Career education and individual education planning: Using the My System of Career Influences

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School of Education

Workshop for Career Practitioners
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Workshop outline

- Story and Meaning
- Qualitative career assessment
- Systems Theory Framework (STF)
- Introducing the MSCI
- Using the MSCI in career education
- MSCI and Learning
“Story is a human universal”

(Cochran, 2007, p. 18)
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“Stories live to be told to others”

(McAdams, 2001, p. 118)
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“There is never a fixed, final, or true life story to tell, nor a single way to tell it, but a plethora of possibilities”

(Botella, et al., 2004, p. 122)
Our goal is to assist clients to:

- tell stories about their lives
- become “explorers” in their lives (Peavy, 1998)
- make meaning about those experiences
- understand the future in the context of the past and present
Our purpose is to assist clients close the gap between

- what is, their present story or “the existing state of affairs”,
- and
- what ought/could/should be, “the desired state of affairs”

(Cochran, 1997, p. 16)
Our task in working with story is to:

- collaborate with clients to explore their lives
- teach them to explore
- apply the meaning of their exploration

(McMahon, 2008)
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Theme of today’s story

Explorers
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Marie’s Story
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Marie
The Explorer
Our lives are multistoried

(White, 1994)
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- **Stories within stories:**
  “I hate English”

- **Stories from other places:**
  “I like football”

- **Stories from other times:**
  “I used to like primary school”

- **Other People’s Stories:**
  “What would your friends say about …”
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- Understanding the character within the story
  “What did you like doing?”
- Identifying the themes of the story
  “What does this say about you?”
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- Connecting past and present to future

“Who do you think might use these skills/aptitudes/talents in their work? Where do you think you could use these?”
“bring these alternate stories out of the shadows and to elevate them so that they play a far more central role in the shaping of people’s lives.”

(Michael White, 1989, p. 19)
Future stories must be:

- believable – clients clearly see the elements of the future story in their role in previous stories
- actionable – clients believe the elements can be put into practice
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Scaffolding:
Drawing the raw material for the future story from stories of past and present experiences
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Create a mattering climate

“the beliefs people have that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else’s attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them”

(Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989)
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Stories have the power to change our thinking, to impact our emotions, and to move us to action

(Amundson, 2003, p. 161)
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What is the Systems Theory Framework (STF) of Career Development?
INDIVIDUAL

- gender
- values
- health
- sexual orientation
- ability
- interests
- disability
- age
- world-of-work knowledge
- personality
- skills
- beliefs
- physical attributes
- self-concept
- aptitudes
- ethnicity

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INDIVIDUAL

- gender
- values
- sexual orientation
- ability
- interests
- physical attributes
- personality
- world-of-work knowledge
- skills
- age
- self-concept
- ethnicity
- aptitudes

Contexts:
- Peers
- Family
- Education institutions
- Workplace
- Community groups
- Media
- Peers
- Peers
- Peers
- Peers
- Peers

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INDIVIDUAL

gender
values
health
sexual orientation
ability
disability
skills
world-of-work knowledge
personality
beliefs
interests
self-concept
physical attributes
aptitudes
ethnicity
age

Geographical location
Education institutions
Employment market
Workplace
Socioeconomic status
Community groups
Political decisions
Family
Historical trends
Media
Globalization

Peers

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Qualitative assessment

- informal
- flexible
- open-ended
- holistic
- nonstatistical
- less rigid parameters than quantitative assessment
- may not be guided by a standardised directions
- little, if any scoring
- scoring if featured is generally subjective

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The role of the counsellor

Expert

Directive

Actuary

Curious and tentative inquirer

Supporter

Co-author

Biographer
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The role of the client

Passive recipient  Active agent
Storyteller
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The counselling relationship

Expert driven
Scores
Objective Directive
Fit

Mattering climate
Stories
Subjective Collaborative
Plan
My System of Career Influences (MSCI)
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- an application of the STF
- involved a four-year and three-stage trialling process in Australia and South Africa
- a qualitative assessment process that represents stringent theoretical, conceptual and practical refinements
- provides clients with the opportunity to meaningfully create their own career stories through reflection
- theoretically grounded, client oriented, holistic, sequential and a meaningful learning experience
- a facilitator’s guide and booklet are available

(McMahon, Patton, & Watson, 2005 a, b)
My System of Career Influences (MSCI)

Facilitators’ Guide

Mary McMahon
Wendy Patton
Mark Watson
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Facilitators’ Guide

- Career Assessment
- The MSCI
- Using the MSCI
- MSCI page by page guide
- Supplementary career learning processes
- References
- Appendices
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Thinking systemically

Case study 1: Dougie
My present career situation
Thinking about who I am
Thinking about the people around me
Thinking about society and the environment
Thinking about my past, present and future
Representing My System of Career Influences
Reflecting on My System of Career Influences
My System of Career Influences
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STF</th>
<th>MSCI</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Influences</strong></td>
<td><strong>MSCI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual System of influences</td>
<td>Thinking about who I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social system</td>
<td>Thinking about the people around me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental-societal system</td>
<td>Thinking about society and the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past, present, future</td>
<td>Thinking about my past, present and future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process Influences</strong></td>
<td><strong>MSCI</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recursiveness, change over time, chance</td>
<td>Representing my system of career influences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My System of Career Influences - 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflecting on my system of career influences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My system of career influences - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My present career situation

1. What career decisions do you need to make in the future? For example, you may need to choose subjects at school, or you may be thinking about your first part-time job or what you will do when you leave school.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. List the part-time or volunteer work you do, have considered or have done at any time in the past.
   a) ____________________________  b) ____________________________
   c) ____________________________  d) ____________________________

3. Think about life-roles you have other than that of student. These may include roles such as sportsperson, choir member, class captain, youth group member.
   a) ____________________________  b) ____________________________
   c) ____________________________  d) ____________________________

4. List any jobs that you have considered for your future.
   a) ____________________________  b) ____________________________
   c) ____________________________  d) ____________________________

5. List any previous career decisions that you have made (for example, choosing subjects to study, choosing to continue or discontinue activities such as music or sport).

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What strategies or approaches have you used in your previous decision making?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. Who has helped you or provided advice with your previous career decisions?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Thinking about who I am

When people are making career decisions there are usually many influences that make them unique. For example, you may have an outgoing personality, or a special ability such as being good at mathematics. It may be important to you to earn a lot of money or to help people.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read the examples carefully and take time to think about yourself.

1 Tick the influences that may apply to your next career decision.
2 Write on the diagram any other influences you can think of that are not listed.
3 Mark with an asterisk (*) those that you think are really important or a big influence on you.
Reflecting on My System of Career Influences

Now that you have drawn your System of Career Influences, it is time to reflect on what you have noticed or become aware of. The following questions might guide your thinking as you look at your diagram.

- What has surprised you about your System of Career Influences?

- What have you noticed that you were not previously aware of?

- What has been confirmed for you?

- What would you like to change?

- What would you like to remain the same?

- How do you feel as you look at your System of Career Influences?

- Of those influences you located closest to you, which do you think is most important? How do you explain its importance?

- Which of these influences have you encountered in previous career decisions? How did they help you? If they did not help you, how did you deal with them?
My action plan

Now that you have completed your MSCI diagram and reflected on its meaning to you and the story it tells, it is time to think about what you might do next in your career decision-making process. These questions will help you to plan your next steps.

- What action or steps will you take now that you have completed your Systems of Career Influences diagram?

- What information would you like to find out now?

- Who could you speak to for that information?

- What resources could you use to find out more?
Learning about my career influences

- What changes have you noticed between your present System of Career Influences and the System you constructed previously?
- How do you explain those differences?

My Action Plan

- Who will you talk to about your System of Career Influences diagram and what would you like to tell them?
- What action or steps will you take now that you have completed your Systems of Career Influences diagram?
- What information would you like to find out now?
- Who could you speak to for that information?
- What resources could you use to find out more?
Thinking about who I am

When people are making career decisions there are usually many influences that make them unique. For example, you may have an outgoing personality, or a special ability such as being good at problem solving. It may be important to you to earn a lot of money or to help people.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read the examples carefully and take time to think about yourself.

1. Tick the influences that may apply to your next career decision.
2. Write on the diagram any other influences you can think of that are not listed.
3. Mark with an asterisk (*) those that you think are really important or a big influence on you.

Few Blacks are studying for educational psychology, so that's the reason that I choose my career.
Thinking about the people around me

When people are making career decisions, sometimes others around them may influence their thinking. For example, colleagues or family members may suggest jobs they think are suitable, you may know someone whose job sounds interesting, you may regard someone you have worked with as inspirational, or you may have spoken with a mentor. Sometimes people read about or see or hear something on TV or radio that influences their decision.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read them carefully and take time to think about your own life.

1. Tick the influences that apply to your next career decision.
2. Add any others that you can think of that are not listed.
3. Mark with an asterisk (*) those that you think are really important or are a big influence on you.

---

2. Female (33)
   Black
   English
Thinking about society and the environment

When people are making career decisions, it is sometimes important to consider the influence of the society in which they live and the environment around them. For example, some people live in areas where there are few job opportunities, and for others the cost of a study course or living expenses, or the availability of transport may influence their decision.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read the examples carefully and take time to think about your own life.
1. Tick the influences that apply to your next career decision.
2. Add any others that you can think of that are not listed.
3. Mark with an asterisk (*) those that you think are really important or are a big influence on you.

2.
Female (33)
Black
English
2.

**Female (33)**

**Black**

**English**

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**Thinking about my past, present and future**

Some of the influences you have already considered may have occurred in the past and yet still affect your career decision. For example, years ago you may have visited a place or seen a documentary that inspired you to make some changes in your life.

Sometimes decisions may be influenced by future considerations. For example, some people may know that they want to work overseas.

Sometimes career decisions may be affected by things in people's present lives that they want to keep the same or want to change. For example, they may not want to move from where they currently live.

On the diagram below are some examples of influences on career decisions. Read the examples carefully and take time to think about your own life.

1. Tick the influences that apply to your next career decision.
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This booklet should not be photocopied.
2. Female (33) Black English
1. Male (25) Caucasian Afrikaans
3. Male (51) Coloured English
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The MSCI learning process

- **Individual process**: MSCI may be completed by a client or student alone in one session in 30 – 40 minutes

- **Individual or group process**: MSCI may be conducted as a learning process conducted over three 30 - 40 minute sessions
  - **Session 1**: page 2
  - **Session 2**: pages 3 – 7 and page 9
  - **Session 3**: page 8

- **Group process**: MSCI (either one session or three session process)
Starting point
Entering the life space of the client
Story and Meaning
Career assessment processes

Outcomes
Story continues
Career action

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(from McMahon & Patton, 2006, p. 170)
Learning is

- an individual process
- a process rather than outcomes
- grounded in experience
- involves transaction between individuals and environments
- the creation of knowledge

The learning process

- constructivist learning
- experiential learning (e.g., Kolb, 1984)
- adult learning principles
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The STF & MSCI learning process

Creating a learning system
- develop a learning alliance
- clarifying the process and learning objectives
- monitor the life of the learning system
- the creation of knowledge
- employ constructivist/experiential learning processes
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The STF & MSCI learning process

The learning approach involves
- grounding the process in experience
- personal reflection
- sharing
- self-learning
- application
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Application

- Fosters active agency
- Action plan - Future planning
  - Speaking to others
  - Seeking information
  - Using resources
  - Gaining experience e.g. work observation or work experience
- Individual learning plans
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Thank You

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