

## Story crafting: strategies for facilitating narrative career counselling

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**Abstract** Narrative career counselling is a growing force in career guidance and counselling that offers a direction for the field to respond to the needs of increasingly diverse client groups. In this article, we review established and emerging approaches to narrative career counselling, then focus on the emerging story telling approach. We offer examples of how career counsellors may facilitate narrative career counselling through three levels of story crafting questions, as well as mapping and scaffolding, which are illustrated by a case example.

**Résumé.** **L'élaboration d'histoires : stratégies visant à faciliter le conseil en orientation narratif.** Le conseil en orientation narratif est une force croissante dans l'orientation professionnelle et le conseil. Il offre la possibilité au domaine de répondre aux besoins de groupes de clients de plus en plus divers. Dans cet article, nous passons en revue les approches narratives du conseil en orientation qu'elles soient établies ou émergentes, puis nous nous concentrons sur l'approche émergente par l'élaboration d'histoires. Nous proposons des exemples de la façon dont les conseillers en orientation peuvent faciliter le conseil en orientation narratif au travers de trois niveaux de questions sur l'élaboration d'histoires, de même que la cartographie et « l'échafaudage », qui sont illustrées par un exemple de cas.

**Zusammenfassung.** **Geschichtenkonstruktion: Strategien zur Ermöglichung von narrativer Berufsberatung.** Narrative Berufsberatung ist ein wachsender Trend in Berufsorientierung und -beratung, welche dem Bereich einen Weg bietet, den Bedürfnissen von zunehmend vielfältigen Klientengruppen zu entsprechen. In

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diesem Artikel besprechen wir etablierte und aufkommende Ansätze der narrativen Berufsberatung und konzentrieren uns dann auf den aufkommenden Ansatz des Geschichtenerzählens. Wir bieten Beispiele dafür, wie Beratungspersonen narrative Berufsberatung durch drei Ebenen von Fragen zur Geschichtenkonstruktion ermöglichen können, sowie durch Mapping und Gerüstbau, die mit einem Fallbeispiel veranschaulicht werden.

**Resumen. La artesanía del cuento: Estrategias para facilitar la orientación profesional narrativa.** La orientación profesional narrativa es una fuerza creciente en el asesoramiento de carrera y consejería que ofrece una dirección en este campo para responder a las necesidades de grupos de clientes cada vez mas diversos. En este artículo hacemos una revisión de enfoques establecidos y emergentes en la orientación profesional narrativa. A continuación, nos centramos en el enfoque de la narración de historia emergente. Ofrecemos ejemplos de cómo los asesores profesionales pueden facilitar la orientación profesional narrativa a través de tres niveles de preguntas de la artesanía del cuento, así como mapas y plataformas, que se ilustran por medio del ejemplo de un caso.

**Keywords** Story crafting · Narrative career counselling · Story telling

Narrative career counselling in its various forms is widely regarded as a way forward if the field is to remain responsive to the needs of increasingly diverse client groups. Narrative career counselling is however not new to the field. Rather it has been given various descriptive titles to reflect the emphases of its proponents, such as: Amundson's (2009) active engagement; Cochran's (1997) narrative career counselling; McMahon and Watson's (2010) story telling approach; Peavy's (1997) sociodynamic approach; Pryor and Bright's (2011, 2012) chaos theory; Savickas et al.'s (2009) life designing; and Young et al.'s (2011) action theory. Further, several texts have provided overviews of a range of narrative approaches and strategies (e.g., Maree, 2007, 2010; McMahon & Patton, 2006a). Such approaches are more similar than different in nature. For example, they are similarly informed by a worldview that values holism, personal agency, and meaning making (Mahoney, 2003) through the use of story and narrative. Importantly, a major focus of career counselling, no matter what its orientation, is the future of clients and the construction of narratives they can enact (Cochran, 1997). This has been variously described as constructing future stories, life design (Savickas et al., 2009), and goal directed action (Young et al., 2011).

This article considers strategies for facilitating narrative career counselling and how career counsellors assist individuals to move from their present story towards a desired story (Cochran, 1997) and in so doing become explorers in their lives (Peavy, 1997). First the article overviews existing and emerging models of narrative career counselling. The article then focuses on an emerging story telling approach, briefly considers its theoretical foundations, and offers examples of how career counsellors work collaboratively with clients by means of story crafting questions in

order to construct sustainable and achievable future stories. Specifically, the article considers three levels of story crafting questions, as well as mapping and scaffolding which are illustrated by a case example.

### The story so far

Narrative career counselling is richly resourced with well-established (e.g., Amundson, 1998, 2009; Cochran, 1997; Peavy, 1997) and emerging approaches (e.g., McMahon & Watson, 2010; Pryor & Bright, 2011; Savickas et al., 2009; Young et al., 2011). In the first major text on narrative career counselling, Cochran (1997) described a counselling process reminiscent in structure to existing models found in the counselling field. In doing so, Cochran explicitly aligned career counselling and counselling. Specifically, he described the narrative career counselling process moving through a series of steps or stages from elaborating a career problem, to composing a life history, to founding a future narrative and finally moving to actualising the narrative, which requires action on the part of individuals. These steps result in individuals participating in “designing and living a course of life in work” (Cochran, 1997, p. 31). Building on his previous work in the field, Amundson (1998) offered a model of active engagement that moves through a set of tasks, specifically: problem defining tasks, problem resolving tasks (i.e., shifting from self-assessment issues to issues of connecting, deciding and preparing for work), and problem closing tasks. Embedded within Amundson’s text is a range of strategies and qualitative career assessment instruments that career counsellors may use. Peavy’s (1997) sociodynamic approach offers a constructivist counselling model that comprises entering the life-space, exploring and describing the life-space, working with stories and deciding, planning and co-constructing personal projects. Similar to Amundson, Peavy offered a range of practical strategies for career counsellors. Each of these models, in their progression from beginning an interview, to further exploration and defining of issues, and to planning a way forward, is reminiscent of well established counselling models and microskills (e.g., Egan, 2009; Ivey, Ivey, & Zalaquett, 2009).

More recent emerging approaches to narrative career counselling differ from established approaches in that, although they also reflect the constructivist worldview, each is underpinned by a specific theoretical perspective on career development. For example, subsequent to Savickas’s (1997) consideration of new models and methods of career counselling and his reformulation of Super’s (1990) theory as career construction theory (Savickas, 2005), Savickas et al. (2009) proposed life designing as a paradigm for the twenty-first century. In this regard, Savickas (1998, 2009) offered a narrative career counselling model based on a career style interview that seeks to identify the life themes that provide a foundation for the construction of the future story. Just as Savickas formulated his approach over many years, Young et al. (2011) amassed an evidence base for an approach to career counselling based on action theory and the construction and enactment of projects founded on goal-directed intentional behaviour. Two further emerging approaches of narrative career counselling are founded on theoretical bases well

established in the sciences but less applied in career counselling. Pryor and Bright's (2011) approach applied chaos theory to career development and McMahon and Watson's (2010) story telling approach was founded on systems theory. Pryor and Bright's chaos theory of careers considers uncertainty and complexity and proposes a range of practical applications for career counselling and assessment. Subsequent to the formulation of the systems theory framework of career development (STF; McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006), the application of its core constructs have been informing the development of a story telling approach to career counselling (McMahon & Watson, 2010), which is the focus of this article.

### The story telling approach

The theoretical foundation of the story telling approach, the STF of career development, has been well described in the literature (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 2006). Essentially the STF considers individuals as inseparable from their contexts, which are defined in the STF as systems of influence. There are three systems of influence, specifically the individual system, the social system and the environmental–societal system, each of which is embedded with a myriad of influences. For example, influences embedded within the individual system include personality, values, interests, age and gender. Influences embedded within the social system include friends, family and work colleagues, and influences embedded within the environmental–societal system include geographic location, socioeconomic circumstances, and globalisation. In addition to the content of career development evident in the systems of influence, the STF also emphasises the process of career development. Importantly, the systems of influence are viewed as dynamic in that there is continuous interaction within and between influences, a process described as recursiveness. This recursive process results in change over time, which is constant and ongoing, and may also be sudden and unexpected through the influence of chance. From the perspective of the STF, individuals cannot be considered separate from their contexts in the career counselling process. In addition, career counselling is regarded as a systemic interaction between counsellor and client. Career counsellors must be sensitive to their own personal systems of influence and also pay acute attention to clients in the context of their systems of influence.

The core theoretical constructs of the STF that guide the story telling approach are: the individual, systemic thinking, recursiveness, and story (McMahon, 2005). In essence, individuals through constant recursive interaction with their systems of influence construct stories that help them to make sense of their experiences and to tell stories of those experiences to other people. In moving beyond theory to practice, career counsellors must consider how they facilitate the counselling relationship so that it is supportive and purposive. The use of story becomes a primary tool for facilitating such a relationship and connectedness between clients and their past, present and future stories. More specifically, in practice, career counselling is a recursive process in which career counsellors employ counselling microskills to facilitate the recursive processes of connectedness, reflection, meaning making, learning and agency (McMahon, 2005) which have been clearly

described in the literature (e.g., McMahon & Watson, 2011a). While connectedness, meaning making, and agency are common across all approaches to narrative career counselling, the story telling approach is distinct from other approaches in its explicit emphasis on learning and reflection. Indeed, the career counselling relationship becomes a space for reflection where, through the telling of stories, patterns, and themes are identified that can inform the construction of the future story. Learning occurs as individuals make sense of the experience and come to realise that the stories they previously regarded as discrete and unconnected exhibit coherence through common themes and patterns. Such learning informs the construction of future stories.

Where do stories come from?

The emphasis on story raises the question of where stories come from. McMahon and Patton (2006b) suggested that the STF offers a practical and conceptual map for career counselling. In essence, the influences of the STF and the interactions between individuals and their influences are the foundational sites of stories. Individuals' lives are multi-storied (Morgan, 2000) and their stories reflect the multi-cultural (i.e., social, historical, racial, gendered) contexts (McMahon & Watson, 2011b) in which they live. Stories reside in the past and present and the goal of career counselling is to co-construct a future story that resonates with meaningful and fulfilling themes and patterns of past and present stories. Connecting past, present, and future stories is not new to the field. For instance, Super (1954) suggested that a way of understanding an individual's future story is to understand stories of past experiences. Similarly, Josselson (1995) explained that an individual's stories of past experiences offer an explanation of the present story, and together such stories suggest a way to a future story.

Story crafting

While connecting an individual's stories makes intuitive sense, the question is how career counsellors go about this within a story telling approach. Facilitative strategies that can assist in this regard, include story crafting, mapping, and scaffolding. Each of these strategies will now be discussed and illustrated where possible with the case history of Steven (pseudonym). Steven was a 28 year-old athlete who was facing transition from a professional sporting career. Steven's opening comment to the career counsellor was:

I need to do something else. I've played sport all my life and I always knew this was coming but to be honest, I just haven't wanted to think about it. So I thought it would help if I talked to you.

In essence, Steven wanted to construct a future story and a new identity (Guichard, 2009).

As with many clients, Steven's opening statement may be regarded as a thin story (Morgan, 2000) containing little information. At this point, the issue for career counsellors then becomes how to move from a thin story offering few possibilities

for career counselling and for the construction of a future story towards thicker and richer stories that are more invested with hope and possibility. Ryan and Tomlin (2010) suggested that systems thinking stimulates deep thinking in the career counselling process. In terms of the STF, systems thinking suggests other times, systems, and roles from which stories may be invited. McMahon, Watson, Chetty, and Hoelson (2012) concurred and offered six strategies for moving from thin to thick stories, specifically: offering a reflective space, deep listening for clues in client stories, constructing brief story crafting responses founded in the clues that invite clients to tell further stories, identifying and making explicit the themes and patterns embedded in client stories, using themes and patterns to connect and provide a sense of coherence to previously disconnected stories, and using themes and patterns as the “nucleus” of future stories.

Listening deeply to Steven’s initial story caused the career counsellor to become curious about how long Steven had played professional sport and about the time before Steven’s sporting career. The career counsellor also wondered how sport had become such a dominant story that Steven had not considered any other possible story despite knowing that he would need to do so. The career counsellor’s curiosity prompted the construction of a range of story crafting responses that included: “I’m wondering what has made you think about a career after sport at this point in time?” “I’m wondering how long you’ve had this career in sport and what it’s been like for you?” “I’m wondering how long ‘always’ has been?” Each of these possible story crafting questions contains an explicit link to Steven’s initial thin story, evidences attentive listening, and represents an invitation for Steven to continue with his story telling. Thus, curiosity becomes a valuable quality of the career counsellor as it gives rise to several response options, any of which will elicit further stories from Steven.

Subsequently in the career counselling session, in response to story crafting questions posed by the career counsellor, Steven told several stories from various times and places. First, examples of Steven’s stories and the perspective of the career counsellor on these stories will be presented. Second, examples of story crafting responses will be described.

## Story telling and counsellor perspectives

### *Stories from the past: school, sport and family*

In considering Steven’s stories, the career counsellor came to realise Steven’s long-term commitment and dedication to his sport. In essence, Steven’s identity as a professional sportsman had been constructed over a considerable period of time through his experiences, interactions with others, and his intrapersonal responses (Guichard, 2009). In Steven’s own words:

I was always good at sport when I was at school. I just really enjoyed it and my parents encouraged me. I remember when they used to drive me to competitions and I remember winning my first competition. It was OK at primary school but once I got to high school we had more homework and I never seemed to have enough time for training and my study. Then I got a sports scholarship for when

I left school and I just sort of let school go. My parents kept telling me I should keep trying with my schoolwork that I wouldn't always be able to rely on my sport but I didn't listen. In the end I did quite badly in my senior year but it didn't really matter then because I had my scholarship.

Further, the career counsellor also recognised the dilemmas and sacrifices Steven had faced to achieve highly in his sport such as not having enough time to do well at school and to be more help to his parents:

My parents owned a hardware store and it was a bit of a struggle for them really... I always helped them out after school and in my school holidays. It was pretty interesting work really and I felt bad when my sport took all my time and I couldn't help them any more.

It was apparent to the counsellor how close Steven was to his family and how much he valued their support and how he did what he could to support them when he could in his school holidays. Indeed, without their support, he may not have been able to achieve his sporting dreams. By listening deeply, the career counsellor began to get a sense of themes related to hard work, commitment to himself and to others, dedication, and valuing family relationships. He was curious to listen for evidence of such themes in Steven's stories from the present.

#### *Stories of the present: the sporting life*

Steven expressed an appreciation for the life his sporting career has offered. "Sport's been really good to me. I've travelled all over the world and it pays me well. I've met all sorts of interesting people that I never dreamed of meeting. I've loved every minute of it. Every day's exciting." Beyond the love Steven shared regarding being a high-level sportsman, the career counsellor came to understand the complexity of an international sporting career:

In sport we have managers who look after us. They work out our schedules and our sponsorships and do a lot of planning for us. We work hard, too. Training gets really tough sometimes and if we don't do well it gets us down. But we know what we have to do and at the end of the day if we put in the hard work training we get the results we want. Some people don't make it but I've been lucky, I have been very successful.

Again, the career counsellor recognised Steven's hard work, commitment to himself and others, and dedication in remaining internationally competitive in his sport. Importantly, the career counsellor recognised Steven's passion and became curious about a sense of loss he imagined that Steven could experience in transitioning from his sport.

#### *Stories of the present and future: sport and family*

In listening to Steven's stories of the present, the career counsellor again recognised evidence of a theme related to Steven's commitment to himself and others that he

could use as the basis of a future question or tentative reflection. The counsellor also recognised the dilemmas Steven faced between his values of family relationships and his passion for sport:

I got married when I was [in my early twenties] and it's been great. My wife travelled with me and we had a ball but now we have a son ... and it's getting harder for us to travel with him and it's hard for me to leave them behind. I've sort of always known sport couldn't last but you know it just carries you along. Now, I don't know - perhaps it's my wife and son but I've started to think about what comes after sport.

Importantly, a thin story related by Steven about his work with youth development groups stimulated the career counsellor's curiosity to find out more. Steven offered:

One of the nice things we get to do is work with youth development groups. I get a kick out of seeing the enthusiasm of the kids when we coach them. We get to talk to them and sometimes I really worry about what they will actually do when they grow up.

The career counsellor was aware that Steven's dominant story and identity as a professional sportsman had been constructed over a long period of time and wondered whether this thin story represented the beginning of the construction of a future story and a new identity (Guichard, 2009).

### Story crafting responses

As evidenced in the examples, Steven's life is multistoried and reflects his experiences in a range of contexts and at various times throughout his life. Essentially his responses relate the content of his stories and are important in gaining a basic understanding of Steven's life and career development to date. To some extent, Steven's career stories may be conceptualised as occurring on different levels. Specifically, Level 1 focuses on information about content and experience, Level 2 focuses on connectedness and subjective experience, and Level 3 focuses on the identification of themes and patterns. It should be noted that the levels of story crafting questions in no way suggest a sequential order across the interview. Rather, the levels are indicative of the depth and purpose of the story crafting questions and the stories being told. Indeed the levels of story crafting questions co-exist recursively throughout the interview. It is important, however, that all levels of questions are attended to. Steven's stories represent a first level of stories that are responses to the career counsellor's Level 1 story crafting questions that focus on *discrete informational stories of content and experience*. In some ways, such questions are reminiscent of first order questions described in the family therapy literature.

The following examples of Level 1 story crafting questions asked by the career counsellor demonstrate how the previous responses were elicited. For example, the Level 1 story crafting question "I'm curious to know a little more about your sport and where it all began" resulted in the response:



I was always good at sport when I was at school. I just really enjoyed it and my parents encouraged me. I remember when they used to drive me to competitions and I remember winning my first competition. It was OK at primary school ... Then I got a sports scholarship for when I left school and I just sort of let school go ... but it didn't really matter then because I had my scholarship.

Another Level 1 story crafting question, “What else is involved in your life as a professional sports person?” elicited the response:

One of the nice things we get to do is work with youth development groups. I get a kick out of seeing the enthusiasm of the kids when we coach them. We get to talk to them and sometimes I really worry about what they will actually do when they grow up.

Steven's Level 1 stories related to various times and settings in his life as well as different roles he has played. Viewed systemically, his stories relate to influences from his individual system of influences (e.g., his story about his ability in sport), his social system (e.g., his story about his wife and child), and his environmental–societal system (e.g., his story about travelling the world). Such stories may be tracked and located at a factual level in relation to time and place using the conceptual map of the STF. Through such mapping, clients come to realise that stories from all settings may have some bearing on their future career story.

However, to progress towards the construction of Steven's future story, a deeper understanding of his stories is required. To achieve this, the career counsellor may use Level 2 story crafting questions that focus more on *connectedness and recursiveness* and *the client's subjective experience of the story*. Such questions facilitate the identification of themes and patterns in Steven's stories and in doing so provide coherence to a collection of stories that were previously discrete.

Level 2 story crafting questions move the client from telling isolated and discrete stories that are focused on facts and content to those that focus on connectedness, recursiveness, and subjective experience in order to facilitate reflection and meaning making. Level 2 story crafting questions are stimulated by career counsellors' curiosity about the stories of the client and a desire to understand the client more deeply. In asking Level 2 story crafting questions, career counsellors invite clients to become explorers (Peavy, 1997) in their lives. An example of a Level 2 question is: “But tell me about the qualities that made you successful?” This question elicited the following second level response from Steven:

I guess I'm just passionate about what I do. I can't imagine doing something that I'm not enthusiastic about. I work hard. Even when I worked in my parents' shop, I loved talking to the customers and had a good relationship with them. I liked trying to help them and work out what they needed. In my sport I love working with my team and I've really enjoyed my youth development project.

Unlike Level 1 story crafting questions and responses, which focus on content at the informational level, Level 2 story crafting questions more specifically focus on

processes related to connectedness, recursive interaction between the individual and their influences and their subjective experiences. Level 2 story crafting questions invite the client to consider the connectedness between influences in their career stories. In particular, this level of questions focuses on the recursive process constructs of the story telling approach, namely, connectedness, reflection, meaning making, learning, and agency. Examples of Level 2 story crafting questions related to the recursive process constructs of the story telling approach are provided in Table 1.

The examples in Table 1 illustrate how each of the counsellor's questions contains an explicit link to the client's stories in the form of connecting words, phrases or statements. In essence, the career counsellor maintains a curiosity about Steven's stories that stimulates the formulation of questions that invite Steven to move to deeper levels of his stories. This attests to the primary role of the client as the focus of the interview and as an active storyteller in the career counselling process. Level 2 story crafting questions and client responses evidence deeper levels of understanding of the client's career stories. For example, in the Level 2 story told by Steven, he begins to identify qualities in himself that contributed towards his success to date such as his enthusiasm, his ability to work hard and to relate to people.

Building on the deeper level of understanding facilitated in Level 2 questions and responses, is the possibility of moving towards a third level where themes and patterns are identified in order to construct Steven's future story. Thus Level 3 story crafting questions invite clients to consider the question, "What does this say about you as a person?" and to identify themes and patterns that are present in all stories. As reflected in the following career counsellor's Level 3 response, questions are only one of the counselling microskills that may be used. Reflections, paraphrases and summaries are also effective story crafting tools: "As I've listened to you, it seems that collaborating with others and working as part of a team is something you've really valued all your life. And it also seems that you work very hard to achieve your goals." In response to this comment by the career counsellor, Steven reflected: "I guess I've never really thought about it. I've only thought sport, sport, sport. But when you think about it everything I enjoy has involved interacting with people – you know, the shop, sport, the youth development." In this interaction, coherence across Steven's discrete stories has emerged through the theme of involvement with people.

Thus the construction of a new story begins. In essence, Steven has begun to tell new stories and uncover hidden stories and stories that were previously unknown to or unrealised by him (McMahon, 2006). Importantly, contained within the new story are "ingredients" of Steven's future career story; Steven has begun to construct a new "narrative to live by" (Gergen & Gergen, 2006, p. 113) and to be active in the construction of that narrative. At Level 3, Steven began to realise that his future story would be founded on themes of his previous stories, such as his love of working with people. In essence, the themes of his previous stories form the scaffolding of his future stories (Gergen & Gergen, 2006; White, 2007). White regards scaffolding as a way in which clients make incremental steps that move them from what they know about themselves towards what is possible for them to

**Table 1** Level 2 story crafting questions

Recursive process constructs	Examples of Level 1 story crafting questions	Examples of Level 2 story crafting questions	Examples of Level 3 story crafting questions
	Focus of Level 1 Story crafting questions: discrete informational stories of content and experience; information	Focus of Level 2 Story crafting questions: processes related to connectedness, recursive interaction between the individual and their influences and subjective experiences	Focus of Level 3 Story crafting questions: “what does this say about you as a person?”; themes and patterns that may indicate ‘ingredients’ of the future story
Connectedness	What else do you do at work? When you are at school, what do you do other than schoolwork?	In what other facets of your life does this apply? How has that been evident in your previous experiences?	If you could sum up your experiences in a sentence, what would you say? What themes have you noticed running through the stories and experiences you’ve shared with me?
Reflection	When you think about your work, what has given you the most satisfaction?	How do you interpret that? What are your reactions to that?	What have you realised that is most significant for you as you move towards the future?
Meaning making	What is similar in those roles?	If you were to explain that, what would you say? What sense do you make of that?	If you were to write a recipe for your future, what would be the key ingredients?
Learning	What skills do you use in that role?	What have you realised that you were not previously aware of? What have you learned about yourself as a result?	Based on what you have learned about yourself, how are you viewing your future now that is different from when we first met?
Agency	What did you do to get to this point?	What could you apply in the future? How did you respond to that situation?	What is the first step you will take when you leave this interview? How will you do this?

know and to do. Scaffolding assists clients to construct future stories that are sustainable because they are founded in their past and present stories. Thus the future story becomes believable and actionable (Gergen & Gergen, 2006) because clients can see that their future story has emerged from their stories of the past.

In Steven’s case, as a result of his career counselling, he could see through his stories the importance to him of working with people and assisting others, and subsequently he made a decision to re-engage in studies to pursue his new goal of community development work after his sporting career. Thus, Steven had assumed a role as an active agent in the construction of a future story and a new identity for

himself. Further questions by the career counsellor could elicit the actual steps Steven would take in planning for and enacting his new identity.

## Conclusion

In concluding, story crafting reminds us of the story of Alice in Wonderland in which Alice had the experience of changing her physical shape several times. In trying to understand this process, Alice became “curiouser and curiouser” about what was happening to her. Similarly, curiosity becomes a primary quality of career counsellors and clients in a story telling approach. Curiosity may stimulate story crafting questions and, in turn, client responses may further stimulate curiosity. Thus, client stories move to deeper levels in response to story crafting questions.

In facilitating a story telling approach through story crafting questions, career counsellors would need to value clients as active agents in the telling of stories. Story crafting questions ultimately place more emphasis on process and meaning than on content. This is made possible if the counsellor listens deeply for clues to elicit other stories, uses both the language of the client and collaborative language to provide links between stories, and facilitates a process rather than acts as an expert. Story crafting is an ongoing process in which career counsellors maintain *recursive curiosity* and *recursive deep listening* throughout the counselling process. All of this occurs within a respectful counselling relationship that creates a reflective space for clients to move to deeper level stories that they tell. Savickas (2011) suggested that all approaches to narrative career counselling offer a general model for career counselling that includes three elements: “(a) *construct* career through small stories; (b) *deconstruct* and *reconstruct* the small stories into a large story; and (c) *co-construct* the next episode in the story” (p. 6). Such elements are evident in the three levels of story crafting we have described in the present article. Importantly, we also offered examples of how career counsellors may collaborate with clients to move to deeper level stories by means of story crafting questions in order to construct sustainable and achievable future stories.

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