

# Narrative Interventions in Post-modern Guidance and Career Counseling

Annamaria Di Fabio · Jean-Luc Bernaud  
Editors

# Narrative Interventions in Post-modern Guidance and Career Counseling

A Review of Case Studies and Innovative  
Qualitative Approaches

 Springer

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*To Jean Guichard, Magister and  
extraordinary colleague as a concrete  
example of reflexivity, courage and integrity*

# Foreword

I am honored to be asked to write a Foreword for this important new book edited by Professors Annamaria Di Fabio and Jean-Luc Bernaud on accountability in career development interventions. The unique contribution of this outstanding volume is its focus on narrative interventions, which are becoming more and more common and important in this era of great complexity and challenge in the world of work. Indeed, this book provides a perfect blend of new ideas, practices, and methods for narrative approaches in career counseling and education. Interestingly, this book comes at a time when the demands for accountability are increasing due to financial constraints in providing resources for needed services for clients facing career and work-based problems. Moreover, our field (and many related disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences) is in the midst of a strong push by quantitative methodologies, which are often viewed as more rigorous or precise than qualitative and narrative tools.

Into this complex landscape, Professors Di Fabio and Bernaud and their talented chapter authors have bravely contributed their time and effort to not just affirming the importance of qualitative and narrative tools as viable means of ensuring accountability, but also of elevating the discourse in these approaches. The interesting dialectic that is taking place in our field is the growing popularity of qualitative and narrative approaches to counseling and career education at the same time that funders and administrators are expecting quantitative evaluation methods. As noted throughout this book, the need for qualitative counseling approaches is particularly relevant during an era of such massive transformations in the world of work. For many clients, narrative tools provide the sort of relativistic solutions that are optimally relevant for this period of such uncertainty in the world of work. The chapters of this book provide wonderful counterpoints to the growing hegemony of quantitative evaluation tools and also link the evaluation efforts seamlessly to the interventions that have been so creatively described in this book.

I also would like to use the space provided for me in this Foreword to make a plea to scholars in our field to be respectful of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to both counseling and evaluation. I have observed a growing rancor in our discourse from advocates from both sides of the qualitative–quantitative

continuum, which has troubled me. In many ways, I find this debate to be irrelevant at best and harmful at worst. The challenges that beset working people currently and in the coming years are serious and are having a profoundly negative impact on individuals and communities. The underlying frameworks of our theories, research, and practices have multiple intellectual and methodological influences, which are appropriate given the complexity of the issues that we are studying. To create battles over the ostensible superiority of one set of methods over another is an unnecessary distraction. We need to focus on resolving the problems that exist for people and nations as they grapple with a working context that is increasingly unpredictable. At times, quantitative methods are appropriately called for, and at other times, qualitative methods are optimal.

This excellent book will soon emerge as a classic resource for counselors, educators, practitioners, and policy analysts who will be relying upon the very creative and thoughtful strategies and perspectives that have been shared by these leading scholars. I congratulate the entire team of contributors of this book, who have given us a great gift that will resonate in our field for many years to come.

Lexington, MA, USA  
December 2017

David L. Blustein

# Preface

This book presents *A Review of Case Studies and Innovative Qualitative Approaches* with the aim of enhancing accountability in post-modern guidance and career counseling narrative interventions under the UNESCO UNITWIN Network Life Designing Interventions (counseling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development. The book has two parts. The first part includes theoretical perspectives and new interventions in different contexts. The second part is focused on accountability and shows new qualitative tools for evaluating the effectiveness of post-modern guidance and career counseling interventions in the twenty-first century. This volume responds to the call, made some years ago (Blustein, Kenna, Murphy, DeVoy & DeWine, 2005), for new qualitative tools to detect change in clients' narratives and to evaluate the effectiveness of narrative career counseling interventions. Yet, years after the rise of narrative career counseling for the twenty-first century, there have been a few responses to the call for methods of evaluation. Rehfluss' (2009) *Future Career Autobiography: A narrative measure of career intervention effectiveness* is a notable exception.

The book begins with the chapter by Annamaria Di Fabio and Jean-Luc Bernaud. This first chapter introduces the principles of accountability and the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of post-modern guidance and career counseling narrative interventions for the twenty-first century. The chapter is focused on the necessity to create specific tools to fully capture the depth and nuance of changes brought about by narrative interventions. Furthermore, the guidelines for accountability are presented as a positive preventive perspective.

The second chapter by Kobus Maree is articulated in two parts. The first part of the chapter introduces the construct of career indecision and provides a brief overview of the research into this construct. Maree examines key aspects of career construction that enable career counselors to help clients manage and resolve their career indecision. The second part of the chapter presents a case study that demonstrates the value of career construction counseling for a postgraduate student in psychology who is facing career indecision, and highlights how career construction counseling can be used to deal with similar challenges.

The third chapter by Jean-Luc Bernaud and Dominique Guédon describes a new approach to individualized counseling for job decency analysis and career development through a case study of a manager working in an establishment for the elderly. The case study shows in particular the use of a quali + quanti approach to the assessment of psychosocial risks and proposes a counseling method to assess work-related resources and dangers. The chapter underlines the importance of not only doing the diagnostic work relating to risk, but also doing the work of individualizing resources. Identifying resources provides companies opportunities for exploration, allows employees to put their situations into perspective, and redefines their relationships to their jobs.

The fourth chapter by Lin Lhotellier, Caroline Arnoux-Nicolas, and Laurent Sovet reveals an innovative framework for career intervention that is focused on meaning. The chapter presents a case study with a special focus on analyzing the interactions between the counselor and the client, and the qualitative effectiveness of the career intervention. The contribution discusses the importance of exploring both qualitative and quantitative effects of a meaning-centered career intervention and highlights the challenges of career counseling within a post-modern context.

The fifth chapter by Peter McIlveen and Allison Creed introduces an approach to case formulation and metaphor. It is through case conceptualization that the counselor reveals (consciously or unconsciously) the rhetoric used to objectify the life of another. The focus is on the professional practice of case formulation as a highly specialized aesthetic of counseling practice.

The contribution by Afonso Ribeiro, Guilherme de Oliveira Silva Fonçatti, and Maria da Conceição Coropos Uvaldo concludes the first part of the volume. Their chapter describes a case study about the impact of a group-based career counseling model for unskilled adults in crisis in the Brazilian context. The effectiveness of the intervention was qualitatively evaluated by a non-structured method based on the participants' life and working narratives, and changes to those narratives throughout the group process. The results indicated an increased reflexivity and a clear process of narrative change during the counseling.

The second part of the present book widens horizons through the lens of accountability that is focused on new qualitative tools for evaluating the effectiveness of post-modern guidance and career interventions in the twenty-first century. This second part of the book presents some case studies from the *International Research and Intervention Laboratory of Psychology for Vocational Guidance, Career Counseling and Talents (LabOProCCareer&T)*, within the Department of Education and Psychology, Section of Psychology, at the University of Florence. These case studies involve collaborative work with international colleagues. The focus is on different narrative career interventions for the twenty-first century and new qualitative tools to evaluate the effectiveness of such interventions.

The seventh contribution by Maureen E. Kenny and Annamaria Di Fabio introduces the second part of the book. Taking into account the characteristics of work in the twenty-first century (e.g., globalization, rapid spread of technology, instability), the chapter firstly introduces the relevance of adaptability, purposeful identitarian awareness, grounded reflexivity, fluidity management, and then the



shift from career development to career management through self and relational management. This chapter also describes some post-modern guidance and career counseling interventions and innovative tools that qualitatively detect a change (or lack of change) in narratives produced by clients before and after their interventions.

The eighth chapter by Ornella Bucci, Allison Creed, and Annamaria Di Fabio presents a case study of an Italian Ph.D. student. The case study involves the Career Interest Profile (CIP), as a life design counseling intervention, and the Future Career Autobiography (FCA). In addition, the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA) is described as an innovative narrative tool. The results of the study revealed the more specific life and occupational goals after the intervention as well as narrative changes in the adaptability dimensions. The life design counseling intervention using the CIP helped the participant to increase self-awareness to develop future career and life paths.

The ninth chapter by Letizia Palazzeschi, Allison Creed, Alessio Gori, and Annamaria Di Fabio presents two case studies. The first is a case study of a young male physiotherapist who graduated in France and then decided to move to Italy some months after graduation to find a job in his field of specialization. The client participated in a life design counseling intervention. The effectiveness of the intervention was qualitatively evaluated through the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA). The second is a case study of a personnel director of a big company in the center of Italy who participated in a narrative career counseling intervention. The client completed two new qualitative tools before and after the intervention: the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA) and the Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO). The results showed the importance of using a life design counseling intervention in helping people to understand themselves more deeply, to identify their actual objectives, and to take the necessary steps toward their future.

The tenth chapter by Annamaria Di Fabio and Maureen E. Kenny presents the case study of an operator of an employment office in Tuscany who participated in a life meaning intervention. The client completed two qualitative instruments before and after the intervention: the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA) and the Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes (CCIO). The results of the study underscored the effectiveness of the life meaning intervention in helping the client to increase self-awareness, life meaningfulness, and deep values.

The eleventh contribution by Peter McIlveen and Annamaria Di Fabio describes a case study that addresses the effectiveness of Intrapreneurial Self-Capital Training for a final-year female biology student. The case study involves a qualitative instrument, the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment (LAQuA). The results of the analysis using the LAQuA coding system describe improvements in the participant's awareness about her personal intrapreneurial resources.

The twelfth chapter by Violetta Drabik-Podgórna, Marek Podgórnny, and Annamaria Di Fabio presents a case study of an Italian worker. This case study addresses the effectiveness of a new life construction dialogue intervention, "Constructing My Future Purposeful Life," using three different qualitative

evaluation tools: the Future Career Autobiography, FCA; the Life Adaptability Qualitative Assessment, LAQuA; and the Career Counseling Innovative Outcomes, CCIO. The results of the case study underscore the effectiveness of the Constructing My Future Purposeful Life intervention and highlight the value of enhancing new dialogue interventions to strengthen the client's reflexivity and increase purposeful identitarian awareness.

The last chapter by Annamaria Di Fabio and Peter McIlveen introduces a new qualitative tool, the Qualitative SIFS Evaluation For Future (QSEF), for evaluating the effectiveness of dialogue interventions. The chapter describes a case study of a worker in a public organization. This new qualitative tool is developed on the basis of the Self-Construction Theory (Guichard, 2004, 2005) and the Life Construction Theory (Guichard, 2013). The results of the analysis using the QSEF coding system showed an increased awareness of the participant in relation to the functioning of her Subjective Identity Forms System (SIFS) supporting her career and life construction.

This book is a substantive contribution to scholarship that enhances reflection on the essential theme of accountability in post-modern guidance and career counseling narrative interventions. The book is a useful point of reference for practice, research, and teaching. The book's case studies, innovative qualitative interventions, and qualitative tools to evaluate interventions' effectiveness are invaluable resources. As a whole, this book advances counseling interventions for the twenty-first century in terms of narrative, dialogic interventions that facilitate clients' self-management in an unpredictable, liquid, and "under construction" world of work.

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