19; 50%) reported the possibility of a change in their future compared to their current situation and specified details related to future events ("I imagine myself working in a supported employment centre which I already know"); 6 (15.8%) mentioned the desire to go back to their previous life (work, relationships and so on) or to continue in the same job they learned during the rehabilitation program such as being a coach or horse driver. Eleven (28.9%) participants were unable to project themselves into the future or to even think to a mid-term future ("I see myself nowhere", "I see it all black"). Similar, more marked, patterns emerged when they were asked to project themselves in 10 years time. Considered as a whole, and in agreement with other recent studies (e.g., Beenstock, Adams, & White, 2010; Sansone et al., 2013), this data confirms the difficulty of individuals with SUDs in orienting themselves toward the future.

Additionally, when analysing the content of the future goals across life domains in a group of young adults with a personal history of various substance abuse (Sgaramella, 2013), their answers suggest that these young adults emphasise goals

related to emotional relationships (nearly 24%), activities related to free time interests (14%) and social relationships (14%). Their priorities suggest a peculiar pattern characterised by a limited active and responsible role in their lives. Furthermore, when asked several open questions dealing with the extent and type of their involvement in reaching the goals they had just listed and prioritised, their answers highlighted that, although actively involved in their goals, their self-confidence in persevering with goals and knowledge of specific actions and strategies needed were poor. Finally, by explicitly asking about the sense and meaning of prioritised goals, the interview highlighted that the sense and meaning of the goals were not clear to them and this may influence the possibility of reaching especially long term goals, such as work and family-related goals.

In another recent study (Sgaramella, 2014), twenty adults with a SUD, whose age ranged from 25 to 45 years, were asked to answer the My System of Career Influences (MSCI; McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2013) qualitative career reflection booklet. They were required to construct a career map through a step-by-step visual process and to reflect on the current and contextual constellation of influences on their career development. When thinking about their past, present and future, it emerged that their past was full of events and influences from different systems; their present was characterised by the rehabilitation program activities and themes debated. Interestingly, narratives also underlined that half of them (47%) had repeatedly faced transitions following jobs lost and had already faced more changes in their work activities than their healthy peers (average frequency of changes was five versus three). Reported attitudes and behaviours undertaken in responding to transitions and in adapting to new situations highlighted the difficulty in deciding what to do and control from the environment. Rarely did the adults report being persistent, supported, and ready to take opportunities.

Comments provided by a young male after reflecting on the diagram constructed during the activity (Sgaramella, 2014) are remarkable and highlighted the following: "I've realised that being a good father will be more important than my past. I've underscored it so much in the diagram. I can now start imagining my life without using drugs, which I believe was impossible in the past. But I need to put more in the diagram to fill my life with many things …". These words underline that through a qualitative reflection process this young adult had the opportunity to come to understand and visualise his story and plan for the next chapter, for a new episode or step in his life design.

CONCLUSION

Although with a different emphasis and research focus, the qualitative career assessment studies reported in our analysis underline the usefulness of this methodology in understanding the relevance of identity and future orientation issues. They highlight, in fact, the nature of the worries individuals with multiple health disorders might have, such as their social image, their low considerations

about their self and their coping skills. Goals set for the recovery process encompass, in fact, improving self-esteem, body satisfaction, problem solving skills, and the motivation to overcome the eating problems (Vanderlinden, Buis, Pieters, & Probst, 2007). Career issues arise and assume relevance when the attention toward eating issues begins to lessen.

On the other hand, studies on substance use and abuse provide further support for the relevance of identity construction in fostering positive changes. Individuals with SUDs who are successful in creating and maintaining new non-addictive 'identities' are more likely to reduce or even eliminate their involvement in these activities. Identity seems a crucial variable in developing a recovery capital, i.e., personal and social resources individuals have access to (Atherton & Toriello, 2012; Hser, Longshore, & Anglin, 2007), and in maintaining change, whether it is for safer behaviour, moderation, or abstinence (White & Cloud 2008).

Results from qualitative career assessment studies suggest the relevance for counsellors working with ED and SUDs to be actively involved in deconstructing the addictive identity by helping such clients identify in their stories dominating expectations or insidious ideas that suppress more life-enhancing alternatives. This will enable subsequent construction of a new, non-addictive identity. Assisting individuals with EDs or SUDs in developing intentionality will help them articulate intentions and anticipations regarding possible selves (Savickas et al., 2009). Placing the problem in a new story, putting it into a new perspective and specifying activities to actualise the established identity will facilitate co-constructing future goals (Savickas et al.).

Future systematic studies using qualitative career assessment procedures are then needed in order to more deeply understand themes and detail intervention goals in career construction and life designing.

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Teresa M. Sgaramella
University of Padova
Italy

Lea Ferrari
University of Padova
Italy

Maria Cristina Ginevra
University of Padova
Italy

ALAN YIM, SHUI-WAI WONG AND MANTAK YUEN

27. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT APPROACHES IN HONG KONG

Reflections from a Confucian Cultural Heritage Perspective

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we first reflect on the current use of career assessment generally and qualitative career assessment specifically in the context of Chinese students in Hong Kong. We review general approaches to career assessment, guidance and support in Chinese schools, colleges and universities, summarising strengths and weaknesses in current provisions. We then discuss briefly an evaluation of the Chinese version of My System of Career Influences Reflection Activity (MSCI; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005) with Chinese secondary students. Finally, issues in qualitative assessment in career counselling in the Asian Confucian heritage context are highlighted.

Career assessment is "a process of gathering data about a person in relation to a career choice, decision, or issue" (Leong & Leung, 1994, p. 247). Its major goal is to facilitate exploration of career options and opportunities, to assist with the making of effective career choices, and to resolve any career concerns that an individual may have (Walsh & Betz, 1990). For many years, career assessment has been considered an integral part of career counselling (Whiston & Rahardja, 2005) and traditionally quantitative assessment tools have been used for this purpose, while qualitative approaches have been less evident (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003). This is certainly true of the situation in Asia.

Quantitative career assessment relies mainly on the use of standardised psychometric instruments (tests, inventories and scales) to generate scores that can be used to distinguish among a group of people with different psychological traits and aptitudes (Hartung & Borges, 2005). The major concerns in quantitative career assessment relate to the standardisation of the administration procedure, test reliability and validity, scoring and interpretation of results, and the applicability of the test norms to a specific group or an individual.

Qualitative career assessment, on the other hand, "entails subjective appraisals via interviews, life histories, and narratives that yield stories to indicate life patterns and themes" (Hartung & Borges, 2005, p. 440). Examples of qualitative career assessment tools include card sorts, genograms, lifelines (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003), Life Career Assessment (LCA), and the Life Role Analysis (LRA; Gysbers, 2006). Using a qualitative career approach, issues of standardisation

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 239–246.

and psychometric aspects of tests are not major concerns. The use of qualitative career assessment tools does not mean, however, that there is a lack of rigour in the process. The development of qualitative career assessment procedures must still meet appropriate criteria and standards—such as grounding the assessment process in a relevant theory, extensively testing and validating the career assessment process, ensuring a reasonable time frame for conducting assessments, providing easily understood instructions for conducting the assessment, and developing strategies for encouraging collaboration between career counsellor and client (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003). In addition, effective qualitative career assessments usually require a debriefing session to follow up on issues that may have arisen during the interview or narrative process.

CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES IN HONG KONG

Every year in Hong Kong approximately 17000 university graduates and 61000 secondary school leavers either enter the labour market or pursue further studies. Traditionally, the main responsibility for career preparation has rested on the graduates themselves and their families. However, to facilitate a smooth transition to employment or further study, career services are increasingly being made available to students by their secondary schools, universities, and by the Labour Department of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. The Labour Department (2014) provides one-stop advisory and support services (Youth Employment Start) for individuals aged between 15 and 29, helping them to begin their career on the right track by enhancing their employability and by disseminating the latest labour market information. These services are provided by social workers and labour officers.

In the past, career development services in secondary schools have often seemed to be superficial, relying on large-scale single-impact programmes—career talks, seminars, discussions with potential employers, and one-off visits to view companies or organisations. Comprehensive and personalised interventions focusing on self-exploration have not been common (Leung, 2002). More recently, however, career education programs have been implemented using curriculum materials for life planning and guidance developed by the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters (Ho, 2008).

Career guidance and counselling in schools is mostly delivered by career teachers who also have ordinary teaching duties (Yuen, Chan & Lee, 2014). Usually, these career teachers have received training in career guidance and counselling sponsored by the Education Bureau. However, they are not qualified to administer quantitative career assessment instruments, so these are seldom used in schools. Instead, qualitative assessment tools are used, such as career planning workbooks and the curriculum materials provided by the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters (Yuen, Leung & Chan, 2014).

Career services provided by universities represent a more comprehensive approach. This typically includes career guidance and counselling, psychological testing, career assessment, job-search workshops, career education programs, recruitment services, and internship programs. In Hong Kong, nearly all public colleges and universities offer career services to their students, assisting them to formulate a career development plan and enhancing their employability. These services play an important role in smoothing the transition from university to work and they are implemented by career advisors operating under the aegis of the Student Affairs Office in the universities.

Career counsellors now attempt to adopt a more developmental perspective by offering a wide variety of services to meet students' needs at different stages during their time at university. The typical career service requires its staff to use a wide range of intervention skills in conducting assessment, individual counselling, and information dissemination (Leung, 2002). Computer-assisted career assessment systems and e-platforms, such as PROSPECTS Planner and TARGET jobs, are also used. However, there remains a traditional belief that formal career assessment tools help career counsellors understand various aspects of their clients, including interests, aptitude, values, and personality. Thus assessment still looms large as a major role of career counsellors. Surfing the websites of career centres in universities in Hong Kong reveals that quantitative career assessment tools are most commonly mentioned, while very few references are made to qualitative career assessment. Standardised psychometric scales are widely used, such as Career Dimension TM (McKim, 2005) and the Work Values Inventory (WVI) (Super, 1968). These instruments are tools developed in the West, using English as the medium for presentation. In most cases, translated versions in Chinese have not been re-standardised and validated for the local context (Leung, 2002). These instruments therefore still lack psychometric evidence to support their reliability and validity for the Hong Kong population.

Beyond the university provisions in Hong Kong, a career assessment kit has been developed by Professor Wong Chi-sum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for use within the Youth Employment Start (YES) program. This material helps young people explore and understand their career interests, personality, emotional intelligence, career maturity and entrepreneurship potential. Young people can take the career assessment tests online and then seek professional consultation and career counselling at the YES Centre. The services are available in Chinese and English (Labour Department, 2014).

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CURRENT CAREER ASSESSMENT

The predominant use of quantitative career assessment in Hong Kong's universities represents both strength and weakness in the service. On the positive side, quantitative career assessment tools present an objective, professional and authoritative image, so they easily win the confidence of both the tester and the client. However, on the negative side problems such as cultural bias in many instruments have been raised

by various researchers (Leong & Leung, 1994; Lonner, 1985; Westermeyer, 1987). Another weakness in relying only on quantitative career assessment is that it does not reveal subtle personality and attitudinal factors in clients that can be important for career planning, and can best be discovered by qualitative evaluation.

In reference to the strengths of qualitative career assessment, Goldman (1992) reported that the advantages include a more active role for clients, being more integrative and holistic than psychometric tests, operating within a developmental framework, facilitating an intimate counsellor-client relationship, flexibility, adaptability, and application to diverse populations. In contrast, disadvantages include the demands placed on counsellors in terms of requiring more professional skills and techniques, the time consuming nature of one-on-one sessions, lack of hard evidence of the reliability and validity of informal methods, and being more subjective (Goldman, 1992). Some qualitative career assessment tools are criticised for not undergoing a rigorous process for development. For instance, some qualitative tools are not grounded in a sound career theory, and some do not even come with a manual that guides their application. The validity and reliability of qualitative career assessment procedures still lack systematic evaluation and standardisation in this part of Asia. Such evaluation should be a high priority for the immediate future, so that the qualitative approach can be interpreted more perceptively with reference to Chinese culture and career opportunities.

The conclusion to be reached is that both types of career assessment have strengths to offer and can be complementary. Researchers recommend merging both forms of assessment to enrich the process and yield more robust results (Hartung & Borges, 2005; Maree & Morgan, 2012; Whiston & Rahardja, 2005). With the gradually increasing use of qualitative career assessment in Hong Kong, both quantitative and qualitative instruments should be incorporated into career guidance and counselling processes. This will result in a more comprehensive picture of clients than could be obtained by either method alone.

A stage has been reached in Hong Kong where more attention should be paid to qualitative career assessment in counsellors' training. A socio-constructivist orientation, as suggested by Walsh (1996), could be adopted, with more emphasis placed on gaining an in-depth understanding of clients by listening to their interpretation of current and past circumstances, and their hopes and aspirations. One approach that appears to be promising is the application of My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005). It has the potential to contribute significantly to a qualitative approach to career counselling in Hong Kong.

USE OF MY SYSTEM OF CAREER INFLUENCES (MSCI)

The MSCI (McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2005) provides a step-by-step approach to assist clients in creating their own career narratives by reflecting on influences on their career path (McMahon & Watson, 2008). In particular, this instrument enables an individual to consider how his/her past, present and future come into play in career decision making.

The usefulness of the MSCI to Hong Kong Chinese students was an issue that required exploration in a small-scale study conducted by the first named author, as described below. In order to avoid language barriers a Chinese version of the MSCI workbook was adopted (Yuen et al., 2009). Six secondary school leavers (three males and three females) were invited to take part in a trial. The participants were in the age range of 17 and 20, and all had completed Grade 11 in their education. All participants took part in the two-hour session for completing the instrument, and stayed for another 20 minutes to share feedback on the process and content of the MSCI. Their views were later analysed and are summarised here. In addition, each participant took part in a 30-minute one-on-one follow-up session.

Most participants expressed positive feedback on the MSCI process and found it useful. Some commented that by compiling their own system of influences they were able to discover underlying themes of their life narrative. Some conveyed a message that completion of the MSCI had helped signify to them their commitment to put thoughts and words into actions. For example, one participant discovered that after going through the MSCI process she was even more committed to her career choice (flight attendant) despite her family's expectation of her becoming a police inspector. All participants concurred that the 30-minute follow-up session with the facilitator was also of great value to them, 'better than just filling out the MSCI instrument'. They added that the mutual exchanges with the facilitator in the individual session consolidated their insights for career planning and decision-making.

In terms of the appropriateness of the MSCI, all participants expressed the view that this assessment process is appropriate for individuals in the senior years of the secondary school and above, but less so for younger students. Most participants found the questions and instructions in the Chinese MSCI reasonably easy to comprehend. However, some participants commented that if it were not for their prior exposure to career concepts in school it would be difficult to understand items such as: "I confirm my values" and my "system of career influences".

The participants stated that their initial impression when picking up the MSCI booklet was 'like attending their secondary school examination and writing up their examination papers'…far too many words and it took too long to complete. Examples and illustrations can be helpful for aiding comprehension in instruments where there is a need to clarify difficult concepts. When asked about the inclusion of examples in the MSCI, participants' views were mixed. Some thought that the more examples provided the better it would be for them to understand instructions.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this brief trial in Hong Kong is that the MSCI and its narrative approach can be useful in career counselling, but the instrument may need to be modified in ways suggested by the participants. The qualitative career assessment process can be made more helpful to individuals in their career planning if the follow-up session is carefully structured by the career counsellor.

CAREER GUIDANCE IN ASIAN HERITAGE CULTURAL CONTEXT

Career guidance is still very much a work in progress in East Asia, including Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore. Although it is developing its own unique features, career guidance in this region still draws to some extent upon tradition and on Western ideas and practices. Value conflicts can arise between Western individualism and Confucian cultural heritage (Hwang, 2009) and this can impact on attempts to provide career support in schools and universities. Education, cinema and the media have tended to transmit to Asia, albeit unintentionally, Western individualistic values of dominance, self-expression and competition, which then come into conflict with local collectivistic virtues of modesty, self-suppression, family-centredness and cultural identity in the region (Kwan, 2009; Yang, 2003; Zhang et al., 2014).

The Confucian value of benevolence (rén) emphasises the maintenance of interpersonal harmony by following the principle of respecting superiors, and taking care of family (Hwang, 2001). The value of filial piety (xiào) emphasises respect for one's family, parents and ancestors by following the principle of obedience. In terms of pursuing a career, one would perform well so as to bring honour (face) to the family and be in a position to support one's parents. When there are conflicts in values between parents' expectations and their children's interests, the career practitioner needs to act as mediator (Hwang, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In qualitative career assessment, such as the MSCI, it would be advantageous for individuals to explore the influences of family and Confucian values in relation to their career aspirations and goals.

While Western career counselling emphasises individual decision making, students in Confucian heritage societies tend to be influenced most by the expectations of their teachers and parents in their career planning (Cheng & Yuen, 2012; Leung, Hou, Gati & Li, 2011). Asian parents emphasise the importance of learning, and they make investments in their children's education (Phillipson, 2013). Parents also tend to adhere strongly to traditional values regarding career status when influencing their children's career paths. To help students resolve possible conflicts, career development practitioners in schools may need to involve parents more directly. Information and opinions from parents may represent an important component in comprehensive qualitative career assessment in Confucian cultural societies.

In terms of career practitioner training, multi-cultural sensitivity should be strengthened so that career practitioners are better able to understand and meet the needs of their clients (Leung & Chen, 2009). This multi-cultural sensitivity can help considerably when interpreting information gleaned from qualitative career assessments such as the MSCI. With regard to future research, it would be interesting to explore the greater use of narrative dialogue for qualitative career assessment in Confucian heritage societies (Reid, 2005). It is also necessary to conduct ongoing studies to discover how best to adapt or modify qualitative procedures that originate in the West to suit local cultural contexts.

In sum, value conflicts can arise between Western individualism and Confucian cultural heritage in East Asian regions. Using qualitative career assessment, career counsellors could empower individuals to explore the influences of their family, parents and Confucian values in relation to their career aspirations and goals.

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Alan Yim
Hong Kong Baptist University
China

Shui-Wai Wong
Hong Kong Polytechnic University
China

Mantak Yuen
University of Hong Kong
China

NHLANHLA MKHIZE

28. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses qualitative approaches to career assessment and their application in an African context. Qualitative career assessments focus on the stories that people tell. In so doing, they bring to the actors' attention that there are multiple stories that can be told about careers. The possibility to author different stories means that change is possible. Having given a brief background to the qualitative approaches to career assessment and the narrative paradigm in which they are primarily embedded, the chapter proceeds to present and discuss some of the techniques used in qualitative career assessment. This is supported by case examples drawn from the South African social and cultural context. It is argued that in African contexts, career assessment should take into account the social and ethical understanding of what it means to be a human being. This understanding is encapsulated in the idea of Ubuntu. Complexities arising from competing conceptions of the self within the person, as well as family and community expectations, should also be considered.

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

A number of authors have advocated for the development of qualitative approaches to career assessment (Brott, 2004; McMahon, Patton & Watson, 2003). McMahon et al. (2003) describe qualitative career assessments as informal means of assessment. Qualitative career assessment does not rely on standardised psychometric testing and hence there is little or no scoring involved. Instead, the focus is on exploring the client's subjective experience in order to assist him or her to map a future/possible self. The counsellor creates a space for the client to narrate his or her own story. It is from the story as narrated by the client that meanings relevant to career development are co-constructed. The main objective of qualitative career assessment is to generate personal meaning in order to assist the client to reflect on his or her personal life (McMahon et al., 2003). Unlike the psychometric approaches that rely on objective diagnostic instruments, qualitative career assessment proceeds from the premise that narrative is the fundamental metaphor of human life. The primary concern of narrative approaches to psychology is to understand the structure, content, and function of the stories that people narrate as it is through these stories that we construct meanings about ourselves and the world around us.

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 247–254.

The literature describes several approaches to qualitative career assessment including structured and semi-structured interview approaches (Brott, 2004; Chope, 2005). Amongst these approaches are the lifeline method, the career genogram, life role circles, and life space mapping. The following section describes these assessment approaches and their application in an African multicultural context.

Lifeline Method

Brott (2004) describes the lifeline method, which is foundational to her storied approach to qualitative career assessment. The main aim of the lifeline method is to identify, in chronological order, the major life events and transitions in the client's life, and their relevance to career decision-making. Together with the client, the counsellor explores the significance of these life events.

In her application of the lifeline method, Brott (2004) uses the 'storied approach' to elicit significant narratives about the client. The client is invited to draw a horizontal line through the centre of the page. The line is marked with significant events, beginning with the client's date of birth on the extreme left, and the current date on the extreme right hand side. The significant dates in the client's life are then marked along the line. These are dates and events such as the year the client started school, the transition from junior to senior school, the transition from senior school to university, the client's first work experience, etc. These dates mark the beginning and end points of each chapter in the client's life. The client is then encouraged to recall an important memory associated with each chapter and this is demarcated along the line (Brott, 2001; 2004). The counsellor uses the *co-construction* phase of the 'storied approach' to assist the client to recall important memories in each chapter of his or her life. During the *deconstruction* phase, the counsellor works together with the client to unpack her story by placing the life chapters within a larger system, incorporating beliefs and attitudes. The client's story is examined from different people's perspectives in order to elucidate alternative voices. Finally, during the *construction* phase, the client is assisted to think about alternatives and preferences going into the future. The preferred chapters and their meanings are created by extending the lifeline from the present into the future (Brott, 2001; 2004).

The author has used this technique to counsel a 25-year-old female student of African ancestry. She was in her first year of study at the university. Her lifeline was marked by significant transitions and multiple losses. At the age of 10 years, the client had relocated with her parents and two younger siblings from the rural areas in South Africa, where they attended a predominantly black (African), Zulu medium school, to the urban areas, where they enrolled in a predominantly white, English medium school. This was in the early days of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. During this period, a number of young, African middle class families relocated to predominantly white suburbs.

The first significant memory that the client recalled was that when they arrived at the English medium school, she and her siblings were retained in the grades

which they had already passed in their African school, in order to 'catch up' with the standard of the English medium school. Three years down the line, when the client and her siblings were well adjusted to their new school, their father passed away due to an AIDS related illness. This impacted negatively on the family's income, and their mother was forced to enrol her children in another integrated but less expensive school. Her mother was to pass away two years later, forcing the siblings to return to the rural, predominantly black school under the care of their grandmother, who supported them with her government pension. The school principal and the pastor in the local community church also offered support from time-to-time. When the client was in Grade 11, one year short of completing her schooling, her grandmother passed away. These circumstances forced her to leave school in order to find a job to support her younger siblings. As the eldest child and mother figure to her siblings, she had to ensure that there was food on the table. It was only after her younger siblings had completed school and obtained a government loan to study at a local university, that the client was able to return to school to complete Grade 12 (the final year of schooling). Thereafter, she enrolled for a commerce degree at the local university.

It was after failing the first year of her commerce degree that the client presented at the student counselling centre for career assessment and counselling. Using the lifeline method, the significant events in the client's life history were demarcated in chronological order, from her date of birth to the time that she enrolled at the university. The above mark the significant chapters in the client's life. We then worked together to mark significant memories along the lifeline. For example, the return to the rural Zulu medium school was marked by challenges as the siblings had not been instructed through the medium of Zulu for a number of years. Other learners ridiculed them as they were unable to read and write in Zulu, their mother tongue, well. This posed challenges to the client's self-esteem.

Using the co-construction, deconstruction and construction method (Brott, 2001; 2004), the significant influences in her life were elucidated as well as the meanings she attached to these events. It turned out she had chosen a commerce degree because she had become a financial provider to her siblings at a very early stage in her life. When she enrolled at the university, she had felt pressed to pursue a career that optimised the likelihood of financial security and independence. During the deconstruction phase, we were able to look at her career narrative from a different perspective, and it was at this point that the voices of significant others in her life, such as the grandmother, the school principal, and the pastor in her local community church, came to the fore. It was the caring of others, who had nurtured her and her siblings as children of the community, commensurate with the communal value of *Ubuntu* (mutual interdependence; the positive and ethical character of human relatedness) (Watson, McMahon, Mkhize, Schweitzer & Mpofu, 2011) that their goal of pursuing a tertiary education had become a reality. At this point the client realised that her primary interests were in the helping profession. Her future time line involved working for a non-governmental

organisation or establishing an NGO of her own in order to cater for the social, emotional and educational needs of orphaned children and the elderly. She enrolled for a social work degree which she completed within the minimum time prescribed for the degree.

The above illustrates the use of the lifeline method in an African cultural setting. It should be mentioned that great sensitivity and care is needed on the part of the counsellor in dealing with a career assessment and counselling intervention involving multiple losses and transitions such as the above. Assessment and intervention are intertwined and the counsellor plays both roles simultaneously.

The Career Genogram

The career genogram is one of the earliest and most recognisable of the qualitative approaches to career assessment (Chope, 2005; Okiishi, 1987). The genogram renders itself most appropriate for use with clients in African settings and other similar cultural backgrounds, due to the emphasis it puts on the role of the family in career decision-making (Watson et al., 2011). The genogram also enables the counsellor to assess the tensions and contradictions between individualistic and communal notions of self-understanding that have been noted by Mkhize and Frizelle (2000) and Stebleton (2007) amongst students of African ancestry. The genogram is a method to map the history of the family. Usually, it involves three generations, beginning with the grandparents on both sides of the client, the parents, and then the client and his or her siblings. It should be noted however that present day families have become very complex: the standard family comprising the children, parents and their grandparents, is no longer the norm in many societies including in Africa. In South Africa for example, a number of children are raised by grandparents and it is not unusual that the uncles, aunts and grandparents are the only significant parent figures that the child knows. It is important to take this into consideration in constructing the genogram.

Chope (2005) distinguishes between a basic genogram, incorporating all "components of the family systems work" (p. 406), and a focussed genogram which zeroes in on a particular dimension of the client's family, such as gender, attachment, and work culture. An example of a focussed genogram is the multicultural genogram (Sueyoshi, Rivera & Ponterroto, 2001). It explores the influences of religion, belief systems, ethnicity and gender on career decision-making. For example, the author once dealt with the case of a young adult woman whose siblings were all male. Her father did not pay much attention to her education, focussing on the education of the boys instead. This was on the grounds that the client, being female, would soon leave the family upon marriage. The woman's uncle on the mother's side took up her case and ensured that she got a decent education. She ended up being the one responsible for the upkeep of her family. The above-mentioned scenario illustrates the usefulness of the career genogram in working with clients from different cultural backgrounds.

The career genogram is a useful tool to elicit significant family patterns, recurring themes, and meanings within the family. The client gathers important information about his or her family and it is this information that is used to construct the genogram. This task should be approached with great sensitivity and care as family secrets that the client had not been privy to, may come to the fore. For example, social parenthood, whereby one of the sisters or brothers takes over the parenting role, is not uncommon in African societies (Mkhize, 2006). This is not problematic where this social arrangement is known to the client. The situation may pose a significant challenge to the counselling relationship should the information emerge during the course of the session, however. This was the case when the author requested a young man who had presented at the student counselling centre for a career assessment, to interview his grandmother in order to elicit information that would be relevant to construct a career genogram. Up to that point the family had told the client that his mother had passed away when he was very young, and he had resigned himself to that fact. It was only when he sought information to complete the genogram that he learned that his biological mother was in fact alive and was none other than the woman whom he believed was his aunt. This woman had left him under the care of his grandmother when she got married to someone else, having separated from the client's father. This necessitated a family counselling session that went well beyond career counselling. The author used this opportunity to enlist the grandmother to assist with the construction of the family genogram.

It is evident from the above-mentioned example that the genogram can be used as an important tool to elicit emotional and other forms of alliances within the family. In the case of the young man mentioned above, it transpired when the counsellor was working with him and the grandmother to construct the family genogram, that the client was most like and identified with his grandmother, whom he saw as a paragon of family responsibility and someone to be emulated. There were a number of unemployed aunts and uncles in the family. The grandmother was a strong matriarchal figure that held the family together. The client saw himself fulfilling his grandmother's role in the future. He was seeking an education that would enable him to do so.

The family situation was however causing him considerable stress and this was affecting his studies. The emergence of the long-held family secret had destabilised the relationship between the client and the grandmother. It was only after the relationship had been restored that further career counselling could be continued. Working through the genogram, and drawing from the notion of *Ubuntu*, which values the ethic of interdependence and mutual responsibility on the part of family and community (Watson et al., 2011), the author challenged the client's belief that he had to carry the family single-handedly, in the same way that his grandmother was doing. It transpired that the family members were holding onto the traditional notion of a career as a stable and permanent job, and hence were not taking advantage of various self-help projects initiated by government at community level. Although the family situation was not completely resolved, the client was less stressed by his

predicament and was able to concentrate on his studies. The above scenario supports the view that the use of the genogram in career assessment and counselling can open up complex family issues and hence requires great skill (Okiishi, 1987).

Life Role Circles

The multiple roles that people find themselves having to play in the post-modern world pose many career challenges. This is more so for students and workers from collectivist cultures. The hiatus or tension between values such as interdependence and a communal orientation, on the one hand, and the individualism and self-advancement that usually characterise the educational and work environment, on the other, is a major source of career stress for this group (Mkhize & Frizelle, 2000; Stebleton, 2007). The challenge stems from the multiple work roles and identities that are to be enacted in ideologically different and sometimes even diametrically opposed cultural worlds. It is in recognition of challenges such as the above-mentioned that Stebleton (2007) appeals to counsellors to assist clients to explore the meaning of multiple work roles and identities, using non-traditional assessment methods.

Life role circles provide a useful avenue to focus clients on the demands of the various roles in their lives and to jointly construct new and better harmonised roles (Brott, 2004). The process proceeds with the counsellor asking the client to draw five circles representing the major life roles in their lives. The size of the circle represents the significance of the life role or the amount of time spent in an activity associated with the role. Overlapping circles represent intersecting life roles. The counsellor then engages the client in a conversation about each role. The actions, thoughts, behaviours, and the meaning of each of the roles to the person's sense of personhood or self could also be explored. Future life roles are then represented diagrammatically by means of five circles. The counsellor assists the client to reflect on the relationship between the different roles in the future. Steps to bring the different roles in the client's life in harmony with each other are discussed.

The life role circles technique is a useful tool to use with students and young professionals from communal (collectivist) cultures in particular. It can also be deployed meaningfully to assist professional women to balance work, family, and cultural responsibilities. It has been the author's experience that African students and professionals in particular find themselves having to balance their roles with many family and community responsibilities. This arises from the social and ethical dimension of be-ing, which defines personhood relationally, with reference to one's participation in the community (*Ubuntu*). From an Ubuntu perspective, life finds meaning through human relations: maintaining positive human relationships, including the relationship with the spiritual world of the deceased, is of vital importance to the self (Watson et al., 2011). Hence, attending extended family (*umndeni*) events and community funerals has a socio-moral dimension: it validates oneself as an ethical, caring member of one's community. On the other hand, the organisational

reality of work is such that attachments that are critical to the individual's sense of belonging, are not often valued. Using life role circles, the counsellor works with the client to decipher the tensions, contradictions and imbalances between the different life roles. Where this is indicated, important but neglected (non-rewarded) life roles are validated (Stebleton, 2007) and a plan hatched to find a balance between competing roles in the future.

Life Space Mapping

Peavy (2000) has used the idea of life space and life space mapping to elicit stories from the client as well as the assumptions embedded in these stories. The life space concept is defined as the meaning systems in which the person is embedded. These meaning systems, which develop over a period of time and in due course become an integral part of the self, become a template by means of which we understand ourselves and navigate our surroundings. The purpose of counselling is to enter into the person's life space in order to engage with the multiple meanings that have been accumulated over time. This can be done through story-telling, whereby the person is invited to tell a narrative, leading to the multiple voices emanating from the story being identified. Mapping and drawings could also be used to highlight the nature of these relationships. The idea is to assist clients to identify the meanings comprising their career life space, and the enabling or constraining role of the different actors in their networks of relationships. The technique is relevant in African contexts, where different ideologies and belief systems emanating from apartheid, colonialism and patriarchy, amongst others, may pose constraints to the career development of people of African ancestry.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The chapter has presented and discussed several approaches to qualitative career assessment. Illustrative case examples based on the South African context have been provided. It was shown that, in African contexts, career assessment should take cognisance of the notion of Ubuntu and its influences on the choices people make. Qualitative approaches allow the counsellor to tease out the tensions between communal, family and personal demands on the client. The challenges emanating from the use of qualitative career assessment, in particular the reliance on the counsellor's expertise and clinical judgement in the absence of standardised guidelines, were considered. It should be borne in mind that the above examples do not reflect qualitative assessment in all African settings. Hence, counsellors need to rely on their clinical judgement to vary their approach according to the exigencies of the situation.

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Nhlanhla Mkhize
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

PART 5

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Part 5 of this book, *Qualitative Career Assessment: Future Directions*, considers the previous chapters and distills key themes from which future directions are proposed. In presenting this seminal text, it is not only important that qualitative career assessment is presented and positioned as a coherent body of work but that its future is also considered. The chapters in Part 5 reflect on the content of the book, consider its future directions and propose a future agenda.

MARY MCMAHON AND MARK WATSON

29. QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, McMahon and Patton suggested that the story of qualitative career assessment "may have been largely silenced or overshadowed" (p. 163) in the field of career assessment by the dominant story of quantitative career assessment. In 2008, McMahon expressed the hope that "the 21st century will see a rising profile for qualitative career assessment" (p. 598). With the recent expansion of narrative approaches in career counselling, the door has indeed been opened to greater use of qualitative career assessment.

To better understand the overshadowed story of qualitative career assessment, this chapter will consider the micro and macro contexts of the broader field of career psychology in which career assessment is a defining feature. The chapter first considers the story of qualitative career assessment to date and the emerging story as reflected in the chapters of this book. Second, the chapter considers the more coherent and consolidated story of qualitative career assessment presented in this book and its future direction and potential contribution to the field.

QUALITATIVE CAREER ASSESSMENT: THE STORY SO FAR

Chapter 1 of this book considered philosophical, theoretical, and contextual perspectives on career assessment. In the present chapter, career assessment is again the broad focus of attention. At the outset, it is important to emphasise that the term career assessment has been used intentionally in this book as distinct from testing to avoid the more synonymous use of these terms that is evident in the literature (de Bruin & de Bruin, 2006). The latter authors clarify the differential meaning of these terms. Specifically the term testing is more narrowly focused on the acquisition of information, whereas assessment focuses more on the meaning of information gathered from psychological tests (e.g., interest inventories) or through more informal means. Thus, assessment incorporates psychological testing.

Essentially, from the earliest history of career psychology, the differences between assessment and testing were apparent. The important distinction between the terms testing and assessment has its origins in philosophical influences on career psychology. For example, Parsons (1909) has been credited with introducing constructivism to the field (Spokane & Glickman, 1994) and thereby establishing

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 257–262.

career counselling as a specialisation in vocational psychology (Pope & Sveinsdottir, 2005). However, Parsons's partnership with Munsterberg, the founder of applied psychology, and Munsterberg's subsequent work, strongly emphasised the positivist philosophical position that underpins testing (Porfeli, 2009). Specifically, Parsons encouraged individuals to gather and make sense of self-information from diverse sources whereas Munsterberg advocated a more 'scientific' approach based on testing. This longstanding point of difference remains evident in recent texts (e.g., Walsh, Savickas, & Hartung, 2013) where a chapter on assessing key vocational constructs describes its purpose as providing a framework for vocational assessment that emphasises prediction (Larson, Bonitz, & Pesch, 2013). Throughout this latter detailed chapter, clients and self-understanding are little mentioned and thus the focus of the chapter is actually on testing. However, the aims of testing and assessment differ. The primary aim of testing is "enabling the client to make a responsible decision" (de Bruin & de Bruin, 2006, p. 131). By contrast, the broad aims of career assessment are twofold: self-understanding and career exploration (de Bruin & de Bruin), both of which are recursively related.

To date, the literature on qualitative career assessment which emanates out of the constructivist philosophy has remained largely fragmented with individual instruments and processes being reported, largely in 'one-off' journal articles. Further, qualitative career assessment is sometimes portrayed as creative 'activities' or 'processes' with which to engage clients rather than as instruments that may be purposefully and intentionally incorporated into career counselling (McMahon, 2006). Unlike the fragmented representation of qualitative career assessment in the literature that demonstrates little if any coherence, several texts have been published on career assessment where the primary focus has been on quantitative tests (e.g., Kapes & Whitfield, 2001; Osborn & Zunker, 2006, 2015). More recently, some reference to qualitative career assessment has been included in such texts. For example, Osborn and Zunker (2015) include sections in their text on card sorts, other non-standardised assessment approaches and on combining assessment results.

While at one level it could be suggested that the limited attention in the literature to qualitative career assessment reflects its place in the field, at another level it could be suggested that this limited portrayal of qualitative career assessment reinforces the dominant story in the macro-context of a profession founded on quantitative testing and heavily reliant on scores and prediction. Furthermore, quantitative career tests and measures have contributed to a research tradition in the career field that is dominated by positivist methodologies. By contrast, qualitative career assessment has not stimulated a significant body of research as reflected in recent research reviews (e.g., Stead, Perry, Munka, Bonnett, Shiban, & Care, 2012).

McMahon and Watson's (2007) analysis of career research using a systemic framework that considered macro and micro influences led them to conclude that a multi-storied approach that combines different research traditions is more relevant to the context of the post-modern era. Similarly, this conclusion could be drawn about career assessment. For instance, Blustein (2006) believes that "an expanded

net of tools can be useful in an inclusive psychological practice" (p. 287). Further Blustein alludes to a multi-storied approach in the use of testing within career assessment and states: "My preference for the role of tests, as implied thus far, is in the realm of explanation and exploration as opposed to prediction" (Blustein, 2006, p. 288). Indeed, part three of this book on using quantitative career assessment qualitatively provides examples of a multi-storied approach to career assessment and demonstrates the complementarity that is possible by seamlessly integrating (Whiston & Rahardha, 2005) these two seemingly different traditions.

A systemic framework is also useful for considering the pervasive and uncritical use of career assessment including testing in diverse settings and with diverse groups. For example, recent criticisms of career assessment (e.g., Stead & Watson, 2006; Watson, 2013) have made the point that tests have been constructed in the context of particular eras and for use with particular populations. With the advance of globalisation, the use of career assessment beyond what Blustein (2006) refers to as "the middle-class, European-American realm" (p. 286) calls for greater cultural sensitivity and the need to construct measures that are relevant and informative to a wider array of client populations (Stead & Watson, 2006). Failure to do this could result in career assessment and testing becoming more of a social barrier than a social resource (Blustein, 2006).

In telling a story about qualitative career assessment, understanding the present story in the context of past stories is critical. Together, past and present stories of career assessment provide a context for considering the construction of the future story of career assessment.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: THE STORY TO BE TOLD

The contribution of the present book is twofold. First, it represents the first text to focus solely on qualitative career assessment and, in doing so, the first compilation of a range of qualitative career instruments and perspectives. While this compilation is important in presenting the depth and breadth of qualitative career assessment presently available, a second contribution of the book is also evident, specifically a range of issues that warrant consideration as the future story of qualitative career assessment is constructed. First and foremost amongst these issues that need to be considered for the profile of qualitative career assessment to rise, is that the emergent evidence base described in this book needs to be strengthened and expanded (see Stead and Davis in this book in this regard). Second, qualitative career assessment needs to be seen for what it is, that is a legitimate way of engaging in the career assessment of clients and thus requiring, as with quantitative career assessment, that career practitioners be adequately prepared to use it. Third, there is a need to consider qualitative career assessment in relation to the goals of explanation and exploration in career counselling which, in the context of this book, has been considered through the lens of career development learning. Finally, as evidenced in Part 3 of this book on diverse contexts, the expansion of qualitative career assessment needs to be inclusive of and sensitive to cultural contexts.

In relation to career research, McMahon and Watson (2007) concluded in their systemic analysis that a change of culture was needed in the field beginning with training, where the induction of those new to the career counselling profession starts. Similarly, in relation to qualitative career assessment, professional training needs to consider a holistic approach to career assessment that goes beyond testing and is inclusive of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Training socialises students into the career counselling profession and failure to take an holistic approach to career assessment may result in "an uncritical acceptance of the status quo but also in an active endorsement of it" (Prilleltensky, 1989, p. 795), that is to say reinforcement of the dominant story of quantitative career testing.

All this suggests closer links between qualitative career assessment and learning (McMahon & Patton 2002). Given the focus of the aims of qualitative career assessment on self-understanding and career exploration and their recursive relationship (de Bruin & de Bruin, 2006), the process through which these aims are achieved may be best understood as a learning process. Essentially, participating in qualitative career assessment processes may be regarded as experiential learning through which individuals draw on their prior knowledge and experience, engage in a process of meaning making, and subsequently distil their learnings by which they move forward. Learning has long been recognised in the field but its story, as with qualitative career assessment, has also been somewhat overshadowed and its application has not always been explicit.

Learning provides a unifying theme through which to view qualitative career assessment. Indeed, learning may be regarded as a mechanism for moving testing towards career assessment in career counselling. Therefore, as qualitative career assessment and its proponents move towards the co-construction of a future story for career assessment, learning may well assume a more central role. Moreover, the learning processes evident in the qualitative career assessment instruments described in this book demonstrate the engagement of a range of learning styles which lend themselves to a more inclusive process of career counselling in which clients are actively engaged. As career counselling expands its reach to diverse client groups and contexts, qualitative career assessment (and the qualitative use of quantitative career assessment) lends itself to culturally and contextually sensitive practices.

The status quo of career assessment and testing has resulted in the marginalisation of qualitative career assessment, and indeed the qualitative career research that emanates from it, by critical gatekeepers in our profession such as lecturers and journal editors. Thus a vicious cycle exists between the contradictory positions of calls, on the one hand, for greater use of holistic approaches to career assessment and, on the other hand, the status quo being perpetuated.

CONCLUSION

The present book has gone some way in answering Reid's (2006) much quoted question about 'how we do' narrative career counselling by providing a comprehensive

description of qualitative career assessment instruments that are presently available. Further, the chapters suggest a variety of learning styles that promote more inclusive and culturally sensitive career assessment and career counselling approaches. However, in addressing Reid's question a new 'how' question emerges for the field and that is to consider 'how do we know that what we do works'. Put differently, there is a need to consider the issue of quality or quality control within qualitative career assessment and to move beyond the present descriptions in the literature of 'activities' and processes'. In presenting this first book on qualitative career assessment, it is hoped that readers will gain more coherent and comprehensive perspectives that guide future assessment practice and research and in doing so, strengthen qualitative career assessment's position in the broader field of career counselling.

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Mary McMahon
The University of Queensland
Australia

Mark Watson
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
South Africa

HAZEL REID

30. CAREER ASSESSMENT: QUALITATIVE APPROACHES – A REFLECTION

INTRODUCTION

We live in challenging and uncertain times, change is constant and rapid, and for many, life appears chaotic and work can be difficult to find. Beyond livelihood, the getting of our daily bread, meaningful work that is sustaining for both body and soul may seem like a luxury and career counsellors are not immune to these constraints in the context of their own lives and work. In various helping professions there are tensions around the requirement to meet standards and achieve competencies, which can lead to the manualisation of professional practice and pull against the need for creativity and the exercise of judgement, based on experience, trust and wisdom. Wisdom is about more than common sense, which is often not common at all, it is informed by knowledge, insight, as well as experience. Career counselling that is knowledgeable and insightful requires more than just the experience of practice, thus the relationship between research, theory and practice is vital and is one of interdependence. Practice also takes place in socio-economic, cultural, and historical and policy contexts: the complexity can be overwhelming. The uncertainties that are involved might lead us to think it is all too difficult, best just to get people into jobs, any jobs, but that is not the approach that is evident in this book.

What is evident is that complexity requires practice that is *thought-full*, that does not disregard career intervention models that have proved useful in the past, but that searches for meaningful approaches for contemporary lives. This is not, however, a call for innovation that ignores or underplays the impact of the social context of the individual or group, as the approaches used need to resonate with the reality of clients' lives. To suggest one way of 'delivering' career counselling would not fit with an understanding of the liquid world (Bauman, 2000) we inhabit. Richardson (1997), in writing about interpretive methodology, employs the notion of the crystal to challenge traditional ways of framing social scientific research. Rather than valorise the work via triangulation, she highlights that when drawing on different qualitative methods when researching lives, we need to move away from the assumptions of fixed points that can be triangulated. Where a mix of approaches and material is used, researchers, and in our case, practitioners, are more likely to *crystallise* in their assessment. Richardson states, "There are far more than 'three sides' by which to approach the world" (1997, p. 92). In career assessment we need more than one lens to assess both the client's needs and the practitioner's approach,

M. McMahon & M. Watson (Eds.), Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches, 263–271.

in order to work alongside the client in effective ways. The chapters in this book, informed by research, provide the reader, like the crystal, with different perspectives reflecting new and original qualitative career assessment practice.

An Initial Reflection

When I was asked to write this final chapter my initial reaction was one of surprise with regard to the title of the book. For me 'assessment' in careers work has been steeped in quantitative methods that rely on tests, lists and objective measurements that pay scant attention to the subjective world of the client. In my own practice in the UK in a state funded career service in the 1990s, I recall a growing 'fashion' for psychometric career assessment. The service I worked for offered career guidance interviews to young people and adults, although adults paid a small fee. At one time my appointment book for interviews with adults was full of requests to help the individual interpret the psychometric test that they had undertaken elsewhere. It was not that they were unable to understand the 'printout' that they had received, but that it was not meaningful to them. Undeniably, clients may approach any form of career intervention with an expectation that the answer about what to do in the future will be the outcome after a short interview. With young people I often explained that I did not have a box of solutions under my desk, but I was interested in exploring their ideas however vague they might be. In some cultural contexts this is likely to be a particular difficulty if the practitioner is expected to be the expert, or where 'answers' must be informed by collective decision making. However, the disappointment that adult clients felt at the lack of 'meaningfulness' from the psychometric assessment, together with the impersonal nature of the feedback, seemed particularly acute. What they wanted was a conversation with an empathic other. The desire for answers was still there, but my person-centred (Rogers, 1967) training led me to ask 'good' questions rather than provide 'right' answers. This provides the client with a space to become more reflective and articulate their thoughts, as Savickas (2011) states, they are enabled to hear their advice to self. In a qualitative career assessment conversation the client learns within a transitional and safe space, to use the language of Winnicott (1971). And conversation from the Latin means 'wandering together with' – that space for supported wandering and also wavering (Cochran, 1997), the time for reflection before making a decision, was not available via an objective assessment test. Of course such assessment tests if used as 'tools to think with', rather than prescriptions, have their place and can be useful, but are rarely good enough on their own. At the point of interpretation quantitative assessment often becomes qualitative, but that space for interpretation and reflection seems essential. Quantitative assessment in careers work remains, for me, a vexed issue, despite being aware of its widespread use in many countries, but attention is paid to this concern in the book where quantitative measures are used qualitatively.

Before moving on, what does career assessment mean to me and who does it benefit? In the teaching of career counsellors at my own institution, we draw on the Unit for the Development of Adult and Continuing Education (1986) definition:

> Assessment in careers work is helping people …to obtain a better understanding of their abilities and aptitudes, as they may relate to either personal, social, educational or career development, or the management of change in their lives. This is in order to enable them to make sound judgements about the appropriateness of particular courses of action. Such assessment may involve a range of methods, informal or formal. (Reid & Fielding, 2007, p. 26)

Fine words, but on their own they do not tell us how career counsellors can support clients to make sound judgements; albeit there is a suggestion that assessment needs to be customised and avoid a 'one size fits all' approach: the latter can appear seductively simple and 'cost effective'.

A Deeper Reflection

I then looked more closely at the content of the book. The editors clarify that the title, *Career Assessment: Qualitative approaches*, was chosen deliberately to 'acknowledge career assessment's longstanding integral role in career counselling and the more recent adoption of narrative approaches'. This is interesting as I was experiencing some unease about the incongruity between narrative approaches and assessment, within the broader perspective of constructivism. From the view expressed by the editors, qualitative assessment is viewed as part of the dialogical, learning process that is evident in meaningful career counselling. Quantitative assessment can 'strip out' the emotional responses in the gaining of self-knowledge, where there is little space for the affective and intuitive knowing. In times of transition there are psychological processes at work and these may be in the foreground for the client, whatever the social context, so there is a need maybe for fewer lists and more stories as life, as lived, is subjective. Then again, and certainly in the West, we operate in employment markets where the place of cognition and rationality takes centre-stage. Thus, mindful of the criticism of over-psychologised approaches which may ignore the larger picture (Sultana, 2011), there is a need for the *psychosocial* in career counselling assessment and practice (Guichard, 2005; Reid & West, 2014). Practitioners need a range of methods, and a range is offered in this text, but they also require the space to learn about and experiment with these.

Qualitative assessment measures, like any others, are enhanced with an appropriate amount of the resource of time. Time is difficult to find, difficult to justify in the busyness of practice. Hansen and Amundson (2009) write of the need to take time and to slow down practice, to be in the moment and trust that the client will find their solutions if given the opportunity to think, supported by the practitioner. When trying a new approach we have to acknowledge our lack of expertise and learn to live for a while with uncertainty, or negative capability, as the poet Keats expressed it (Harris Williams, 2005). Insecurity can lead us to intervene too soon when assessing the client's needs, we can jump in too quickly and speak for the client, due to our own insecurity. In the slowing down and taking time authors in this

volume discuss how career writing and other creative methods can uncover what is emotionally salient for the individual. There can be a concern about going too deep when employing qualitative and narrative assessment methods, 'opening up a can of worms', but painful stories can be heard and contained (Reid & West, 2011a). The point of transition may be a crisis, a disruption where transgression is required – going against the norm or what may be expected of the individual by others. Self-assessment is hard, the learning that occurs may be transformative if this takes place in a supportive relationship, and we should never underestimate the power of being listened to by an attentive other.

So, my deeper reflection, informed by time spent reading the chapters, was that the content of *Career Assessment: Qualitative Approaches* provides a lucid and extensive body of work, informed by theory, organised coherently, and grounded in practice: with a wealth of examples of 'how to do' qualitative assessment.

Assessing Qualitative Career Assessment

But reflection should also be critical. It is acknowledged in the book that qualitative assessment is often viewed as lacking the rigour that is associated with quantitative measurements. Studies of methods that are based on qualitative research explain the theoretical background, outline the methodology and then explicate how to apply the model, but they are less able to measure effectiveness of any of the approaches outlined. Yet whether a quantitative or qualitative assessment approach for career counselling is used, effectiveness is always difficult to measure precisely, because of other influencing factors in a person's life; but this is certainly more of a challenge for qualitative approaches. There is though a need for measurement of the effectiveness for qualitative assessment as money and other resources need to be accounted for. As in any approach, and particularly those that are new and being tested, there will be flaws that need to be exposed, paid attention to and the approach developed further. However, we need criteria that are not based on positivistic and quantifiable measures and these are offered in the book. In addition, we might also consider and adapt criteria that have been developed more broadly to 'validate' interpretive and narrative research (e.g., Speedy, 2008).

For instance, and as appropriate to the aims and 'target' client group, does the qualitative career assessment method:

- Use social science, historical and cultural perspectives to inform its development – is the theory grounded in engagement with real people in their complex every day and extraordinary lives?
- Provide evidence of knowledge of relevant epistemologies, and also technologies where relevant?
- Recognise the influence of the personal, social and economic context of the client or group?

- Consider different cultural traditions, and is it open to the multicultural mediation of experience?
- Clarify the need to work collaboratively, alongside the client?
- Engage the client – is it understandable, well-shaped, satisfying, creative and interesting?
- Develop from a clear analysis of the research that supports it – is rigour found in the trustworthiness of the resulting peer-reviewed texts and publications?
- Demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues, such as the needs of specific groups and are these addressed?
- Include an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the work with the client – what is its effect, intellectually, emotionally, does the learning invite new questions, greater self-awareness and self-efficacy?
- Appear credible and productive in terms of cultural, social, individual, or a collective sense of what is 'real'?

And importantly…

- Make a useful contribution to the client's understanding of their career/life interests?
- Recognise that time and resource constraints may have an impact on its successful application and can it adapt accordingly?

The Key Themes

In providing an overview of the historical, philosophical, theoretical, and research foundations of qualitative career assessment, the emphasis on learning emerges early in the work as the core theme, central to the philosophy and organisation of the entire book. Careers work can draw on contemporary learning theories to promote the concept of reflection as a route to, so called, 'deep' learning (Brockbank & McGill, 2007). Deep learning through reflexive processes should lead to cognitive learning: i.e., changes in our understanding of the world, and in ways of behaving in the world - but will also involve affective learning. Such learning takes place in a social context with others and is affected by the degree of agency (or personal power and influence) that the learner can access. How qualitative career assessment is structured, the models and methods employed, the cultural conditions within which it is 'delivered' and the type of organisation within which it is set – will all affect the learning process. The space for learning is also created, and often constrained by, the language used – the ways of speaking and thinking in a particular context (the dominant discourses). The prevailing discourse will draw on a particular set of meanings: for example, a shared understanding of the use of metaphors or images that have resonance within a particular setting and cultural stories that are meaningful to the particular group (Burr, 1995). The understanding involved is often assumed and, as a prevailing discourse, is given precedence over other ways of talking and thinking: in other words, of representing the world. In order to belong to a particular

group, such discourses have to be understood and joined with. Clearly some discourses are more powerful than others and the space for resisting the prevailing discourse may be highly constrained, limiting the degree to which transformative learning can take place (Mezirow, 2000). Such matters affect a person's capacity to learn and are influential when we consider the effectiveness of various career assessment methods.

Moving on, in the section which offers more practical chapters, terms like 'Assessment Instruments' might suggest a mechanical approach, but the array of methods discussed reflect the need for different tools for diverse situations, recognising that clients have different learning styles – the theme here being the need for flexibility and creativity.

What also becomes clear from the content of the book is that qualitative assessment has many shapes but within the wide parameters demonstrated, is fundamental to career counselling and not a separate activity, or a 'pick and mix' selection of techniques. The editors have ensured that the scope of the work does engage with critical issues, with context and diverse cultural expectations. This is important, as career assessment for career development and learning is a growing practice in many countries outside of the Western economic context. In addition, other disadvantaged client groups that experience a range of social variables, and have been on the periphery of career practice, are also considered.

Authors are well known within the field of career counselling and are drawn from nine countries and the themes are international in their significance. In addition, care has been taken to avoid 'throwing out the baby with the bath water' in the move to new ways of working. The ground-breaking work of Parsons and the highly influential work of Holland was motivated by social justice and there is a place for approaches derived from both, alongside more recent and future developments. Thus another theme is about avoiding the dichotomy between approaches seen as quantitative versus qualitative, or objective versus subjective, or overly-individualistic versus over-socially determined - as this leads to a rather sterile debate and can create a 'no man's land' where dialogue becomes difficult. 'Splitting' into either/or positions is a human tendency, but the consequences result in over-simplistic or over-complex 'solutions'. That said it is important to recognise that quantitative and qualitative career assessment approaches stem from divergent philosophical traditions. Attention is drawn in the book to the interplay between development and stability, and to predictability and chaos. So, our career assessment methods need to recognise the interplay between inner and outer lives, in context. Or as C Wright Mills instructed us, 'Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life' (1970, pp. 247-8).

It is then important that we worry about 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980) and problematise our concepts, but we also need to smooth the hard edges of poststructuralist critique for everyday life and practice. The book acknowledges that complex situations require multifarious and transdisciplinary approaches, and, within the text there is support for the qualitative use of quantitative career

assessment. It is, perhaps, the conversation about the career assessment, whether quantitative or qualitative, that is important. If we wish to uphold the value of small stories, episodes and 'telling tales' (Reid & West, 2014) within a systematic approach to qualitative career assessment, then rather than operate from polarities, we might view our assessment approaches as oscillating on a scale that moves between the left and right positions set out below.

The Future of Qualitative Career Assessment

In a world where the old employment certainties have been shaken, and in places have fallen away, and where new technologies develop at an exponential rate, there is no room for definitive statements in terms of the future of qualitative career assessment. My allegiance to qualitative methodology for career assessment and research is clear, but must be subject to critical reflection. There is a place for a range of career services and career assessment methods, but a conversation about what is meaningful to the individual would appear to be essential. Bruner, in my exploration of the value of narrative approaches in career counselling and research, is a 'theoretical friend': he gives me the language to express ideas that are still formulating. He writes, 'In the end, even the strongest causal explanations of the human condition cannot make plausible sense without being interpreted in the light of the symbolic world that constitutes human culture' (1990, p. 138).

We are always moving through history, always in a state of becoming and cannot know the future for qualitative career assessment, but its time is now. How long does it take for what is innovative to become established, and then traditional, and then thought no longer relevant? The quest for innovation can tip us into the chasm of business or corporate language – innovation has become a thrusting word and something we 'must' all aspire to in the global context of change and more change. Our thirst for new knowledge is fine, but who decides what counts as knowledge and who can make use of it needs to be considered, as Foucault taught us. So we need to mind our language and examine the discourses at work in the

Table 30.1. Moving between qualitative and quantitative career assessment

Qualitative career assessment, is more concerned with:	*Quantitative career assessment, is more concerned with:*
Narrative / story	Targets and outcomes
Meaning and identity	Behaviourism and focus
Constructivist thinking	Realism
Slow time / play	Fast time / seriousness
Emotions / empathy	Cognition / logic
Subjectivity / biography	Objective distance
Opening up space for creativity	Instrumental – 'what works already'

(Adapted from Reid & West, 2011b)

language we use (see Table 30.1). Rather than seeking perpetual innovation with its concomitant assumption of 'progress' in the gaining of more knowledge, perhaps we can concentrate more on creativity and imagination within career learning. In an interview with Viereck in 1929 Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." Here's breadth as well as depth in those wise words.

Thinking On… Learning More

It has been a privilege to be asked to write a reflection on what is an accessible but also erudite text. It has been a difficult task to capture and articulate the insights that I have gained from reading the work and impossible to do justice to each contribution. Then again, I was not asked to write a review and I have deliberately refrained from making reference to specific chapters. My reflections will be on-going and I will continue to learn from the book's comprehensive content, with its intellectual stimulus, its conceptual wisdom and its practical usefulness – as, no doubt, will the reader.

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Hazel Reid
Canterbury Christ Church University
United Kingdom

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Norman Amundson is a Professor in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia, Canada. In his work, Dr. Amundson emphasises the importance of creativity, imagination, cultural awareness, positive affirmation, hope, and active engagement. His publications include over 100 journal articles training DVDs, a number of books, and several career workbooks.

Michael B. Arthur is a Professor at Suffolk University, Boston, USA. His books include the *Handbook of Career Theory* (1989), *The Boundaryless Career* (1996), *The New Careers* (1999), and *Knowledge at Work* (2006). He is a co-developer of the Intelligent Career Card Sort (ICCS), and an advocate of an interdisciplinary approach to careers scholarship.

Gideon Arulmani is Director of The Promise Foundation, India. Gideon's interest in the interface between culture and counselling led to the development of the Cultural Preparation Process Model of Career Development based on which he has attempted to design culture-resonant career guidance systems for developing countries and emerging economies.

Anuradha J. Bakshi is an Associate Professor and Head of the Human Development Department at the Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, University of Mumbai, India. She teaches in the bachelors, masters and doctoral programs in human development, and has over 25 years of teaching experience at university level. She is the Vice-President of the Indian Association for Career and Livelihood Planning.

Barbara Bassot is a Senior Lecturer within the Centre for Career and Personal Development at Canterbury Christ Church University. She is Course Leader for the University Certificate in Understanding Careers Education and Guidance and leads a Masters by Research in Guidance and Support. She teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate programs and supervises doctoral students.

Jim E. H. Bright is a Professorial Fellow in Career Education and Development at the Australian Catholic University and a Visiting Professor of Career Development at the International Centre for Education and Guidance Studies at the University of Derby. He has a PhD in Psychology and is a Fellow of the Australian Psychological Society.

Pamelia E. Brott is an Associate Professor at Virginia Tech in the Counsellor Education Program. She is the author of 32 publications and 33 international and

national conference presentations spanning the fields of career counselling and school counseling. Her specific areas of interest are constructivist career counselling and qualitative assessments.

Brittan L. Davis is a doctoral candidate in the counselling psychology program at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. Her primary research interests include vocational psychology, sexual and gender transgressive minority concerns, issues related to identity, mentoring and supervisory relationships, and feminist multicultural and cross-cultural psychology.

Annamaria Di Fabio is a Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology, Director of the International Research and Intervention Laboratory of Psychology for Vocational Guidance and Career Counseling (*LabOProCCareer*) and Director of the International Research and Intervention Laboratory of Positive Psychology and Prevention (*PosPsyc&P*) at the Department of Education and Psychology, University of Florence, Italy.

Lea Ferrari is an Assistant Professor at the University of Padova, Italy. Her teaching and research activities focus on life design, career construction, social and work inclusion of vulnerable people. She is a member of the International Research Group "Life Designing Dialogues", Career Adaptability International Collaborative Group, and European University Network for Innovation in Guidance (NICE).

Tyler J. Finklea is a fourth year doctoral student in the counselling and school psychology program at Florida State University. She has been a Career Advisor at Florida State University for three years and has research interests in the use of technology in career counselling and the intersection of career and mental health.

Elzette Fritz is a registered educational psychologist and research fellow at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Her research interest lies in school community therapeutic interventions, with the focus on creative expressive arts therapy. She has written numerous articles focussing on creative therapeutic interventions with children and adolescents.

Maria Cristina Ginevra is a Research Fellow at the University of Padova, Italy. She is also adjunct professor at the Department of Psychology, University of Milan-Bicocca, Italy, where she teaches the psychology of disability and school inclusion. Her research interests concern the field of school, social and work inclusion of vulnerable individuals.

Paul J. Hartung is Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Northeast Ohio Medical University. He is current editor for The Career Development Quarterly and a fellow of the American Psychological Association, the International

Association of Applied Psychology, and the National Career Development Association.

Seth C. W. Hayden is an Assistant Professor of counselling at Wake Forest University. His research focuses on the career and personal development of military service members, veterans, and their families. In addition, he explores the connection between career and mental health issues as well as clinical supervision.

Julia F. Kronholz is a current third year doctoral student in the counselling and school psychology program at Florida State University. She currently serves as a career advisor in the Career Center and has seven years of career development experience in the areas of career counselling and employer relations.

Bill Law was for 12 years a teacher and guidance practitioner. In 1972 he moved into programme development, later joining the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling as its Founding Fellow. Since 1992 he has worked independently on careers-work responses to economic, technological, cultural and environmental change. He consults with a number of research and development organisations.

Reinekke Lengelle is a doctoral candidate and visiting graduate professor with Athabasca University, Canada. She designs and teaches courses that use creative, expressive, and reflective writing to foster personal and professional development. She is a writer, researcher, and poet.

Jacobus G. (Kobus) Maree is a Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria. His main research interest is career construction counselling (for life designing). A regular keynote speaker, he has received a number of awards for his work (including a fellowship of the IAAP in July, 2014).

Peter McIlveen is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. He leads the multidisciplinary research team, the Australian Collaboratory for Career, Employability, and Learning for Living (ACCELL). Peter is a registered psychologist with a professional background in rural mental health services and counselling.

Mary McMahon is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at The University of Queensland where she teaches career development and career counselling at postgraduate and undergraduate levels. She has published extensively nationally and internationally.

Frans Meijers is a Professor of pedagogy and career development at the University of The Hague, The Netherlands. His research demonstrates that career learning

takes place as a result of experiential learning and a dialogue about experiences. He develops career training programs for teachers.

Warren Midgley is Head of School (Linguistics, Adult and Specialist Education) at the University of Southern Queensland. His research expertise is in sociolinguistics, with a particular focus on the connections between language, culture and identity for language learners.

Nhlanhla Mkhize holds a PhD in Psychology. He is Dean and Head of the School of Applied Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. His main research interests are career psychology, ethical and moral decision-making, indigenous psychologies and cultural psychology in general.

Laura Nota is a Professor of career construction and career counselling and psychological counseling for the inclusion of social disadvantage, University of Padova, Italy. She is Director of the Larios Laboratory and of the University Centre for Research and Services on Disability, Rehabilitation and Inclusion. Her research activities concern the fields of psychology of inclusion and career counselling.

Debra S. Osborn is an Associate Professor in the Educational Psychology and Learning Systems Department at Florida State University. Her research focuses on the design/use of technology in counselling, innovation and effectiveness in counsellor education, and the design/use of assessments in career services.

Polly Parker is a Professor at The University of Queensland's Business School, Brisbane, Australia. Her research in careers and leadership, published widely in a range of international journals, has supported the learning processes she has guided in both academic and corporate settings. She is designer and co-developer of the Intelligent Career Card Sort (ICCS®).

Wendy Patton is a Professor and Executive Dean, Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. She has taught and researched in the areas of career development and counselling for more than 20 years. She has co-authored and co-edited a number of books, and is currently Series Editor of the Career Development Series with Sense Publishers. She has published widely with more than 150 refereed journal articles and book chapters. She serves on a number of national and international journal editorial boards.

Gary W. Peterson is Professor Emeritus and Senior Research Associate in the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development at Florida State University. His research focuses on career development, career decision making, and personality and career assessment.

Robert G. L. Pryor has worked in the field of vocational counselling and psychological assessment since 1974 both for government and private consultancies. He has also held a range of academic positions and currently is the Adjunct Professor, School of Education, Australian Catholic University. He has published widely in assessment, counselling and career development theory.

Mark C. Rehfuss received his doctorate from Kent State University. He is an Associate Professor and Program Director of the Online Human Services BS Program at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. His research interests include career counseling, narrative, counselor education, qualitative methods, and online learning.

Hazel Reid is Director of Research for the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. Hazel is a Fellow of the Career Development Institute, a Fellow of the National Institute of Careers Education and Counselling (and co-edits the NICEC journal) and a founding member of the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling. She is actively involved in a number of European projects related to the work of career guidance practitioners.

James P. Sampson, Jr. is the Mode L. Stone Distinguished Professor of Counseling and Career Development at Florida State University. His research focuses on the appropriate use of computer technology in counseling and on the use of cognitive strategies in the design and delivery of career counseling and guidance services.

Sara Santilli is a doctoral student at the Doctoral School of Psychological Sciences at Padua University, Italy. She is a psychologist with a post graduate degree in career counselling at the University of Padova. Her research interests concern the fields of career counselling and disability, with a special focus on career adaptability and work attitudes toward people with disability.

Vidhya Satish is the Director of the South Indian Education Society (SIES) Institute of Comprehensive Education at the SIES College of Arts, Science, and Commerce (affiliated to the University of Mumbai). She oversees training in early childhood education, special education, and counselling. Vidhya is a doctoral student in the Department of Human Development, Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, University of Mumbai.

Teresa M. Sgaramella is an Assistant Professor at the University of Padova. Her research interests and teaching focus on life design, work inclusion of vulnerable and disabled individuals, and rehabilitation counselling. She is a member of the International Research Group “Life Designing Dialogues”, and of the European University Network for Innovation in Guidance (NICE).

Barbara A. Smith is an award winning registered clinical counsellor and a doctoral candidate at University of British Columbia. She currently works in the field of youth mental health. Her clinical work, teaching, and research focus on creativity, play and expressive therapies, mental health, substance use, hope, and career development.

Salvatore Soresi is a Professor of psychology of disability at the University of Padova, Italy. For his work he has received three awards, in 2008 from the Society of Counselling Psychology (Division 17 of the APA), in 2013 from the ESVDC, and in 2014 from Division 16 of the International Association of Applied Psychology. His research activities concern the fields of psychology of disability and rehabilitation and career counselling.

Graham B. Stead is a Full Professor and Director of doctoral studies in the College of Education and Human Services at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. He is a core faculty member of the counselling psychology program and teaches statistics and advanced career development to doctoral students.

Grethe van Zyl is an educational psychologist in South Africa. Her research focuses on how possible career paths can be explored through the implementation of creative and expressive arts activities in a grade 9 classroom context. She currently works at a secondary school in a learning facilitation position focussing on career exploration, counselling and learning support.

Mark Watson is a Distinguished Professor at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa. He teaches, researches and practices in the field of career development, counselling and assessment. He has co-authored and co-edited a number of books and published 81 refereed journal articles and 63 book chapters. He serves on several international journal editorial boards.

Shui-Wai Wong is an instructor in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He is an experienced college counsellor and has earned his Doctoral degree in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. His professional and research interests include student counselling, work values and career assessment.

Alan Yim is a guidance counsellor of the College of International Education, Hong Kong Baptist University. He is a registered social worker in Hong Kong. His research interests are in child-teacher relationship training, filial therapy, narrative therapy, wellness, qualitative and quantitative career assessment.

Mantak Yuen is an Associate Professor and Deputy Director of the Center for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education at the University of Hong Kong. He is a registered counselling and educational psychologist. His professional interests are in social-cognitive theory, school counselling, gifted education, and life career development.

SUBJECT INDEX

NAME INDEX