RUNNING HEAD: MY CAREER CHAPTER

Counsellors' Personal Experience and Appraisal of My Career Chapter

Peter McIlveen

Queensland University of Technology

Corresponding Author:
Peter McIlveen
Student Services
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba 4350
AUSTRALIA
+61 7 46312375
+61 7 46312880 (fax)
mcilveen@usq.edu.au

Abstract
This study investigated a qualitative career assessment and counselling procedure that was founded upon a constructivist, narrative approach to career counselling, My Career Chapter: A Dialogical Autobiography. Counsellors were trained in the use of the procedure and then applied it to themselves in an intensive workshop format. Intepretative phenomenological analysis was used for the research methodology. Counsellors were then interviewed to determine (a) their personal experience of My Career Chapter and (b) their appraisal of its alignment with a set of recommendations for the design and use of qualitative assessment procedures. Four superordinate clusters were derived from the data and these included My Career Chapter's relationship to theory, its administrative process, the counselling process, and the counselling relationship. The results indicated that My Career Chapter satisfied the recommendations for qualitative procedures. Possible amendments to the procedure were discussed.

Counsellors' Personal Experience and Appraisal of My Career Chapter

Qualitative career assessment and counselling procedures readily fall under the aegis of constructivism and have emerged as a legitimate alternative, or partner, to traditional quantitative, psychometric procedures. From the early signals of their proliferation (e.g., Savickas, 1992), qualitative procedures have increasingly been the focus of professional attention; take for example, a special edition of the Journal of Career Assessment (2005, issue 2) and the diverse array of qualitative procedures variously compiled by McMahon and Patton (2002; 2003). The current study contributes to the literature by investigating counsellors' experience and appraisal of an new constructivist career assessment and counselling procedure, *My Career Chapter: A Dialogical Autobiography* (McIlveen, 2006).

My Career Chapter

My Career Chapter (MCC) was designed as a variant of the constructivist approach (Patton & McMahon, 2006b) and specifically for narrative career counselling. It was derived from the Systems Theory Framework (STF, Patton & McMahon, 2006a), the theory of career construction (Savickas, 2005), the theory of dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). The composition of MCC approaches clients as if they are *storytellers* (McMahon, 2006) and facilitates a client writing a brief, career-related autobiography—a chapter of a client's career life. Unlike unstructured autobiographical techniques which offer the client limited directions, such as the Life Chapter exercise (Cochran, 1997), MCC entails a structured set of steps that guide clients in their writing and reflecting. Similar to another procedure based upon the STF, the My System of Career Influences reflection activity (McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005), MCC is presented in the form of a printed workbook containing detailed instructions. It is delivered to clients as a homework exercise following on from initial counselling interviews, such as the Career Systems Interview (McIlveen, McGregor-Bayne, Alcock, & Hjertum, 2003), or at least the establishment of a working alliance.

MCC requires a client to work through a series of tasks in a methodical step-wise fashion, beginning with broad career-related questions to orient him or her to the task. The client then considers "the big picture" of career by viewing and reflecting upon a diagram depicting the STF (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). The client then considers how each of the influences identified in the STF are compatible or incompatible with one another. Firstly the client compares the individual influences (i.e., individual system) in relation to the external influences (i.e., contextual, social and environmental-societal systems). The client then compares the individual influences against one another. These two compatibility tasks commence the process of decentring a client's view of his or her career; or leading the person to consider that career is a broad and deeply personal and lifelong experience, much more than the composition of their interests, skills and abilities. Next the client writes about his or her career by completing part-sentences associated with each of the influences of the STF. Each sentence of the influences has a past, present, and future stem; along with a rating of how strong the influence is and how he or she feels in relation to it. Upon completing the sentence-completion task, which is the bulk of the autobiography, the client must submit the draft to an "editor" for review. The editor is the client him or herself, five years younger. The client must read the manuscript as if they were the younger self and then write editorial comments to the older self. Upon receiving editorial comments, the older (current) self writes back to the editor with a summary of the career story and future. Upon completing the booklet, a client's story is read aloud by his/her counsellor in the subsequent session and the story, or aspects of it, may be integrated into the counselling process.

Recommendations for qualitative assessment

Notwithstanding their potential utility for counsellors and clients, constructivist qualitative methods need to be brought under the gaze of rigorous research and evaluation—

regardless of epistemological differences. However, there have been relatively few formal guidelines upon which to design, use and evaluate qualitative career counselling and assessment procedures (Goldman, 1992; McMahon & Patton, 2002; McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2003). McMahon, Patton and Watson (2003) established a set of recommendations for the construction of qualitative assessment procedures. Their recommendations include:

- (a) Ground the assessment process in theory;
- (b) Test the career assessment process;
- (c) Ensure that the process can be completed in a reasonable time frame;
- (d) Design a process that fosters holism;
- (e) Write instructions for the client;
- (f) Write readable and easily understood instructions;
- (g) Sequence logical, simple, small achievable steps;
- (h) Provide a focused and flexible process;
- (i) Encourage co-operative involvement of counsellor and client; and
- (j) Include a debriefing process (p. 197-200).

The recommendations also reflect guidelines on how to apply qualitative procedures in career counselling (McMahon & Patton, 2002) and provide substantive foundations for the development of international standards. Notwithstanding their relatively recent publication, the recommendations have received some attention in the literature with respect to their application (e.g. McIlveen, Ford, & Dun, 2005; McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2005). Furthermore, the recommendations readily integrate with aspects of an agenda for research into process variables in career counselling (Heppner & Heppner, 2003), which was used as a reference point for the current study.

The core writing task of MCC, which entails a sentence-completion method, has been the subject of research which investigated clients' emotional reactions to it (McIlveen et al., 2005). The current study extends that research by investigating counsellors' reactions to the full version of MCC. Furthermore, the research is centred upon counsellors' appraisal of MCC's alignment with a set the recommendations for qualitative career assessment tools (McMahon et al., 2003). A critical and reflexive desk audit would go some way to describe MCC's processes and alignment with the recommendations for qualitative procedures; however such an audit would not fully account for the actual experience of its application. The current study sought to investigate how MCC was personally experienced by counsellors who learned and applied it in an intensive training workshop. The reporting of the study entailed adaptation of the guidelines for qualitative research proffered by Morrow (2005).

Method

Assumptions and research design

This study entailed application of the qualitative research method Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2003). IPA is phenomenological and hermeneutic in theoretical origin and aims to facilitate understanding how individuals make sense of their psychosocial worlds, experiences, and events. However, IPA transcends mere description, or "giving voice" to the participants; it progresses toward higher theoretical interpretations of participants' meanings (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). IPA thus satisfies the assumption of constructivist ontology and epistemology. Application of IPA in this study aimed to explore counsellors' experience of MCC, based upon their learning in an intensive training workshop and their personal application of the procedure.

Researcher-as-instrument statement

As the primary developer of My Career Chapter, my own appraisal of it has been accounted for through autoethnographic writing, personal application of the procedure, and application in counselling. This study was conceived out of a desire to understand the

experience of other users of My Career Chapter and to concurrently seek a critical review of its qualities, so as to inform modifications or improvements to its composition.

Participants

As small, concentrated, homogenous samples are preferable for IPA research, the sampling procedure for this study was deliberate and selective. Eleven counselling professionals were invited to participate. Their counselling disciplinary backgrounds were psychology and education. Whilst there was homogeneity in all of the participants being counselling professionals, a measure of diversity was introduced to broaden the scope of opinions. Personal counsellors and counsellor-trainers were included deliberately to bring the potential for an alternative critique of MCC; one which should be devoid of engrained assumptions pertaining to career counselling. Four participants conducted career counselling as their main professional activity; five conducted personal counselling as their main professional activity, two of whom specialized in cross-cultural counselling; and two were counselling academics who were professionally involved in the training of counsellors at the graduate level.

Sources of data

In an intensive workshop format, participants were trained in the theory and recommended applications of MCC. This training process sought to firstly ensure that potential users would have a reasonable grounding in the use of MCC and to secondarily glean their experiences and appraisals of it with regard to the recommendations for the qualitative career assessment processes (McMahon et al., 2003). In summary, the training program comprised:

(a) An orientation and introduction to the recommendations for qualitative career assessment and counselling procedures (McMahon et al., 2003);

(b) A self-reflection exercise: What is Your Career Counselling Worldview? (Watson, 2006), which facilitated participants' consideration of the theoretical, practical and cultural dimensions of their approach to counselling;

(c) An overview of the foundational theories of MCC: Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 2006a), Theory of Career Construction (Savickas, 2005), and the theory of Dialogical Self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993);

(d) A description of the theory of narrative career counselling and an overview of exemplary techniques, for example, My System of Career Influences (McMahon, Patton et al., 2005);

(e) An account of MCC's development and its relationship to theory and other techniques;

(f) Personally completing MCC as an individual, including the reading aloud of their career story to a participant in order to simulate the clients' experience in counselling; and,

(g) A group discussion and debriefing.

The training took place over the period of four hours and included regular breaks. Although the training session flowed according to a schedule, participants engaged in discussions throughout the presentation. This allowed them to clarify ideas and to share opinions on topical issues.

Interviews. Smith and Osborn (2003) recommended semi-structured questionnaires for the collection of data for an IPA study. A set of stimulus questions was developed for each recommendation for the design and delivery of qualitative career counselling and assessment procedures (McMahon et al., 2003). The following question serves as a sample using the criterion of "ground the assessment process in theory": *How does My Career Chapter relate to theory and which aspects of its application of theory stood out for you?* The

questions were compiled in a semi-structured questionnaire format to flexibly enable open-ended responses from participants.

The eleven participants were interviewed over a period of no more than two weeks following the training workshop. Excluding introductions and development of rapport, the durations of interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded for later transcription and analyses. Transcription was performed by a commercial agency. The audio-recording of one interview failed and consequently collaboratively written notes were recorded immediately after the interview. These data were not included in the final analyses of transcripts using IPA, but were reserved as a secondary source of data for checking against the final analysis.

Workshop discussion. A group discussion immediately followed the workshop. Participants' initial impressions and general opinions of MCC were sought and shared with the group. The discussion was not conducted to obtain primary data, but was used as a source of information to prepare for the potential issues that would arise in the subsequent interviews and to enable participants to reflect upon their own views in context of the views of others.

Data analysis

Ten interview transcripts were the focus of the research and were analysed using IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Prior to commencing the analysis, the transcripts were read whilst listening to the audio recording. This read-and-listen process was done to refresh, note transcript omissions or errors, and to actively re-engage with the dialogue of the interviews.

The initial step of IPA entailed repeatedly reading through one interview transcript before working through any of the others. In the recommended procedure for IPA, notes are recorded in the left-hand margin of the transcript during the first reading. Rather than write in the margins, in this study the comments noting specific experiences were written on each transcript using word-processing editing and comments features. Upon completing this pass of the transcript, the transcript was read again, taking into account the initial notes and entering themes that subsumed the notes. This thematic level of analysis was conceptually higher than that of the first and aimed to create psychological understandings of the text, which were both grounded in an individual's interview, yet sufficiently abstract to allow for connection with the themes from other cases. The themes were then listed at the bottom of the transcript and reviewed to determine conceptual clusters, which were subsequently checked against the raw transcript for meaningfulness. Text which was indicative of clusters' and themes' meanings was retained for exemplification. The entire process was repeated for each individual transcript. Thus each individual's transcript was analysed idiographically so as to create a full account of his or her experience. Participants were provided a copy of the interview transcript for verification and keeping.

Following the iterative procedure performed on each case, a final list of themes and superordinate clusters was constructed so as to indicate the aggregated meanings from the group. This interpretative process entailed repeatedly moving back and forward across the participants' themes and checking if themes were conceptually related to a superordinate cluster. This list was used to enable a thematic reporting of results.

Trustworthiness. A check was made to assure trustworthiness of the data and the analysis according to the paradigm-specific requirements for constructivist research (Morrow, 2005). Whilst the data saturated relatively early in the analysis, care was taken to abduct negative evidence and discrepancy within the data to ensure a balance of participants' experience and to satisfy the criterion of fairness. The criterion of ontological authenticity requires that participants' data be expanded and elaborated. This requirement was satisfied as an inherent part of the IPA interview process in which their experiences were elaborated to the point of shared understanding with the interviewer. Educative authenticity was satisfied

through the group discussion at the end of the workshop, in which participants shared their experiences. Catalytic authenticity pertains to action which is stimulated by the research process. This criterion will be explicated in the discussion section as it was borne out in a decision to modify MCC as an outcome of the study. Morrow's criteria pertaining to meaning, especially shared meaning, were satisfied through the process of the participants being able to confirm their transcripts and the themes derived from them. It should be noted, however, IPA does not require the final interpretation to be a shared construction, as it ultimately represents meanings generated and owned by the researcher, rather than the participants.

Results

Four superordinate clusters were conceived from the themes derived from the participants' data: *theory*, *administrative process*, *counselling process*, and *counselling relationship*. Due to space limitations, not all of the pertinent themes can be explicated in this paper; only the critical themes have been described in detail.

Theory

Notwithstanding the specific question addressing theory, the link between MCC and theory was a prominent feature of the interview transcripts. All of the counsellors acknowledged the presence of theory in the design or operation of MCC. The Systems Theory Framework and narrative approach were explicitly emphasised, along with notions of holism and allusions to person-centred theory.

> Well it relates very strongly to the Systems Theory Framework because it incorporates questions that ask about a lot of the different influences on a person's career. So it's very well grounded in that particular theory. (Counsellor 8).

This was not simply an intellectualization of the relationship between theory and MCC. Having actually used the procedure on themselves, each counsellor had a lived, personal experience of how the process connected to theory. Following on from the previous example:

> What stood out for me was that it really allowed me to focus on each of those important influences. (Counsellor 8).

Here Counsellor 8 exemplified the personalization of the process in her repeatedly referring to herself, "me", in the recounting of her experience and its connection to theory—in this case STF and its multiple influences. Interestingly, two of the personal counsellors mentioned a relationship to psychodynamic theory, particularly in relation to *projecting* into the sentence-stems as part of the story writing process.

Administrative process

There was consistency in the opinions that the instructions were user-friendly and that the procedure followed a logical and transparent sequence. Flexibility in the procedure was likewise acknowledged, particularly in reference to the sentence-completion process. Three crucial themes pertaining to administrative process which are worthy of explication here, include length/duration to complete MCC, the capacity of MCC to be of mediated by different client groups and characteristics, and the compatibility matrices.

Length/duration. All counsellors commented upon the length of MCC, or more accurately, the time and effort required for its completion. Given the account of their experiences, it would likely take at least two hours to complete without feeling pressured. Some of the counsellors believed that the time taken was not necessarily a negative feature of the procedure, borne out in the belief that such a comprehensive storying of one's life or the process of career exploration should not be something short or perfunctory. This was counterbalanced with suggestions that some clients who attend career counselling are often anxious for a "quick answer" to the conundrum of career uncertainty.

> …is there, in fact, a real timeframe? Do we need a timeframe? Yes, maybe in practical terms when we're interviewing people and doing this, but it could be emphasising to them that, you know, this isn't hard cast wrought in iron for the rest of your life. (Counsellor 4).

This counsellor was suggesting that whilst the MCC does take time, clients' desire for a quick solution should be assuaged by the counselling pretext that one's career story changes over time and its development should not be seen as something that can be completed quickly and packaged up neatly.

Counsellor 10's comments on the length of MCC also served to raise another commonly shared view amongst the counsellors.

> …it is long, but the length, in and of it-self, may actually be a positive thing, as those clients who do it, get involved in it, and actually display a high degree of commitment to what they are doing. That commitment produces a great narrative. (Counsellor 10).

The question of client commitment to completing MCC was entwined with the issue of its suitability for different clients.

Suitability. All of the counsellors considered MCC to fall within the achievable reach of most adult clients. However, the most predominant theme related to achievability, was client suitability in terms of client age, or more correctly, developmental stage. In particular, the counsellors raised concerns that MCC may not be suitable for school-aged clients. Notwithstanding the fact that it was not designed for young adolescents, the question focused the discussion upon how MCC could be improved or limited in its application to those who would benefit most.

Age was not the only factor pertinent to client-suitability. The verbal skills or psychological-mindedness of the client were brought into the frame, with one of the counsellors claiming that she preferred a visual mode of processing and that the considerable verbal content was challenging. In a variation to the suggestion of advanced verbal skills as a requisite, another counsellor, who described himself as a good talker and a story teller, but not enamoured of reading, said:

> Emotionally, ….when I first saw the document there was that instant reaction of the school-boy who wants to go out and run around and be free and who is being sat down in front of a big task that he feels is tapping into his weakness, so I had that emotional reaction to it. (Counsellor 3).

Compatibility matrices. The final administrative theme related to the compatibility tasks (i.e., STF individual influences v. external influences, and individual v. individual). While there was evidence that the counsellors saw value in the compatibility tasks as a "warm-up" to the writing proper, in the sentence-completion task, and as a process to orient the client to the decentred influences of career (according the STF), there was some disquiet on having to complete two tasks. One counsellor found the process appropriate with respect to expanding her view of her career, but frustrating in that she wanted to get on with the writing task. One could readily imagine some clients feeling the same.

Counselling process

Suitability issues notwithstanding, there was an unequivocal shared view that MCC would be an effective career assessment and counselling procedure. Four main themes were derived from the data: client-driven process, holism, reading process, and debriefing.

Client-driven process. Further to the allusions to client-centred counselling mentioned in the theory section, the counsellors saw the process of completing MCC as having significant client focus with emphasis upon it being client-directed, as a self-exploration.

Holism. There was consistency in opinion that MCC was holistic in nature and that comprehensively drew in the many influences that make up career.

…I can't think of anything else that you could possibly put in it. I don't think that there was anything that could have been in there that wasn't. (Counsellor 5).

Moreover, the process of completing MCC required the writer to bring the various elements of his or her story into a coherent narrative.

I think it's a first instrument that I've come across that has really allowed me to look at so many different aspects of who I am and my environment and puts that all together to form a nice story, you know. (Counsellor 8).

Reading process. The counsellors were moved by the process in which their fellow workshop participant read aloud their story written in Step 5. This sharing is what would transpire in a counselling session, with the counsellor reading the client's story. An important dimension to the reading process is its apparent capacity to induce metacognitive reflection.

…now that I've heard [my story] this way, I would attend to this aspect rather than to the aspect that I'm might have had in my mind when I was writing it. (Counsellor 6). it was a very powerful exercise, actually. You know, when you write something, you usually just dismiss it out of your brain, and move on to whatever it is. But when you write something and then someone reads it back to you, you know, you re-engage with those thoughts. So…that process was really, really interesting. It made me think about what I'd written and made me think about what I was thinking. (Counsellor 7).

Whilst reflective learning is intrinsic to MCC and its co-construction of a career story, this must be seen within the context of the entire career counselling experience and relationship.

Debriefing. The counsellors acknowledged that a debriefing process was inherent to the process of completing MCC, particularly as part of the reading back activity and subsequent co-construction between client and counsellor. However, there were notes of caution suggesting that the debriefing needed to be made more explicit within the procedure and the counselling itself.

Counselling relationship

There was unequivocal opinion that a fundamental requirement for the application of MCC was its administration within the context of a counselling relationship.

Well it depends how much the person is willing to reveal….It asks a lot of personal questions and some people aren't comfortable with revealing personal stuff even with a counsellor (Counsellor 9).

Despite counsellors acknowledging MCC's capacity as a self-directing self-help procedure, the counsellors saw its complexity as a self-exploration process as an indicator of the need to subsume it under a broader client intervention, namely career counselling. The counsellors were firm in stating that MCC should not be used in isolation. This was not merely about ensuring that clients worked through the procedure correctly, it was, moreover, about ensuring that the benefits of its capacity for effectiveness would be optimal.

I think it's a matter that has to be addressed in building rapport and trust and respect between the counsellor-client relationships. I think that's got to be imperative for [MCC] to work. (Counsellor 2).

Discussion

This study investigated professional counsellors' experience of using MCC and their judgment on how well it aligned with the guidelines for qualititative career assessment and counselling procedures (McMahon et al., 2003). The study was not a critical review based upon a desk audit; rather it was based upon the personal experience of actually completing MCC, reflecting upon the experience in a group discussion, taking reflective notes after the experience, and moreover, reflecting on the process by way of a semi-structured interview, which was the ultimate focus of the research. Having conducted the research using

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, four predominant clusters were formulated: theory, administrative process, counselling process, and counselling relationship.

In respect to theory, the counsellors' views on the relationship of MCC to theory confirmed explicit links to theory, particularly the STF, constructivist and narrative theories. They also connected MCC to broader theoretical notions of holism and person-centredness which permeate the constructivist approach to career counselling. The counsellors' suggestion of the relationship between the sentence-stem completion process and psychodynamic projection is noteworthy because of the historical origin of the sentence-completion paradigm (Loevinger, 1985), which was derived from psychodynamic ego-psychology. That connection notwithstanding, the psychological construct of projection may be, nevertheless, readily reformulated through constructivist lens. In addition, the views of the counsellor who took a pragmatic approach with allusions to eclecticism, would lend credence to the suggestion that MCC may be useful for practitioners whose practices are informed by theoretical traditions other than constructivism. Given the overall agreement on the nexus of MCC and theory, it would be fair to conclude that this particular career assessment and counselling procedure stands as a theoretically-informed contribution to the literature on career development practice.

With respect to administrative process, the counsellors suggested that MCC's instructions were clear and readily understood. Furthermore, they suggested it was a flexible and achievable procedure. However, there was a caveat on clients' level of language ability or psychological-mindedness needed to complete the procedure. Notwithstanding the deliberately verbal features of MCC, as a means of differentiating it from visually oriented procedures (e.g., My System of Career Influences), the theme of suitability for different clients was notable. This stimulates the question of whether MCC would be useful for school-aged adolescents and goes to the process question of client-subtype (Heppner & Heppner, 2003). Whilst it was not originally designed for such a group, the question related to issues such as users' level of language ability, developmental readiness, and career maturity. As a consequence, further study is required to address the question of whether MCC would be appropriate for high school students. The compatibility matrices were granted a mixed evaluation with some opinion indicating their usefulness and other opinion suggesting they were too onerous. Without deleting the compatibility task from MCC altogether, especially given its purpose as a decentring exercise, the tasks used in this version may need to be modified in order to minimise negative reactions.

As for the counselling process, the counsellors suggested that MCC is an holistic client-focused counselling procedure. The most significant element of the counselling process was the shared reading of the story written in Step 5, the sentence-completion activity; which is essentially the main body of the story. Previous pilot research on this procedure indicated that clients experienced a mild positive emotional reaction to writing their story (McIlveen et al., 2005). In the current study, the counsellors judged the reading aloud process as a powerful experience for counselling and clearly as the core of the procedure. In addition, the metacognitive learning of the reading process reflects the notion of career counselling being a learning process (Heppner & Heppner, 2003). Whilst a debriefing process is inherent to MCC, there were laudable concerns that this necessary element may not be sufficiently obvious. Thus future reformulations of MCC would need to emphasise the importance of debriefing, particularly given its nexus with the counselling relationship.

Embedding MCC in a counselling relationship was seen as vital to its appropriate application. As such, MCC was seen as being dependent upon the co-operation of client and counsellor. This reflects the preeminence of the relationship in constructivist counselling (Mahoney, 2003) and the valuing of individualised interpretation and feedback (Brown et al.,

2003). It also responds to the call for research into career counselling process which investigates the role of the working alliance (Heppner & Heppner, 2003). Notwithstanding the importance of administering MCC through counselling, the reading aloud process of MCC may be of value to a client if he or she conducted the process in a person from another trusting relationship (e.g., friend or spouse). Extending the process into other relationships would align with the notion that career is constructed through a variety of dialogical exchanges, not just in the mileu of career counselling. Future research could investigate if the outcomes of a client's discussions with another person could be returned to the counselling setting, whilst retaining the full impact of the career counselling experience.

The approach to IPA used in this study reasonably satisfied the criteria for trustworthiness of qualitative research and the criteria specific to constructivist research: fairness, authenticity and meaning for constructivist research (Morrow, 2005). The results of this IPA study may be read by researchers and practitioners as a faithful account of a specific group of professional counsellors' perspectives of MCC. The counsellors who participated in this study had expertise in the counselling of young and mature adults. From that limited perspective, the results indicate that MCC satisfies the recommendations for qualitative career assessment and counselling procedures. Furthermore, this result provides additional support for the claim that workbooks and written exercises are valuable for career interventions (Brown et al., 2003). In conclusion, this study has built upon previous research into MCC (McIlveen et al., 2005) and upholds its potential as an emerging constructivist assessment and counselling procedure.

References

Brown, S. D., Ryan Krane, N. E., Brecheisen, J., Castelino, P., Budisn, I., Miller, M., et al. (2003). Critical ingredients of career choice interventions: More analyses and new hypotheses. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 62*, 411-428.

Cochran, L. (1997). *Career counseling: A narrative approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Goldman, L. (1992). Qualitative assessment: An approach for counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 70*, 161-162.

Heppner, M. J., & Heppner, P. P. (2003). Identifying process variables in career counseling: A research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 62*, 429-452.

Hermans, H. J. M., & Kempen, H. J. G. (1993). *The dialogical self. Meaning as movement.* San Diego: Academic Press.

Larkin, M., Watts, S., & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 102-120.

Loevinger, J. (1985). Revision of the sentence completion test for ego development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48*, 420-427.

Mahoney, M. J. (2003). *Constructive psychotherapy. A practical guide*. New York: Guilford Press.

McIlveen, P. (2006). *My Career Chapter: A Dialogical Autobiography*. Unpublished manuscript.

McIlveen, P., Ford, T., & Dun, K. (2005). A narrative sentence-completion process for systems career assessment. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 14*(3), 30-39.

McIlveen, P., McGregor-Bayne, H., Alcock, A., & Hjertum, E. (2003). Evaluation of a semi-structured career assessment interview derived from systems theory framework. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 12*, 33-41.

McMahon, M. (2006). Working with storytellers: A metaphor for career counselling. In M. McMahon & W. Patton (Eds.), *Career counselling: Constructivist approaches* (pp. 16-29). London: Routledge.

McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (2002). Using qualitative assessment in career counselling. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 2*, 51-66.

McMahon, M., & Patton, W. (Eds.). (2003). *Ideas for career practitioners: Celebrating excellence in Australian career practice*. Brisbane: Australian Academic Press.

McMahon, M., Patton, W., & Watson, M. (2003). Developing qualitative career assessment processes. *The Career Development Quarterly, 51*, 194-201.

McMahon, M., Patton, W., & Watson, M. (2005). *My System of Career Influences*. Camberwell: Australian Council for Educational Research.

McMahon, M., Watson, M., & Patton, W. (2005). Qualitative career assessment: Developing the My System of Career Influences Reflection Activity. *Journal of Career Assessment, 13*(4), 476-490.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 250-260.

Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2006a). *Career development and systems theory: Connecting theory and practice.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2006b). Constructivism: What does it mean for career counselling? In M. McMahon & W. Patton (Eds.), *Career counselling: Constructivist approaches* (pp. 3-15). London: Routledge.

Savickas, M. (1992). New directions in career assessment. In D. H. Montross & C. J. Shinkman (Eds.), *Career development: Theory and practice* (pp. 336-355). Springfield: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Savickas, M. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-70). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology. A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 51-80). London: Sage Publications.

Watson, M. B. (2006). Career counselling theory, culture and constructivism. In M. McMahon & W. Patton (Eds.), *Career counselling: Constructivist approaches* (pp. 45-56). London: Routledge.