



Symposium Introduction: Reflexivity in Life Designing Interventions

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the Symposium on Reflexivity in Life Design Interventions. Eight articles report studies of counseling processes and client operations during life design interventions as well as client feedback during subsequent Interpersonal Process Recall interviews. The Symposium concludes with comments on and discussion of the studies.

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At the Congress of the International Association for Applied Psychology in Paris, France during the summer of 2014, the Life Design International Research Group met to plan their third collaborative project. The first project had been to articulate a new paradigm for career counseling and use the framework to craft a contextualized model of intervention based on the epistemology of social constructionism (Savickas et al., 2009). The resulting life-design framework for counseling implements the theories of self-constructing (Guichard, 2005) and career construction (Savickas, 2005). Conducting research on life design counseling *outcomes* required measures of two of its central goals, namely career identity and career adaptability. There were several available measures of career identity but not one for career adaptability. Accordingly, the Life Design Research Group's second project was to jointly construct a measure of career adaptability. The *Career Adapt-Abilities Scale* (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) was collaboratively constructed by teams from 13 countries and since its publication in 2012 it has been translated into 8 additional languages and been used in over 50 research studies.

During the Paris meeting, the Group decided to pursue a project suggested by Professor Jean Guichard from the Institut National d'Etudes du Travail et d'Orientation Professionnelle (National Institute for the Study of Work and Career Counselling) of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (National Conservatory for Applied Technologies). He encouraged the Group to next study the *process* of life design counseling. Together the Group designed a study to examine what prompts reflexivity and change during life design counseling using the self-construction model of Guichard (2005) or the career construction model of Savickas (2005). The Life Design Research Group formulated three overarching research questions to guide the research: "What changes during the intervention? What elements prompt these changes? How was reflexivity fostered and developed?"

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The general research method had a counselor conduct a videotaped interview(s) with two different clients using either the self-construction or the career construction counseling model. After each session, a research partner would ask the client and ask the counselor separately to identify the most important thing that occurred during the session. The day after counseling is completed, a research partner would use the videotape to perform an Interpersonal Process Recall interview (Larsen, Flesaker, & Stege, 2008) with the client and with the counselor separately to identify critical moments. The researchers then use the resulting data to answer the three research questions relative to their client(s). In discussing their results, the researchers were encouraged to describe the process and progress of client's and counselor's thinking as they slowly build a new intention for the future. To prepare for the research, team members were asked to read an article on the Interpersonal Process Recall method (Larsen et al., 2008) and one on its application in counseling process research (Watson & Rennie, 1994). Beyond this very general research protocol, each researcher or research team was encouraged to adapt the general format to their particular situation. An announcement inviting other interested researchers to participate in this project appeared in the October 2015 issue of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*.

We invite you to now read the following eight articles in this Symposium that examines reflexivity and the change process during and following narrative career counseling.

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