

**THE SEARCH FOR DAILY MEANING:**

**A Technique for Career Counselling**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Because work is such a tremendous potential source of meaning in an individual's life, techniques which turn career choice into technical talent matching are inadequate. The individual's search for authentic meaning needs to be the focus of career counselling, but few approaches have been able to address this relationship between working and living.

Major developments in career theory are reviewed to highlight the distinction between the more technical logical positivist and the phenomenological approaches. Super's Career-Development Assessment and Counselling (C-DAC) model is described in detail as it is the first significant attempt to move beyond the technical approaches by incorporating developmental theory into career counselling and by stressing the role of counsellee readiness to use the information provided.

However, especially in South Africa, any test-based approach to career counselling runs the risk of shifting the locus of control from the counsellee to the counsellor, so an autobiographical non-test approach, the life-line, is introduced to assist counsellees in their search for personal meaning without running the risks associated with test-based assessments. The life-line helps to contextualise the choice of work within the counsellee's subjective life experience and turns career counselling into a shared search for a range of personal meanings rather than the provision, by the counsellor, of a limiting interpretation.

Three case studies are presented to demonstrate the use of the life-line, and the conclusions arrived at are shown to be essentially similar to conclusions obtained from using the C-DAC battery. The advantages and limitations of the life-line are discussed and its ability to combat problems associated with school based career counselling is outlined as well as its usefulness with mid-life career changers, in cross-cultural contexts, and in group counselling.

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## ON WORK

Then a ploughman said, Speak to us of Work.

And he answered, saying:

You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.

For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life's procession that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite.

When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.

Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison?

Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour a misfortune.

But I say to you that when you work you fulfil a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born,

And in keeping yourself with labour you are in truth loving life,

And to live life through labour is to be intimate with life's innermost secret.

But if you in your pain call birth an affliction and the support of the flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that naught but the sweat of your brow shall wash away that which is written.

You have been told also that life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary.

And I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge,

And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge.

And all knowledge is vain save when there is work,

And all work is empty save when there is love;

And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.

And what is it to work with love?

It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.

It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.

It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.

It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit,

And to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

Often have I heard you say, as if speaking in sleep, "He who works in marble, and finds the shape of his own soul in stone, is nobler than he who ploughs the soil.

"And he who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of man, is more than he who makes the sandals for our feet."

But I say, not in sleep, but in the overwakefulness of noontide, that the wind speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;

And he alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving.

Work is love made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine.

And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.

From *The Prophet*  
by Kahlil Gibran

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND

#### The role of work

For most people work, or the lack of it, has become a major part of their lives and it has a tremendous impact on other aspects of their existence. Writing in *Newsweek* magazine, Burger (1993, p. 10) says,

For more than two decades, from the late 1940's to the early 1970's, the industrialised world enjoyed an unprecedented period of rapid growth and rising productivity that had economies running at full steam. Trade grew, incomes rose, living standards soared and in Europe, the United States and Japan, practically everyone who wanted a job could have one. Look at us now .... Make no mistake about it: the economic, political and social issue of the 90's is jobs.

Work has become a focal point around which most people's lives revolve and affects not only how they earn their living but also how they live their lives. As Weinrach (1979, p. xiii) points out, work is a major part of human experience - involving more time than any other activity except perhaps sleep. As such it has a major impact on other aspects of existence and affects, to some extent, the emotional and material quality of a person's life. It can define a person's socio-economic status, where a person lives, with whom that person socialises and how that person spends his or her leisure time. Work is so central to people's lives that their entire outlook, and even their mental health, is affected by it. Dovey (1984, p. 52) says that people who can be described as happy - as emotionally and spiritually fulfilled - are usually fulfilled at work. Super (1979, p. 150) sums this up when he asserts that

work is a way of life and ... adequate vocational and personal adjustment are most likely to result when both the nature of the work itself and the way of life that goes with it ... are congenial to the aptitudes, interests and values of the person in

question.

Roe and Lunneborg (1990) find Maslow's concept of needs, arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency, to be a useful starting point and say that "no single situation is potentially so capable of giving some satisfaction, at all levels of basic needs, as the occupation" (p. 68).

The role of work in human existence has been discussed by a number of other theorists. For Erikson (Watkins & Savickas, 1990, p. 84) it is seen as a means whereby individuals express and implement their identity. Freud is said to have regarded the ability to work as one of the hallmarks of psychological health and well being (Crites, 1981, p. xvii).

Adler identified three tasks that individuals confront as they move through life: love, social relations and work. Because all human beings are interdependent, we all rely (to some extent) on the labour of others and work becomes essential for human survival (Mosak, 1983, p. 68). The healthy person has developed social interest and will commit to life tasks - including work - without evasion or excuse because of a feeling of belonging to a community, of being part of humankind. This communal identification entails a basic concern for others as well as desire to contribute to society - a primary outlet for this is through work and work related activities (Watkins, 1984a, p. 34).

Dovey and Mathabe (1987) point out that work, in the modern world, plays a central role in satisfying the four major life tasks faced by individuals. As well as Economic Survival, work assists individuals develop a sense of Social Identity since, they believe, an individual's response to the question "What work do you do?" tends to determine the "nature of the response to one as a person" (p. 5) and thus it determines how that individual is perceived by others - Danziger (1987, p. xiv) sees work as "the medium through which society judges an individual's worth". Through the work they do, individuals communicate basic messages about how they see themselves, what is important to them and how they perceive the possibilities open to them.

A sense of Community emphasises the importance of the other people with whom an individual works and who determine the "emotional quality of one's everyday life" (Dovey & Mathabe, p. 7). In turn, through the possibilities available to them and the way in which their activities are received by others, individuals develop conclusions about their place in the world. This interaction results in "making a living" being far more than making money - people build a fluid structure for their daily lives (Cook, 1991, p. 105) and work represents a search "for daily meaning as well as daily bread. ... For a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying" (Terkel, 1975, p. 1).

Work becomes "often the most significant potential source of Meaning in a person's life. Work which satisfies the emotional/spiritual dimension of human existence, contributes to an enriched life experience" (Dovey & Mathabe, p. 7) and is intimately related to who an adult is as an individual - it is, according to Cook (1991, p. 105), an essential vehicle by which adults connect with the world around them.

### The process of career choice

Given this centrality of role, the process whereby individuals prepare for, select, enter and progress through their working lives becomes a profound journey of personal growth. Michelozzi (1980) says that choosing a career can be a very special and precious time during which individuals are required to orientate and organise their lives.

It can be a time when we look deeply at ourselves and what we have been doing. It can lead us to question how we intend to spend our lives for a time, or our time for the rest of our lives: to keep or not to keep certain goals, to change or not to change certain behaviours. To aspire or not to aspire to certain positions - all with a view towards greater life enrichment. (p. ix)

For Dovey (1982, p. 4) the choice of work begins with subjective criteria such as "the individual's interpretation of his or her life experiences and the accompanying emotional

impact of the experiences", and cannot be turned into a technical "talent-matching" exercise. Instead Dovey (Dovey & Mathabe, 1987) advocates an approach based on "preventive psychology" (p. 8) which emphasises an active and critical approach towards occupational information so as to identify the intention of the information and to find alternative sources. The approach also advocated the development of "individual meaning structures" (p. 9) and personal knowledge through specific education programmes.

One of the important factors influencing an individual's life experience is, according to Stoltz-Loike (1992, p. 195), the individual's family. Understanding the interrelationship between work and family becomes essential if we hope to identify the many factors influencing career decision making. After all "clients are not solely individuals, but individuals within the context of their past and current relationships" (p. 196). Against this background career counselling becomes, for Carlsen (1988), a dialogue between counsellor and client through which clients seek to make sense of their lives and to discover direction, structure and significance. Counsellors need to assist clients discover what work means in their lives.

Homan (1986) expresses the individual's search for work as a quest for authentic existence which, "according to Heidegger (1949, 1962) is a mark of being. More accurately, it is a mark of *Dasein* - being there" (p. 15). As such it is fundamentally

a dialectical question of "Who am I and who am I to become" as distinct from the common vocational question of "What can I do?" The former question is dialectical because one is always pressed to ask the question and answer it as one is coming into being. The latter question is static because one is objectified: I am a teacher, I am a plumber, I am a something (but not a someone). (p. 21)

He sees this point as "particularly relevant in light of Erikson's (1968) fifth stage of the life-cycle, in which the person wrestles with identity versus role confusion" (p. 22).

## The South African situation

It is not possible to talk of the career counselling scene in South Africa as if there is a unitary theory or approach. However official publications tend to ignore the almost phenomenological role of work and resort to what Dovey (1981, p. 27) refers to as "the dial-a-job style career guidance activities of testing, information ... dissemination and 'slotting-in' placement." The HSRC *Investigation into Education: Report of the Work Committee Guidance* (1981) - the so-called "de Lange Commission" - starts off by making the assumption that education systems in South Africa should be "making a positive contribution towards the provision of manpower and economic development of the country" (section 1.1, p. 1). While there is often mention made of "the individual needs of the pupil", this is almost inevitably coupled with "the needs of the country" (section 2.3.4, p. 8).

The National Manpower Commission's report *Vocational Guidance and Counselling in the RSA* (1988) refers to vocational guidance as "comparing individual characteristics and abilities with training and job requirements" (p. 17). The report states

7.5.1.1. Effective vocational guidance and counselling and a realistic choice of career on the part of a person implies that the personality traits and the requirements of the relevant occupational field (job requirements) should be matched as effectively as possible. In order to carry out effective guidance or counselling and therefore to make a realistic choice of career, information about the person's abilities (man specifications) and information about occupations (job requirements) is necessary. (p. 40)

According to Dovey (1981, p. 27) such a mechanical approach satisfies the need for efficiency, low unit cost, productivity and cost-effectiveness which is expressed by Langley (1988, p. 1-2) amongst others. This approach, normally termed the Trait-and-Factor Approach, has dominated the career counselling field in South Africa for many years (Brownell, 1992) and there is considerable research evidence that "Trait-and-Factor

career counselling works" (Crites, 1981, p. 32). An outline of the theory will be provided in the next chapter since it has occupied centre stage in career literature and has been widely (and well) used by numerous theoreticians. However many authors are critical of this model because of its technicist approach which ignores the search for authenticity and meaning which working can provide for the individual, and its reliance on traditional formal psychometric techniques, which the National Manpower Commission's report regards as "some of the most important aids in the process of vocational guidance, counselling and career choice" (p. 41).

The "test and tell" approach, as it is termed by Crites (1981), is the misuse of the theory (Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1990) but, according to Brownell (1992, p. 65), this is the approach most often adopted by career counsellors in South Africa which, at best, provides the client with a mass of test information which is frequently forgotten or distorted. At worst it completely ignores the psychological realities of decision making that lead to indecision and unrealism in career choices and fails to foster the general competencies and skills required (Crites, 1981). It frequently sets the counsellor up as an "expert" in a powerful position over the counsellee who waits passively for information and answers, assuming that the choice of a job is a once off simple matching event. Such an assumption amongst counsellees and parents is frequently perpetuated by private career counsellors who may be tempted "to exploit it for their own short-term advantage" (Brownell, 1992, p. 66).

The trait-and-factor approach seems to have been used in South Africa for the same reasons as it was in America in the 1930's - facilitating the occupational choice of white males. Crites (1981) points out that despite economic depression in America during the 1930's a large number of people were placed in jobs as the result of what was essentially trait-and-factor intervention. This led to the conclusion that improved employment selection techniques were needed to "establish a more stable labour force and to aid business recovery" (Crites, p. 6). Brown *et al.* (1990, p. 5) describe how, with the civil rights and the women's movements and the development of national concern for the poor,

the objectives of career practitioners in America shifted during the 1960's and 1970's to include not only the facilitation of occupational choice but also helping these developing minority groups deal with the unique circumstances of their entry into the world of work.

Incongruity and incompatibility between an individual's personality and the organisational structure of the working environment have been identified by Stones (1982) as one of the definitive dimensions of teacher maladjustment. As will become clear this is true for most, if not all, other occupations and if work is to be experienced as a positive, fulfilling force in a person's life, it must be at least a part of that person's search for authenticity. A number of authors such as Dovey (1981), Homan (1986) and Collin and Young (1986) have attempted to add the dimension of personal meaning to the process of career choice and this has resulted in a more hermeneutic approach through which the choice of a career comes to be viewed as an enormous range of possibilities rather than as a "single meaning to be discovered" (Collin & Young, p. 849).

The theories of career decision making most pertinent to this study are presented briefly in the next chapter to draw the distinction between the so-called Logical-Positivist approaches and the more phenomenological approach of the psychodynamic theorists. Chapter Three focuses on the Career-Development Assessment and Counselling (C-DAC) Model of Super (1983) as the most widely accepted model currently available for career counselling and development work. In Chapter Four the so called "life-line approach" to career counselling which is not based on orthodox psychometric testing is presented and its validity in terms of phenomenological career counselling theory is highlighted. Chapter Five presents case studies in which the life-lines constructed by three counsellees are used to illustrate the approach, and the results obtained from those life-lines are compared with the results of psychometric tests. These comparisons are discussed in Chapter Six and conclusions about the usefulness and limitations of the life-line approach are drawn. Some speculation is also offered concerning the applicability of the life-line approach in situations other than those from which the case studies were drawn.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORIES OF CAREER COUNSELLING

Career counselling, which is known by a variety of names (eg. vocational guidance, vocational counselling, etc.), means different things to different people. Crites (1981) says that it is a somewhat disparate field which has developed from various needs - cultural, economic, social, psychological - and various disciplines that approach the analysis of career choice from often contradictory assumptions. Because of its hybrid nature, which has been a source of strength as well as weakness, it has frequently been disdained as a field of behavioural sciences by related, but supposedly more prestigious, specialities such as individual psychotherapy and group work.

According to Powell and Kirts (1980, p. 75) no single comprehensive theory can incorporate the scattered empirical findings. A variety of theories, often based on more general counselling theories, have emerged which, according to Collin and Young (1986), have "no organising principles, little coherence and variable quality" (p. 838). They have grown sporadically in response to the developments within several academic disciplines and according to their epistemological, philosophical and methodological traditions.

The major theories have been well covered by a variety of authors such as Osipow (1983), Brown, Brooks and Associates (1990) and Crites (1981) who also provides a comprehensive overview of the changes and developments in career counselling. What follows below is a brief introduction to the theories most pertinent to this particular study. According to Jepsen (1992) the major theorists over the last 20 years are clearly Holland and Super, but the person who is often termed the father of career counselling - Parsons - provided the conceptual framework on which this later work has been based.

## Trait-and-Factor

Trait-and-factor counselling is historically the first attempt to match individuals with specific jobs. It is based on a careful diagnosis of test profile information along with subjective items of personal history. This represents a rational, empirical approach based on the psychology of individual differences. The root of all career development theory can be traced to the three-step schema of Parsons (1909) which provides the first conceptual framework for career counsellors.

In the wise choice of a vocation there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions for success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. (p. 5)

Parsons developed techniques to help individuals identify their resources, abilities and interests and match these traits to the "condition of success in different industries" (Parsons, 1909, p. 8). This emphasis on increasing the success and satisfaction of the individual remains central in career theory and practice although, according to Brown and Brooks (1990), "the emphasis on increasing productivity has been of little concern to most theorists" (p. 2), despite the insistence of South African policy makers that increased productivity and the provision of occupational information remains an important consideration.

Because the needs of the market place were a predominant concern of the times, the primary emphasis of the trait-and-factor approach became the study of occupations and it was believed that occupational information provided an adequate basis for vocational choice.

The approach is, according to Weinrach (1979, p. 62), "essentially rational and logical"

but continues to express a concern for the whole person who is viewed as largely rational and capable of wise choices so long as he or she has adequate information on which to base these choices. The role of the counsellor, according to Crites (1981), is clearly that of educator if not social engineer - the intervention "emphasises teaching and persuading the client, convincing the client of the inherent reasonableness of the counsellor's inferences from the accumulated case data. The counsellor exerts considerable influence upon the client" (p. 29). Crites summarises the relationship of counsellor to client as "largely that of teacher-to-student, expert-to-novice, older-to-younger" (p. 30).

As mentioned before, Crites (1981) believes that "trait-and-factor career counselling works" (p. 32) but goes on to caution that

in the hands of its highly competent and enlightened originators who are still practising, it is most likely as viable today as it was in the past. But as practised by too many Trait-and-Factor counsellors who have not updated the model and methods, this approach has gone into incipient decline. It has developed into what has been caricatured as "three interviews and a cloud of dust". (p. 49)

Crites says that clients usually leave without using the information supplied on their own, "due to the very lack of initiative that generated the problems which brought him or her to career counselling in the first place" (p. 52). The criticism seems to be largely of trait-and-factor counselling poorly applied, rather than of the practice itself.

### Holland's theory of careers

Holland's (1973, 1985) work has sparked a continued interest in occupational stereotypes and personality orientation. For example, accountants are typically concerned with structure, procedure and order. They exercise considerable self-control and identify with power and status. While these personality characteristics do not fit every accountant, they fit enough to provide a reality base within our culture for a personality - stereotypical

projection of the typical accountant. The theory has been termed a "birds of a feather theory" (Weinrach, 1979, p. 93) and is regarded as not only a theory of vocational choice but also, to a lesser extent, a theory of personality.

Rosenberg and Smith (1987, p. 2) summarise Holland's basic concepts as follows:

1. The choice of a vocation is an expression of personality.
2. Interest inventories are personality inventories.
3. The members of a vocation have similar personalities and similar histories of personal development.
4. Because people in a vocational group have similar personalities, they will respond to many situations and problems in similar ways, and they will create characteristic inter-personal environments.
5. In our culture, most persons can be categorised as one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional.
6. There are six kinds of environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.
7. People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles.
8. Vocational satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the congruency between one's personality and the environment (composed largely of other people) in which one works.

This last point is, according to Fredrikson (1982, p. 29) "the heart of Holland's theoretical assumptions and it can be readily recognised why he also may be categorised as a trait and factor theorist."

The six personality types are as follows:

**REALISTIC** - These people are stable, persistent, rugged and robust, and prefer practical, "hands-on" environments dealing with well-defined products. They enjoy

learning about and working with tools and machinery, preferring traditional ways of doing things. They like the out-of-doors and may choose to live outside the city. Realistic people are doers who prefer action rather than discussion so may become impatient with those who want to talk about an issue rather than do something about it. They feel best about themselves when they are in top physical condition.

**INVESTIGATIVE** - These people are curious, reserved, independent and introspective. They enjoy intellectual or problem-solving tasks where they can work alone most of the time. They do not enjoy giving work direction to others or receiving work direction from others but prefer working with colleagues who have comparable levels of expertise. Investigative people do not like working in a structured environment with a great many rules, but prefer to work at their own pace without deadlines or constraints. They seek creative solutions to problems, but may not always want to be the ones to implement the solutions.

**ARTISTIC** - These people are creative, intuitive, expressive, and spontaneous. They enjoy tasks where they can rely on their verbal and visual skills. They like to work alone, but do not like to be ignored, and like attention and recognition for their creative contribution. Artistic types like freedom and spontaneity, and sometimes feels stifled with a great deal of structure, rules or regular hours. They prefer to work on projects in spurts, often late at night or early in the morning.

✓ They are most productive in a flexible environment.

**SOCIAL** - These people are kind, generous, idealistic and co-operative. They are concerned with their own feelings and those of others, and seek to help people improve themselves. They like to work with people in solving individual problems. Social people do not like intense competition and want everyone to participate, enjoy what they are doing and co-operate with the total team effort. They listen well, are able to read the needs of others, and are willing to take extra time and effort to resolve conflict or to help those in trouble.

**ENTERPRISING** - These people are energetic, ambitious, and fast-paced individuals who enjoy power, status, and wealth, and who can be quite assertive

and persuasive. They are willing to make a decision and act on it. They move quickly to action, enjoying the challenge, risk and adventure. They enjoy competition and usually do not like precise, detail-oriented work. Generally, they do not spend much time in researching a problem, preferring a quick assessment, then action - they might even dare others to "call their bluff".

**CONVENTIONAL** - These people are conscientious, stable, steady and thorough. They are excellent at maintenance or follow-through tasks and tend to trust the "tried-and-true" ways that experience has shown successful. They like tangible, logical, practical environments governed by definite rules and procedures and prefer working in office settings with definite hours, good training and secure benefits. Conventional people like to know exactly what is expected of them, preferring definite rules that they can follow with a minimum of change or disruption. They work well under close supervision.

Holland's theory has a number of practical applications in career decision making.

According to Frederickson (1982), the appropriateness of an occupational choice can be judged by the compatibility of the individual's personality type with the personalities of the individual's who are principally involved in that occupation. Such compatibility considerably improves the chances of job satisfaction, success and emotional stability. ✓

The interrelationships among the six orientations can be illustrated graphically in a hexagonal pattern with the personality types/work environments closest to each other being most similar and those furthest away being most dissimilar. The shared traits are specified. This theory has generated a tremendous amount of research and subsequent support, and Brown (1987) concludes, after a detailed evaluation that, "the current theory is the best theory of vocational choice of those currently stated" (p. 13). The theory and the related psychometric instruments are amongst the most widely used, if not the most widely used, by researchers and counsellors today (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990). \*

## Super's developmental theory

One of the criticisms levelled at both Holland and the trait-and-factor approach is that "matching models are static and outdated" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 66) and ignore the possibility of people changing "their environments and themselves" (Osipow, 1983, p. 112). Nevo (1987) speaks of "the misconception of singularity and finality" (p. 248) which leads to significant anxiety about career decision making "because some people believe that a vocational choice is irreversible, and they attach too much importance to the decision" (p. 248). More recent work in careers has begun to speak of Career Development: instead of viewing a career as a once off decision take at a specific point in an individual's life, developmental theories are sensitive to the life stage and related developmental tasks faced by the individual (Begg, Watson & de Jager, 1991).

Super was among the first to write on Career Development as a process and, according to Weinrach (1979), he is the leading figure on the subject today - "probably more is written about his approach than about any other. No one has had greater impact on vocational counselling over the past twenty-five years" (p. 124). According to Osipow (1983), Super appears to have been influenced by both self-concept theory and developmental psychology which suggests that life can be viewed as a series of fairly distinct stages. His conceptions of career development is built upon the framework of these life stages and based on the assumption that vocational tasks reflect larger life tasks: as such Super (1980) defines career as "the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a lifetime. These roles include those of child, pupil or student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent" (p. 282). No longer is the worker the single focus of career development which comes to mean more than the choice of a job. He focuses, instead, on the total life span - from childhood through to death - and the worker role is merely one amongst many. Thus the relative importance of the role against other roles and the values that individuals seek to meet in the various life roles become important aspects of their Career Maturity, or readiness to make the decisions and undertake the tasks required by their life stage (Begg *et al.*, 1991). As such Super

(1990) begins to move towards a more phenomenological perspective and uses a "Life-Career Rainbow" as a way of conceptualising the multidimensional concept of careers, the temporal involvement in, and the emotional commitment, to each life role. He regards the individual more holistically than typical trait-and-factor theorists and acknowledges that satisfaction in life comes from the way one's life is lived rather than purely from the work one does. He says that work satisfaction and life satisfaction depend on "establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experience have led one to consider congenial and appropriate" (p. 208). Super regards the individual "as the organiser of his experiences" (p. 220). While not rejection matching approaches to career counselling, he regards them as "insufficient basis for career guidance ... because studies of the life space and life span have made it clear that occupational choice ... is not something that occurs once in a lifetime" (p. 220).

Super (1990) himself says that "in one important sense there is no 'Super's Theory'; there is just an assemblage of theories that I have sought to synthesise" (p. 199) and he refers to his work as a "segmental theory, a loosely unified set of theories dealing with specific aspects of career development, taken from developmental, differential, social, personality and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory" (Super, 1990, p. 199). His Life-Career Rainbow does some of this synthesising by bringing the concepts of life span and life space into one model.

Super (1990, p. 206-208) has stated his theory in series of propositions as follows:

1. People differ in their abilities and personalities, needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts.
2. People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
3. Each occupation requires a characteristic pattern of abilities and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each

occupation.

4. Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and, hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience, although self-concepts, as products of social learning, are increasingly stable from late adolescence until late maturity, providing some continuity in choice and adjustment.
5. This process of change may be summed up in a series of life stages (a "maxicycle") characterised as a sequence of growth, explorations, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into (a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage and (b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage. A small (mini) cycle takes place in transitions from one stage to the next or each time an individual is destabilised by a reduction in force, changes in type of manpower needs, illness or injury, or other socioeconomic or personal events. Such unstable or multiple-trial careers involve new growth, reexploration, and reestablishment (recycling).
6. The nature of the career pattern - that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs - is determined by the individual's parental personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts), and career maturity and by the opportunities to which he or she is exposed.
7. Success in coping with the demands of the environment and of the organism in that context at any given life-career stage depends on the readiness of the individual to cope with these demands (that is, on his or her career maturity). Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological, and social characteristics; psychologically, it is both cognitive and affective. It include the degree of success in coping with the demands of earlier stages and substages of career development, and especially with the most recent.
8. Career maturity is a hypothetical construct. Its operational definition is

perhaps as difficult to formulate as is that of intelligence, but its history is much briefer and its achievements even less definitive. Contrary to the impressions created by some writers, it does not increase monotonically, and it is not a unitary trait.

9. Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of self-concepts.
10. The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts. It is a synthesizing and compromising process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, opportunity to observe and play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows (interactive learning).
11. The process of synthesis of or compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concepts and reality is one of role playing and of learning from feedback, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counselling interview, or in such real-life activities as classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.
12. Work satisfaction and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits, and self-concepts. They depend on establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experiences have led one to consider congenial and appropriate.
13. The degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able implement self-concepts.
14. Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organisation for most men and women, although for some persons this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even non-existent. Then other foci, such as leisure activities

and homemaking, may be central. (Social traditions, such as sex-role stereotyping and modelling, racial and ethnic biases, and the opportunity structure, as well as individual differences, are important determinants of preferences for such roles as worker, student, leisurite, homemaker, and citizen).

Osipow (1983) summarises most of the pertinent research and makes the following evaluation:

The theory is a well-ordered, highly systematic representation of the process of vocational maturity. .... Consequently, in its current state, it has considerable utility for both practice and research in vocational psychology. Most of the research reported on Super's theory generally supports his model. .... The future prospects for this approach to career psychology appear to be promising (p. 185-186).

### Psychodynamic career counselling

The contribution of a number of psychodynamic approaches to career theory were discussed in Chapter One. Watkins and Savickas (1990) define psychodynamic career counselling as being those "approaches that are guided by attempts to understand, make meaning of, and utilise individual motives, purposes and drives to facilitate career exploration" (p. 79) and include both Freudian and neo-Freudian theories (such as Adler and Sullivan). They regard the three most important psychodynamic theories as being the psychoanalytic, Eriksonian and Adlerian, but add that "the harshest but seemingly most realistic statement we could make about psychoanalytic career theory is that it is now dead or, at least, moribund" (p. 82). Osipow (1983) says much the same of psychoanalytic careers research and most reference material appears to be pre-1970.

Since the mid-1960's attempts have been made to apply Erikson's theoretical contributions

to vocational behaviour. As mentioned in Chapter One, Erikson's fifth stage - identity versus role confusion - has received the most attention since it occurs primarily during the adolescent years when questions are being asked such as - Who am I? What are my values? Where am I going in my life? From an Eriksonian perspective, people make statements of identity through the occupations they choose and their occupation becomes, according to Watkins and Savickas (1990), a way of implementing an individual identity. It is a means by which individuals express who they are, how they see themselves in relation to others, and how they see themselves as contributing to the world about them. Watkins and Savickas regard Erikson's theory as having much to offer career development and Munley (1977) points out that Erikson's theory "does not lead to predictions in terms of what kind of person chooses a certain kind of job, but rather helps identify personality factors associated with success in handling career development tasks" (p. 226).

Although Adler considered the importance of work in his writings, only in recent years has there been direct attention to Adlerian theory and vocational behaviour. Watkins (1984a) made a formal attempt to translate the theory into vocational terms and examined four variables integral to Adler's theory: lifestyle, life tasks, family atmosphere and relationships, and early recollections.

Lifestyle is seen as synonymous with the concept of personality and is the overall scheme by which individuals understand and make sense of the world about them. From a career standpoint, individuals implement their lifestyle through the occupation they choose: the attitude held towards oneself affects the way in which individuals function, present and think about themselves as workers; the attitudes held towards others affect how people regard and work with their co-workers; the attitude held towards the world in general affects the perceived significance of work in individuals' lives. The fundamental hypothesis of Adler's theory is, according to Watkins and Savickas (1990), that the individual's lifestyle will be brought to bear on his or her orientation to life tasks and relationships - work being one of the life tasks which Adler identified. Another life task is

social interest - a basic concern for others and a desire to contribute - and work can be seen as a primary means by which individuals are able to implement this life task and contribute to society. For Adler, all behaviour occurs in a social context and individual develops a sense of being "socially embedded " (Mosak, 1989, p. 66). Subjectivity becomes the major tool for understanding the person rather than any type of objective evaluation. From an Adlerian viewpoint, children first learn about work and working within the family, and the perceptions of and relationship with parental figures affect the values and expectations individuals hold about work.

Early recollections (ERs) are memories that occur before the age of eight, are visualizable, and single, specific incidents. They are purposeful - people remember certain events because they are meaningful. As such they become reflections of the present (Watkins & Savickas, 1990) and vividly illustrate the guiding themes of a person's life-style. ERs are important in personality make-up and in work behaviour and vocational functioning - they relate to how individuals think about and operate in the world of work, and can provide "a wealth of career-related information about client's dispositions such as their occupational focus, trend towards activity/passivity and affiliation/isolation" (Watkins, 1984b, p. 271).

According to Watkins (1984b) the analysis of ERs requires that attention be given to two particular aspects: themes and details. Themes refer to persistent trends present in the memories which can be sought. Details refer to the prominent aspects of the memories including the use of the various senses. In introducing tentative interpretations of the ERs the counsellor encourages the client critically to evaluate the counsellor's statements and to join with the counsellor in the joint analysis of the memories.

Adler's personality theory and approach to personal counselling are, according to Watkins and Savickas (1990), regarded as highly practical and useful, and seems equally useable in career counselling. However they acknowledge that all too little research has been undertaken.

For a variety of reasons practising career counsellors have never embraced psychodynamic theory in their understanding of the career choice process. In the next section the place of these approaches will be examined in more detail.

### Evaluation

For the most part the philosophical underpinning of the generally accepted theories of career development and decision making is logical positivism. Not unexpectedly, theories growing out of logical positivism seek to establish principles that can explain, predict, and be used as the basis for controlling career development behaviour and the assumptions of this position are relatively straightforward. They are well summarised by Brown and Brooks (1990, p. 10):

1. People can be separated from their environments for study, and they can be further subdivided for study.
2. Human behaviour can be objectively observed and measured and operates in a lawful, linear fashion; cause and effect can be inferred.
3. The traditional scientific method is the accepted paradigm for identifying facts about human behaviour.
4. The contexts (environments) in which people operate are considered as neutral or relatively unimportant; thus, the focus of inquiry should be observable actions of human beings.

Collin and Young (1986) regard career theories as "conceived within the orthodox philosophy of the social sciences" (p. 841), according to which the social and physical worlds are composed of stable facts which are "ultimately unambiguous" (p. 842). Such an ordered and objective world "is open to investigation, explanation and prediction by means of the scientific mode of enquiry. Subjectivity in both researcher and researched, is regarded uneasily; where possible, qualitative research is contained by quantitative" (p. 842).

Watkins and Savickas (1990) use the term "vocational guidance" to refer to this objective perspective in which counsellors help clients "become more objective, realistic and rational in making vocational choices" (p. 95). According to them the guidance paradigm as first proposed by Parsons consists of three steps. First, counsellors help clients increase their self-knowledge through objective appraisal and discussion of their abilities and interests. Together, a client and counsellor articulate the client's strengths and weaknesses and how they differ from those of other people. Second, counsellors help clients gather realistic occupational information and learn how differences in abilities and interests structure the world of work. Third, counsellors help clients rationally identify and explore occupations at the levels and in the fields that correspond to a client's abilities and interests. Guidance concludes when clients use "true reasoning" to match themselves to fitting occupations and then make viable choices that should result in job success and satisfaction (p. 95).

In conducting such vocational guidance, counsellors use what Watkins and Savickas term "actuarial methods" (p. 96) in which the counsellor as actuary estimates the probabilities of a client succeeding in various occupations. Counsellors base these estimates on data gathered through assessment of the client with psychometric instruments that objectively measure individual aptitudes and interests. After matching a client's aptitude test and interest inventory results to aptitude and interest patterns that characterise various occupations, counsellors can recommend fitting occupational levels and fields to the client.

Increasingly, according to Brown and Brooks (1990, p. 11), social scientists are rejecting logical positivism both on philosophical and scientific grounds but, although it appears to be dead as a philosophical movement, it continues in career development. Collin and Young (1986) note a number of current theoretical shortcomings of this approach. They feel that the literature is concerned only with the "objective career" or with what Watkins and Savickas (1990) term "vocational guidance" - the observed progress of the individual through an organisation or an occupation - and generally neglects the "subjective career"

which refers to the more individual perspective. This neglect of the individual's subjective experiences ignores the perceptions, feelings and values of the individual as well as the relationship between job and the rest of life. They cite a study by Collin (1984) which found that the subjective experience of career did not parallel the objective experience, while Stoltz-Loike (1992) has highlighted the need to understand the relationship between work and family.

In contrast with the orthodox view, a number of social scientists, including Collin and Young (1986), suggest a phenomenological approach which "recognises no objective, ordered social reality outside the individual's construction of it through subjective and intersubjective meanings" (p. 842). Brown and Brooks (1990, p. 11) summarise the assumptions of the phenomenological position as follows:

1. All aspects of the universe are interconnected: it is impossible to separate figure from ground and subject from object.
2. There are no absolutes; thus human functioning cannot be reduced to laws or principles, and cause and effect cannot be inferred.
3. Human behaviour can only be understood in the context within which it occurs.
4. The subjective frame of reference of human beings is the only legitimate source of knowledge. Events occur outside human beings. As individuals understand their environments and participate in these events, they define themselves and their environments.

Such an approach is neither predictive nor control orientated - it admits the significance of subjective experience and seeks to understand such experience in the individual's own terms in an "attempt to uncover the patterns and tendencies of career action as they are commonly understood" (Collin & Young, p. 848).

This approach has been termed "career counselling" by Watkins and Savickas (1990), as opposed to vocational guidance, since it helps clients understand their behaviour from

their own point of view. They say that when operating from the objective perspective, the counsellor acts authoritatively as a representative of the community and its common sense. When operating from the subjective perspective, the counsellor elicits clients' subjective conceptions of themselves and their world, and acts as interpreter to help clients understand their selves and the meaning they give to their lives. The counsellor elicits occupational possibilities, not through traits, but through facilitating self-exploration and interpreting meaning. These procedures help clients acknowledge and discuss unexamined ideas and feelings they have about making vocational choices.

Collin and Young (1986) go on to suggest that there is no single meaning in a career and that the meanings attached to careers cannot be neatly categorised. Meanings can be derived by the individual and by someone else, such as the counsellor, in conversation with the individual, discussing perceptions about the individual's environment and subjective reactions to events (Brown & Brooks, 1990, p. 12).

Watkins and Savickas (1990) point out that people do not use differences between themselves and others (traits) to explain their behaviour but regard their "needs and goals as the reason for their behaviour. Purpose, not traits structure their causal explanations" (p. 98). Perhaps the first theorist to break away from the logical positivist approach was Super. According to Watkins and Savickas, his Life Pattern Theory elaborated the subjective perspective. Super (1954) devised career pattern as an extension of life pattern theory. Essentially, the theory of life patterns states that analysis of an individual's life history reveals tendencies and patterns that can characterise that individual's life story. The life history approach to career pattern counselling seeks to aid the individual by identifying past and probably future patterns of development and has resulted in the Work Importance Study, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The real value of psychodynamic career counselling, according to Watkins and Savickas (1990), appears to be to complement the logical positivist approach rather than to replace it - and so to provide two perspectives of the client. Such a combination can consider

aptitudes and interests in a matrix of life experience and can thus help clients mesh their inner reality with outer reality. In such a way clients can find socially viable (objective) and personally suitable (subjective) opportunities to develop their life themes and grow through their work. Such work will feel essential not external, because it is an integral part of their life themes.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CAREER-DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT AND COUNSELLING MODEL

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, the first theorist to move away from a logical positivist approach to career counselling was Super, whose theories of career development and career maturity have become the basis for much modern career work. His work seems to span the gap between the trait-and-factor and the psychodynamic approaches and is generally regarded as the most promising direction in career psychology (Osipow, 1983). Bearing in mind the comment by Watkins and Savickas (1990) that the real value of psychodynamic career counselling seems to be in complementing logical positivist approaches, the psychometric instruments used by Super and fellow theorists assume a particular importance.

Super's career development theory and research has resulted in the construction and refinement of measures of career maturity which were initially regarded as ways of evaluating career education programmes. The possibility of using them in counselling was explored by a number of researchers and was described by Super (1983) as a Career-Development Assessment and Counselling (C-DAC) Model. According to Super (1990) the existent vocational immaturity of high school pupils and many university students (in the sense of lack of planfulness and lack of relevant information about occupations) results in the frequent misuse of the usual assessment methods. He says

If a youth knows little about the world of work, scores on interest inventories that use occupational titles or job descriptions may be misleading. If a student or an adult has given little thought to occupational choice or to the unfolding of a career, he or she is not likely to be ready to use aptitude, ability, interest or value data in planning the next stage or steps in a career. (p. 224)

Assessment of Career Maturity is thus seen as an essential early step in vocational counselling as well as in the exploration of further education prospects. However, in line

with this approaches' phenomenological basis, it is not enough to assume that a measure of career maturity means the same thing to different people and the importance of, and meaning attached to, work can vary. The discovery of the relative importance of the work role for the counsellee compared with other life roles is a further important step in career assessment. Clearly, for people who do not regard work as important, the attitudes and information that constitute career maturity must seem irrelevant.

One of the most important results of Super's work, for the purpose of this study, is the development from his Career Pattern Study (Super, 1954) of the International Work Importance Study in 1978. This is an international consortium of Vocational Psychologists from thirteen European, American, Asian and African Countries, whose objectives are, according to de Jager, Watson and Oosthuizen (1990), twofold:

1. To assess the relative importance of the work role as a means of value realisation in the context of other life roles.
2. To understand the values that individuals seek or hope to find in the various life roles.

The Work Importance Study utilized four psychometric instruments (the Career Development Inventory; the Self-Directed Search; the Role Salience Inventory; the Value Scale) which were adapted and standardised for use in South Africa. The Role Salience Inventory and the Value Scale were developed specifically for the Study, while the other two tests were existing measures acknowledged for their usefulness in career counselling and programme evaluation.

The **Self-Directed Search (SDS)** (du Toit & Gevers, 1991) is a measure of vocational interest which utilizes Holland's (1973) theory of careers discussed in Chapter Two, and which results in a three letter "code" indicating the counsellee's predominant personality types. On the basis of this "code" counsellees can begin to explore environments that will prove to be congruent for them. The items on the SDS have a bearing on the activities a person prefers, the skills he or she has or is familiar with, the occupations he or she is

interested in and an assessment of his or her own abilities.

**The Life-Role Inventory (LRI)** (Langley, 1990b) is the South African version of the Role Salience Inventory (Nevill & Super, 1986) and measures the relative importance to the counsellee of a number of life roles. Three aspects of each life-role are important:

- a. **PARTICIPATION** in each of the five roles evaluated: this explores how involved the individual is (or recently has been) in each life-role;
- b. **COMMITMENT** to each of these roles: this examines how the individual feels towards each role and the individual's expectations of that role;
- c. **VALUE EXPECTATIONS** in each role, or the extent to which the individual expects to be able to meet major life satisfactions (values) in each of the five roles.

The five life roles examined by the LRI are:

- a. **STUDENT**: A person who learns new things. This role includes both formal and informal learning such as preparing for and attending classes and practising a hobby or skill.
- b. **WORKER**: A person who earns money or makes a profit.
- c. **CITIZEN**: A person who helps as a volunteer in the community in any way to improve the lives of those around him or her.
- d. **HOMEMAKER**: A person who takes care of home, family and the related responsibilities such as repairs, cooking, shopping, caring for others (physically and emotionally), gardening and so on.
- e. **LEISURITE**: A person who does something for fun or relaxation, whether it is a hobby, a sport or spending time with other family members or alone.

Roles increase and decrease in importance according to the life stage with which the individual is engaged and according to the developmental tasks which are encountered with increasing age. The importance attached to the role can be assessed in terms of both time accorded the role and the emotional involvement in the role. The same value can be

realised in more than one life-role or activity at the same time. This is well illustrated by Super (1980, p. 282-290).

The **Value Scale** (Nevill & Super, 1989) measures those values or satisfactions which most people seek in life. Twenty values such as Ability Utilisation, Advancement, Life Style, Prestige, Risk, Social Interaction, Economic Reward and Spirituality are included in the South African version of the scale. Nevill and Super (p. 3) describe values as the objectives sought in behaviour; and interests as "the activities in which values are sought" (p. 3).

The **Career Development Questionnaire (CDQ)** (Langley, 1990a) is the South African version of the Career Development Inventory (Super, Thompson, Lindeman, Jordaan & Meyrs, 1984) and was developed to evaluate and explore the readiness of individuals to make career related decisions. It examines five steps that have to be taken by an individual at each stage of life in order to master the appropriate life tasks successfully. Langley (1990a, p. 3) describes them as follows.

1. Obtaining self-information
2. Learning Decision Making skills
3. Gathering career information
4. Integrating self-knowledge and career information
5. Career planning

Taking these factors of Career Maturity, Role Salience and Values sought from each role into account, Super (1983) conceptualised his Career-Development Assessment and Counselling Model as follows (see also the Table on page 33).

#### STEP I: PREVIEW

This step is unchanged from a "matching model approach" (Super, 1983, p. 559). It involves previewing what is to come, making a tentative counselling plan based on previous records, initial interviewing and preliminary assessment. After this initial step

the model differs from other approaches.

## STEP II: DEPTH VIEW

In examining the counsellee more closely and making an in-depth study of his or her life and career possibilities, the first question to be asked about the need for more data is not regarding the level and field of work as would be the case in a trait-and-factor approach, but is about the readiness of the counsellee to assess abilities and interests, and to make life decisions. This involves both Work Salience and Career Maturity - in that order - and is reflected in the model as STEPS IIA and IIB. These can be assessed by a counsellor using the Life Role Inventory and the Career Development Questionnaire so that counsellees who are not yet ready to make career related decisions can be helped to identify the types of experiences that they need to make the decisions "required by their own psychological and social development and the structure and content of our educational and occupational systems" (Super, 1983, p. 559). If the counsellee regards the work role as important, then scores on career development and interest inventories mean a great deal, but if work is less important career development and interest scores have little importance for vocational decision-making but may guide exploration (Super, 1990). At the same time outlets for the individual's values in life roles other than work can be sought (Nevill & Super, 1989)

Super (1990) points out that while STEP II involves the exploration of self concept by the counsellee (IIC), measures of self and occupational concept are presently very undeveloped and so are seldom formally used.

## STEPS III and IV: ASSESSMENT and COUNSELLING.

Nevill and Super (1989) and Super (1983) suggest that after gathering the relevant information and reviewing it, and while considering both occupational and nonoccupational roles, the counsellor and the counsellee should meet to discuss the material. During this session the emphasis is on understanding the implications of the material. Counsellees need both to understand that they are in a developmental process,

and to have a clear view of their current career status and its attendant tasks. They need to understand what attitudes, knowledge, competencies, and decisions are appropriate for that level of development, and what the next stage holds. They also need to see how their own values can be met in the life roles of worker, student, homemaker, citizen and leisurite.

Both the counsellor and counsellee need to understand the latter's degree of preparation for making career decisions. Since depending upon his or her level of preparation, counsellees need to engage in different types of career exploration. If they need to be made aware of the developmental tasks to be confronted, then exploration may be needed for maturing and developing readiness to cope with the tasks of career decision making. If they need help in crystallising a career choice, then exploration of the world of work may be needed to help them learn about options and evaluate potential choices. If they have a fairly good understanding of work in general, but need to make a specific choice, then in-depth exploration may be necessary to expand their understanding of a particular occupation.

In STEP IVC, Assimilation by the Counsellee, the emphasis is on making novel types of data, derived from studies of work importance and of career maturity, part of the active thinking of the counsellee. It is important for counsellees to see themselves as individuals coping with certain developmental tasks, at a stage in life at which they are expected, and to some degree may expect themselves, to make certain decisions and acquire certain competencies and statuses. They need to understand how they see work and other life-career roles, and how society, their families and their peers see these roles.

Super (1990) regards helping counsellees recognise how they see their traits as a basic step in the counselling process, as is helping counsellees "accept and clarify their actual and ideal self-concepts, develop harmony among the traits of the personality, refine their self-images, become more realistic in assessing their own traits and develop feelings of self-efficacy" (p. 249). It is only after counsellees have understood and been able to

accept this data as well as its context, that an understanding of their present and next life stage becomes possible. Planning based on individual abilities and interests, as well as exploration and decision making activities, are only likely to be meaningful and useful to counselees once they have achieved this recognition and acceptance.

After this exploration process, counsellor and counsellee should make a plan of action; that is, decide whether to obtain further training or seek a job. Included in this decision would be a discussion of the possibilities for self-realisation by other means than through the job. There should be a discussion of the implications of the plan; the counsellor should monitor the action and provide follow-up support, evaluation, and further planning for the counsellee as needed.

To embrace a phenomenological approach requires that career counsellors engage with counselees in the career development process which Carlsen (1988) refers to "meaning-making", or which Homan (1986) describes as helping "each person discover his or her own humanness" (p. 21). To assist counselees make sense of their various life roles and to engage in the process of development, the counsellor must be a facilitator and an enabler rather than an expert, and needs to be "sensitive to the ongoing dialectical development of the whole person and be willing and able to explore with the person those domains of the self that escape the tidiness of Kuder Preference Records" (Homan, p. 22)

## CAREER-DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT AND COUNSELING MODEL

### STEP I. PREVIEW

- A. Assembly of data on hand
- B. Intake interview
- C. Preliminary Assessment

### STEP II. DEPTH VIEW: FURTHER TESTING?

- A. Work Salience
  - 1. Relative importance of diverse roles
    - a. Study
    - b. Work and Career
    - c. Home and Family
    - d. Community Service
    - e. Leisure Activities
  - 2. Values sought in each role
- B. Career Maturity
  - 1. Planfulness
  - 2. Exploratory attitudes
  - 3. Decision-making skills
  - 4. Information
    - a. World of work
    - b. Preferred occupational group
    - c. Other life-career roles
  - 5. Realism
- C. Self-concepts
  - 1. Self-esteem
  - 2. Clarity
  - 3. Harmony
  - 4. Cognitive complexity
  - 5. Realism
  - 6. Others
- D. Level of abilities and potential functioning
- E. Field of interest and probable activity

### STEP III. ASSESSMENT OF ALL DATA

- A. Review of all data
- B. Matching and prediction
  - 1. Individual and occupations
  - 2. Individual and nonoccupational roles
- C. Planning communication with counselee, family, and others

### STEP IV. COUNSELING

- A. Joint review and discussion
- B. Revision or acceptance of assessment
- C. Assimilation by the counselee
  - 1. Understanding the present and next stages
  - 2. Recognising one's self concepts
    - a. Accepting the actual
    - b. Clarifying the actual and the ideal
    - c. Developing harmony among self-concepts
    - d. Refining cognitive complexity
    - e. Ensuring the realism of self concepts
    - f. Others
  - 3. Matching self and occupations
  - 4. Understanding the meaning of life roles
  - 5. Exploration for maturing
  - 6. Exploring the breadth for crystallisation
  - 7. Exploration in depth for specification
  - 8. Choice of preparation, training, or jobs
  - 9. Searches for outlets for self-realisation
- D. Discussion of action implications and planning
  - 1. Planning
  - 2. Execution
  - 3. Follow-up for support and evaluation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE LIFE-LINE APPROACH

After reviewing a large body of research, Slaney and Slaney (1986) conclude that "expressed interests had predictive validity - in terms of college major or career choice - that equalled or exceeded that of inventoried interests" (p. 24). This call for non-test techniques in career counselling is supported in a study by Nevo (1990) which found that "counselees rated discussion with the counsellor as more important in counselling than were objective tests, interest inventories or vocational information" (p. 314). In addition Nevo notes that "counselling deals with people whose personal problems impinge on the vocational sphere" (p. 323) so the two cannot be dealt with separately - work is an integral part of life. Brown (1985) has argued strongly along this line - that career counselling is a viable intervention with clients who have rather severe emotional problems and "overlooking the interplay of personal and career factors must be avoided" (p. 201). This is behind Miller-Tiedeman's (1988) philosophy of "lifecareer" which, simply stated, sees occupational decision making as an opportunity to examine, redefine and direct one's life. For Miller-Tiedeman, the counsellor's role is to "help clients become more complete by facilitating the self conceiving process, stimulating self-consciousness and promoting choice" (Savickas, 1989, p. 103).

Clearly a new paradigm is developing in career counselling and the movement is away from "objective" approaches toward those phenomenological techniques through which counsellors do more than merely interpret life stories but also facilitate their development. Collin and Young (1986) propose three ways in which counsellors can engage in this facilitation: the ecological/systems approach, the biographical approach, and the hermeneutical approach. While these three approaches are closely linked, it is the biographical approach which has particular relevance here, for it is in this way that counsellors and clients can begin to discern the patterns and tendencies in the clients'

lived experience. The approach attends to the "effective environment" (p. 848) and considers how clients effect and are affected by change, thereby making sense of their personal stories. Interrelationships, rather than cause and effect, are addressed and a wide range of possibilities become available to clients rather than the discovery of a single meaning.

Dovey and Mathabe (1987) emphasise the importance of "counselling towards personal knowledge and the identification of individual motivation and meaning structures" (p. 9). This approach is intended to help the individual establish "what really matters to him or her and the part played by life experiences in the construction of individual meaning". To achieve this they recommend a specific counselling approach in order to facilitate the exploration by clients of their lives as they have lived them, and to help them engage with a counsellor in seeking a sense of individual meaning, discovering their life patterns and moving on to gain an understanding of their "lifecareers".

Dovey (1982) outlines how clients are requested to prepare a "life-line" which documents those events which have had a powerful emotional impact, positive ("peaks") or negative ("troughs"), upon them. The events listed may include achievements, activities, relationships, events or places and may vary from the death of a pet dog when the client was four, to not being selected for a job at the age of 27.

The client is requested to list succinctly as many memories as possible without evaluating their relevance or applicability. Sheets of A4 paper divided down the middle, with peaks listed on one side of the mid-line and troughs on the other, appear to be a suitable format and it may be suggested that the clients work year by year, especially through their educational career, but it should be pointed out that the chronology is far less relevant than the completeness of the record. Such an exercise can take clients anything up to three hours, and the way in which the life-line is completed and presented is left up to the clients since this can also provide significant indications of the way in which they live their lives. If possible the life-line should be given to the counsellor a day or so before

the appointed interview so that it may be reviewed in preparation for a discussion on the events listed.

From these memories the counsellor tries to ascertain the nature of the events that have been taken very seriously by the client - the events that have mattered to the extent that they have had the power to affect the client's emotional being and sense of personal meaning. Almost by definition, memories are of events that have significance and importance for the individual. Usually the events are linked by a common psychological experience or theme, and the counselling process involves an elaboration of these memories and the identification of the associated themes, in the same way as the themes in Early Recollections are dealt with by Adlerian counsellors (Watkins, 1984b).

For example, a series of negatively experienced events reflecting a theme of loss might include such diverse memories as changing schools, breaking a favourite toy and ending a relationship. Such experiences may result in a strong value being placed on emotional security and stability. Usually several important themes emerge and a range of alternative meanings can be explored by the client and the counsellor together, resulting in a "dynamic human encounter in which the emotionally charged biographical experiences of the counsellee, and the relationship between these and his or her social-structural context, are explored" (Dovey, 1983, p. 49). The young Commerce student lists his peaks as including: "receiving most cuts in the class, having sex when I was not drunk or high, putting my car together again, getting a driver's licence, first team rugby". His troughs include: "not going to America [to a sailing regatta] with friends who were not as good as me, drugs, sitting at a desk, school". He is unlikely to make a good student at present and has come to realise that university is more his parents' dream than his own, yet is reluctant to become a motor mechanic despite his skills and interests because he has big hands which are constantly being hurt when he works on machinery. He knows that he will end up with back problems and because, he believes, receiving promotion necessitates his no longer doing what he really likes - fixing cars. Clearly he has technical skill and dexterity, as well as strength and a quick mind: considerations of robotics,

prosthetics, being a stunt-man or rally driving appear far more realistic than his present academic career. The counsellor's task is to help the client identify the potentially meaningful experiences that would fulfil his or her life and discover how to relate to the world in a meaningful way through a variety of life roles - not just the worker role.

Super (1980) has suggested using his Life-Career Rainbow in much the same way and notes how emergent themes involve both work and non-work activities so that the counsellor needs to engage with the client in a skilful and sensitive way using all his or her counselling skills but "giving psychology away by making insights and tools directly available to clients" (Jepsen, 1992, p. 101), rather than adopting the role of expert interpreter.

As Watkins and Savickas (1990) have suggested, the real value of psychodynamic career counselling appears to be to complement, rather than to replace, the logical positivist matching-model. Super's (1983) Career-Development Assessment and Counselling Model appears to be the first step towards such an approach. However it still seems to run the risk - in South Africa at least, where the prevailing expectations are based on outdated theoretical and practical frameworks - of being seen by the users of career counselling services as being able to provide a mechanistic, immediate and single answer to an individual's career choice difficulties (Brownell, 1992). As soon as psychometric instruments are used, the assumption is that they will provide an answer - such external locus of control and counsellee passivity are directly counter to the requirements for planful career decision-making (Super, 1983) and suggest inadequate levels of career maturity. This is especially true for school leavers who are, according to de Haas (1992), expected to make firm decisions that they are not yet ready to make and the results of a test may be clung to as a way out of the paradox - options mentioned by the counsellor may be reinterpreted as alternatives and even recommendations.

With the use of a non-test technique such as a life-line, there is far less of a chance of the counsellor being regarded as the expert who holds the single truth since counsellees are

actively engaged in the process themselves and, when asked, are frequently able to identify the pervasive themes with very little help from the counsellor. By engaging in a dialogue with the counsellor, counsellees gain their own clarity and thus take control of their career and life planning. The meanings discovered are then their authentic meanings rather than externally ascribed. The counsellor joins with the counsellee in a search for a variety of possible meanings, instead of providing mechanistic and limiting interpretations.

If the counsellor approaches the interpretation of the life-line from the theoretical perspective of the Career-Development Assessment and Counselling Model, and engages carefully and sensitively with the counsellees, it becomes possible to explore the counsellees' involvement in and commitment to a variety of life roles as well as to gain an understanding of the counsellees' readiness to make career decisions on the basis of how they have lived their lives. A variety of counsellee traits such as values, abilities and even personality types become clear if they have been able to present a comprehensive life-line and if they are enabled to explore it fully.

Clearly a number of limitations exist in any approach to career counselling. Shertzer and Linden (1979) warn that while tests can foster mechanistic decision making, the alternative non-test techniques, including autobiographies, have "shortcomings equal to, if not greater than, the failings of test data" (p. 50). Rosenberg and Smith (1987) caution that with those clients who can be regarded as having primarily Realistic and Conventional Holland type personalities, such subjective approaches are less useful since they do not provide the definite structure and clear direction sought by these people. Dovey and Mathabe (1987) have noted two disturbing aspects of their work with life-lines. Some clients have been unable to list any events that have effected them emotionally, which they regard as an indictment of modern life. In addition, they note how many people have mentioned hurt and betrayal by others which has resulted in their finding meaning in "non-human fields of endeavour" (p. 9).

Watkins (1984b) has found that using an Adlerian approach to examining Early Memories (ERs) in career counselling is generally most beneficial for clients who (a) are highly motivated; (b) are self-analytical and self-exploratory; (c) already take responsibility for their career decision making; (d) actively engage in making more informed career decisions. The same can probably be said about the use of a life-line. Watkins and Savickas (1990) regard four types of clients as being able to benefit most from blending the subjective approach with the objective:

The first type are those clients who seem indecisive as opposed to undecided or who seem particularly unrealistic in self-appraisal and naive about life. ... The second type are those clients referred by other counsellors as 'difficult cases' and those who have already finished vocational counselling with a different counsellor. We find that the subjective perspective often reveals the private-sense misconceptions that made them difficult clients and frees them to develop their careers. The third type are adult clients such as mid-career changers, displaced homemakers and discharged employees who already have an objective view of their interests and abilities. And the fourth type includes culturally different clients who may not be adequately served by an 'objective' view that draws on a common sense different from their own (p. 103).

For those clients who can go beyond the objective, the life-line appears to provide an excellent additional aid in the search for a personal life meaning and the counsellor is able to obtain comparable information to that available through psychometric means without running the risks associated with such means and, at the same time, enabling counsellees to play a greater part in the creation of their own future. To follow life-line counselling sessions with an appropriate psychometric assessment battery becomes viable for such counsellees who tend to have developed a clearer understanding of the meanings and the implications of the test results which would normally replicate, and so reinforce, the non-test based counselling. Three case studies which illustrate the use of a life-line are presented in the next chapter as well as a comparison with the results obtained by psychometric means.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CASE STUDIES

Three of the clients who presented at the Student Adviser's Office at Rhodes University in the first half of 1993 seeking career counselling and who agreed to participate in this study were selected on the basis of having provided comprehensive and useable life-lines as well as having undergone psychometric testing. In this chapter each student is introduced with some biographical background to provide a life context. The student's life-line is then provided verbatim with notes appended to illustrate how the life-line was explored in the counselling session, and the themes identified by counsellee and counsellor are presented. On the basis of this exploration and the resultant themes some conclusions are offered. These conclusions were obviously arrived at through a counselling process as discussed in the previous chapter rather than simply on the basis of the presented material. As such they are tentative and, perhaps, appear somewhat vague. Bearing in mind the developmental model in which such an approach is based, and the need to discover a range of meanings, more definitive conclusions would not be appropriate.

The results of psychometric tests done by the counsellees are then presented and discussed, and conclusions based on the test are presented. At the end of the chapter the two sets of conclusions arrived at for each of the three counsellees are briefly compared.

#### I. ELIZABETH

##### (a) Background

Elizabeth is a 22 year old girl who registered for a B Sc (Honours) in Maths at the beginning of last year. She originally sought career counselling after academic difficulties forced her to consider leaving university and seeking work.

She achieved a first class matric, completed a two year "pre-degree" course in India, after which she read for a B Sc in Maths, in which she achieved a second class pass. When her father came to work in Transkei, she wanted to join him, their mother being dead. One of Elizabeth's sisters, a medical doctor, now lives in East London and works in a Ciskei hospital. Another sister is also a medical doctor.

When Elizabeth joined her father she made enquiries about continuing her studies and enrolled for Maths honours at Rhodes University. The Department accepted her to the course over two years instead of one and required her to complete some Maths III options as well, since they judged her academic course to be insufficiently similar to the Rhodes course and so not having properly prepared her for the Honours programme. At the end of the first year she achieved very poorly and was warned of the potential consequences of continuing with her honours and failing. The Department advised her to "do the whole Mathematics III course first before continuing with the Honours". They, however, did permit her to continue if she maintained a satisfactory academic record. Because she found herself unable to meet the requirements she began to consider her alternatives and sought career counselling. She felt unable to continue but equally unable to consider leaving because of how it would affect her father.

The Department had asked her to finalise her arrangements within a week. If she withdrew, as she felt she would have to do, she would have to move out of residence and return home - something she wanted to avoid. The resultant time constraints led to my asking her to do a life-line and a short battery of tests at once. She had no idea of the kind of work she could or should seek, except that she "could always teach Maths!"

(b) Life-Line

PEAKS

1. The first time I came first in class. It was in Std 2.<sup>1</sup>
2. I got to act in the Christmas plays at school.<sup>3</sup>
3. When I went to India I met a lot of the girls and boys my age who also had to stay in boarding school and made friends.<sup>4</sup>
4. My sister (Susan) insisted that she would take care of me at home, while we stayed with my Grandparents.
5. I began to make good progress with the work given to me in school. I was able to manage two languages that were compulsory.<sup>5</sup> My eldest sister (Mary) got in for medicine.<sup>6</sup>
6. Passed out of matric with a first class which I didn't think I would do.
7. College life was very nice, More fun than studies.<sup>7</sup>
8. Passed my pre-degree as well.
9. Won inter-district debating.
10. Taught Gov. Literacy Programme.<sup>9</sup>
11. Joined up for a B Sc in

TROUGHS

1. Always called the "dumb one" of the family.<sup>1</sup>
2. My mother passed away suddenly and my father was so upset.<sup>2</sup>
3. He sent my sisters and myself to India as he could not manage three of us.<sup>2</sup>
4. Hated India. Did not like the boarding school. Generally did not like the place.
5. Found the education system very different. Had to learn two new languages of which I had no clue about.
6. Slowly I began to adjust but still did not like the place.
7. Started to stay with my Grandparents and sister. At first it was fine. But as they grew older the responsibility of looking after them fell on my sisters' and my shoulders.
8. Had a very bad shock when my Grandmother nearly had a heart attack.<sup>8</sup>
9. My sister Susan was going through

- Mathematics.<sup>11</sup>
12. Enjoyed college life. Made lots of friends.
  13. Applied to Rhodes and joined for Hons in Maths.
  14. Computer Society - taught myself wordprocessing and programming.<sup>12</sup>
  15. Just loved South Africa, met a whole lot of people.
  16. Was very happy that all my family was together.
  17. Worked for sometime at OBT. Enjoyed that a lot. Met other people who were very helpful.<sup>14</sup>
  18. Went to India for my eldest sister's wedding. Was very nice. Spent time with my Grandparents, cousins and friends.
  19. Back at Rhodes, and have to decide what to do next year.
  20. Met new people. Made new friends. Started working properly.
  21. Joined a couple of societies. Hope they will help.
  22. Appointed tutor in the Maths Department.<sup>9</sup>
  23. Went to Hogsback for the Easter vac.
  24. Spent time with my family.
- a difficult time, as she was not sure what she wanted to do.<sup>10</sup>
10. Susan went to Transkei and I had to look after my Grandparents for more than a year.
  11. Susan came back but she did not like India and longed to go back to South Africa.
  12. Finally forced my father that we wanted to come to South Africa and so without really knowing jumped into the Hons course.<sup>13</sup>
  13. Finding the work very difficult and different to the system in India.
  14. Did not do well at the end of exams.<sup>15</sup>
  15. Did not do well for term end test papers either.
  16. My best friend in res is dropping out. She is going back to the states.<sup>16</sup>

(c) Exploration

1. Academic achievement is important to Elizabeth. This comes up time and again.
2. Her sense of loss at her mother's death was exacerbated by being sent away by her father. She said, "it felt as if I wasn't good enough", and this has led her to striving to achieve, so as to be "good enough" and to be accepted by her father.
3. Elizabeth discovered that she enjoyed performing and being the focus of attention - but "not in a bad way - I didn't feel I was boasting."
4. Perhaps because of her feelings of rejection by her father, Elizabeth turned eagerly to her peers with whom she developed close friendships. She began to find fulfilment here rather than within her family.
5. Languages, which initially frightened Elizabeth, seemed reasonably easy! She discovered that she actually enjoyed them.
6. The acceptance into Medical school of one of her sisters, and her father's obvious pride, suggested to Elizabeth that academic success was the "way to go" to achieve his recognition and approval.
7. Friends predominated (and still do). She described herself as a "joller".
8. Despite finding it difficult to look after her grandparents and feeling a little resentful about it, Elizabeth was very attached to them. Her family remains important to her.
9. Through her university extra-murals, she discovered that she enjoyed talking, and working with others in a variety of contexts, including teaching.
10. Her sister's depression as a result of her lack of direction profoundly affected Elizabeth who developed an irrational belief that "not knowing what to do" was "terrible", yet feeling quite powerless to find any sense of direction.
11. When I asked her what she enjoyed about her degree, she explained that in the Indian system she studied largely Maths with minor courses in Statistics and Physics. She said she enjoyed "figures", logic and problem solving.
12. She "discovered" computers and found out that she had a flair for them.
13. The Maths Honours was seen as a way of getting to be with her father and sister

again, rather than something she really wanted to do.

14. She had a short vacation job in Transkei but it was the social aspect of the job (the mixing with co-workers) that really appealed to her.
15. Clearly, academic failure leads to her feeling depressed and discouraged.
16. Her insecurity and misery is made much worse by her friend leaving. This is part of her need for friends so often expressed.

(d) Themes

After discussing the life-line, I asked Elizabeth what themes stood out for her. She found it quite easy to identify and discuss the main themes.

1. Clearly her family - and her friendships - are important. The sense of community which boarding school, university and work provided, in the absence of a close family life, is important to her. On her own she feels quite insecure and inadequate.
2. She has significant affinity for computers.
3. Languages interest her, and she is linguistically competent. She discovered that she enjoyed talking, arguing and instructing - all areas of significant achievement.
4. She is good at, and enjoys logical problem solving.
5. She needs significant public recognition for her achievements through which she feels that she gains a sense of personal adequacy.

(e) Conclusions from the Life-Line

It became clear that, given these themes, Elizabeth needed to begin to gather information on the career options that require some combination of computers, logical problem solving, language and social interaction. She was aware, very importantly, that in looking for work that involves significant social contacts and relationships, she is seeking to redress her lack of a close family. She is unsure if this is really something which she wants in her work or if once this need is adequately met other, more relevant, needs will become prominent. Working does not appear to be particularly important to her at present and meaning in her life is gained more through a sense of community and the

recognition of her achievements, than from any task orientated behaviour. That she has failed to achieve recognition and parental approval as a result of her studies, might well result in her placing significant emphasis on work as a means of achieving this acceptance in the future. Counselling needs to assist her explore the values she seeks to fulfil in work and to develop a realistic life plan in which she can find ways of fulfilling her needs.

(f) Psychometric Tests

1. Career Development Questionnaire

(The norms for first year students at the University of Witwatersrand are provided in brackets).

A.	Information on Myself	13	(16,3)
B.	Decision Making	12	(16,8)
C.	Career Information	12	(15,4)
D.	The World of Work and Myself	11	(16,1)
E.	Career Planning	11	(15,5)
	Total Career Maturity	59	(80,6)

On all areas Elizabeth scored significantly below the most appropriate available norm group and showed herself unready to make a career choice or to use information which might be provided. Her low score for "Decision Making" may reflect her feelings of personal inadequacy and her need for social support. More seriously, she displays totally inadequate awareness of vocational options and of how she relates to these options, nor does she have a clear idea about how her personality characteristics link with the work world. In addition she demonstrates poor awareness of how to move towards future planning. She is not ready to start thinking about working, and it is doubtful if Elizabeth will be able to integrate and use information gained about herself as the result of the psychometric testing of traits such as interests and abilities, given her lack of Career Maturity.

## 2. Self Directed Search

Holland Code ISC (E)

Jobs that typically match Elizabeth's code include:

ISC	- Researcher	ISE	- Law
	- Psychologist		- Education
	- Historian		- Counselling
	- Sociologist		- Industrial Relations
			- Medicine

These will prove useful starting points for Elizabeth to research, keeping in mind her low scores on the CDQ and her limited ability to (a) integrate information gained in a personally meaningful way and (b) develop plans to enter any given job.

## 3. Value scale (max 20)

High	Low
Ability Utilization (19)	Aesthetics (15)
Achievement (20)	Altruism (16)
Advancement (19)	Physical Activity (13)
Creativity (19)	Physical Prowess (5)
Economic Rewards (20)	Risk (7)
Life Style (20)	Social Interaction (15)
Personal Development (20)	Social Relations (13)
Prestige (20)	

Clearly Elizabeth is aware of her need to achieve academically and to gain public recognition for these achievements. Economic rewards and achievement seem to go hand-in-hand for her, and any achievement which does not bring prestige and advancement would be inadequate. The high score for "creativity" reflects (she feels) her intellectual creativity rather than any aesthetic sense (which value is, itself, low). It was initially surprising that Elizabeth achieved low scores for "Altruism", "Social Interaction" and

"Social Relations". However it must be remembered that she does not find fulfilment in social contact in itself, but rather as a means to an end: a sense of community, containment and acceptance.

Elizabeth is likely to seek a high prestige job in which she can use her (creative) abilities to the full and receive public recognition and economic reward in return.

#### 4. Life role inventory

(Scaled scores are reported and norms for females and for Std 10 English Speaking pupils are provided).

	STUDY	WORK	COMMUNITY SERVICES	HOME AND FAMILY	LEISURE ACTIVITIES
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	2,0 (2,5) (2,5)	2,9 (2,1) (2,2)	1,9 (1,9) (1,8)	2,2 (2,7) (2,6)	3,4 (2,9)Females (2,9) Std 10
<b>COMMITMENT</b>	2,4 (2,8) (2,8)	4,0 (3,1) (3,1)	3,2 (2,4) (2,3)	3,6 (3,3) (3,1)	2,6 (3,1)Females (3,1) Std 10
<b>VALUE EXPECTATIONS</b>	3,6 (3,6) (3,6)	4,5 (4,1) (4,1)	4,3 (3,3) (3,1)	4,3 (4,2) (4,1)	4,1 (4,1)Females (4,2) Std 10

Elizabeth apparently does not enjoy being a student but it seems likely that she sees it as a way of achieving the recognition and respect she desires. She would much rather be working. Now that study has failed to bring her the needed acceptance and recognition, she may be hoping that she can achieve this through working. It is, however, to her role in community services that she looks to have her values and needs met in the first instance. Although not very involved in community work at present, she feels that she would like to be - perhaps in an attempt to rediscover her own sense of community which the Home and Family role does not provide in any significant way - although she feels it should!

(g) Conclusions from the Psychometric Tests

Currently Elizabeth is engaged in social activities and does not appear to be particularly emotionally involved in either her studies or the prospect of working. This social contact is perhaps a means to an end rather than attractive in itself. Thus the sense of community achieved at university could be found in the workplace instead. Her needs seem to be centered around fairly derived values such as achievement, prestige and economic reward. Her low level of career maturity supports the impression that working is not currently important to her, and this should be explored in counselling. The SDS suggests that Elizabeth could profitably begin her career search by exploring communication orientated careers. Her strongly investigative personality is suited to problem solving work and she would probably be able to find fulfillment in some work which provides a combination of these traits, such as lecturer or social researcher. One must always be aware of the danger of forclosing career exploration by providing very specific recommendations or suggestions, and Elizabeth can be encouraged to use her investigative and problem solving abilities to research further options and directions. Counselling needs to assist her develop her career maturity and explore the relative importance of all her life roles.

II MARK

(a) Background

Mark is a 17 year old matric pupil whose parents have just moved to Grahamstown from the Southern Cape, where he has remained as a boarder in the school he has attended since the last part of his Standard 8 year.

His father is employed by a large bank which led to his being transferred every three or four year. As a consequence Mark has been to a number of schools and has lived in a variety of towns, often fairly small ones. He describes his family as "sporty": his father was a Junior Sprinkbok athlete and Mark has his provincial Biathalon and Athletics colours. He has served on the local Junior Town Council. Academically he achieved an A

aggregate at the end of Standard 9 and has consistently done well despite the regular moves.

In the initial interview Mark reported that he had "been tested" by the Department of Manpower when he was in Standard 8. He was repeatedly told that he could do "whatever I wanted to" and, because he expressed an interest in a medical field, this was supported by the counsellor. He says that he was "given some information to read, but it didn't really help" because it "didn't tell me anything I didn't know already".

Mark said that he is "keen on medicine and becoming a doctor - but not necessarily a GP" or even a medical doctor, and has considered a variety of related professions such as physiotherapy or pharmacy. He found it very difficult to explain why he was attracted to the medical field except that it "interests me".

At the beginning of the initial interview, Mark appeared to be quite passive and expressed significant helplessness in this situation with statements such as "I have no idea what I'm going to do", "I want to know what I should do", "Manpower gave me some information", and "I don't know [why it interests me]".

After our initial discussions, I asked Mark to construct a life-line for use in our second session, during which we discussed it in detail in an attempt to identify relevant themes and to gain a shared sense of his life as he had lived it. He was far more open during this session and was able to use the memories recalled to provide structure and triggers in talking about himself. At the end of the session, after we had jointly formulated a statement about his life and his goals, I asked him to complete a short battery of pencil and paper tests before the next counselling session during which we discussed the results of the tests and the implications of these results. These results and conclusions are reported below.

Mark gave me the life-line the day before our appointment so that I was able to formulate

questions from which to initiate discussion. A joint analysis produced a variety of noteworthy issues about how Mark perceives his own life. Some of the points were raised from the discussions rather than from the life-line and Mark was surprisingly verbal in the session, in contrast with his hesitation in the initial interview and his expressed difficulty in social situations (illustrated in the life-line).

(b) Life-Line

PEAKS

Going to hostel.  
Gaining WP Triathlon Colours.  
Going to Potchefstroom for S A Biathlon Champs.  
Going to S A Platteland.  
Gala - Oudtshoorn.  
Girlfriend.  
Getting new bike.  
Triathlon helped me achieve so much.<sup>3</sup>  
Getting my dog.<sup>2</sup>  
Playing with my dog.<sup>2</sup>  
Successful Std 9 year.  
Going to Cape Town for the first time.  
First time I gained provincial colours.<sup>6</sup>  
Watching rugby in Std 6,7,8, while still at Grey High School PE.  
Dream Springbok Triathlete.  
Dream of being successful and happily married.<sup>8</sup>  
Swim training in E L last December.

TROUGHS

Going to hostel.  
Matric (so far).<sup>1</sup>  
Girlfriend.  
Family being transferred so many times.<sup>2</sup>  
Changing schools.<sup>2</sup>  
Disappointment at not being a prefect.  
Triathlon sometimes.<sup>4</sup>  
Personality - I sometimes play mindgames with myself.<sup>5</sup>  
Extreme disappointment at not getting EP Triathlon colours during first season.  
Being transferred from Stutterheim to PE (leaving friends).  
Always wanting to be the best.<sup>6</sup>  
Jealous of other peoples' achievements.<sup>6</sup>  
I hate feeling insecure, undecided, unorganised.<sup>7</sup>  
Training on windy days in Jeffrey's Bay.  
Jeffreys Bay (other Gran) during past



Prefect Std 5.

Going to Grandparents last year June. <sup>8</sup>

Family cleaning car and working around house on Sundays.<sup>2</sup>

Doing athletics at Junior school.

Water skiing over weekends.

First time I flew on an aeroplane.

Going on a train in Std 2.

Going with school rugby teams to Queenstown to play.

Going with parents to watch rugby over weekends. <sup>2</sup>

Playing golf with friends over weekends.

Training.

Meeting Keith Anderson (Springbok Triathlete) in St Francis.

Training with Keith. <sup>6</sup>

Last English oral in Standard 9.<sup>12</sup>

Std 4 class trip to Oudtshoorn, and feeling homesick.<sup>13</sup>

Travelling home on the bus these holidays.<sup>14</sup>

First night out with my girlfriend.

S A Triathlon champs in 1993.

Watching my cousin in Miss SA pageant in 1989.

Cycle race against WP,EP and Border in Oudtshoorn.

Biathlon trials in Oudtshoorn.

holidays.

Having to spend the whole day with my girlfriend and her family on the beach.

Having stitches in my head.<sup>9</sup>

Too many high expectations of me. <sup>10</sup>

Training.

Holiday at Hamburg beach in Std 3. <sup>11</sup>

My dog fighting with our neighbour's dog.

Watching Springboks lose rugby games against French Team.<sup>6</sup>

Christmas days in Barkley East (Gran and G'pa) with family.

The day our family got an M-Net decoder.

Watching America's funniest home videos on TV.

Receiving my WP Triathlon blazer.<sup>6</sup>

Running an inter-house cross country race while still at Grey.

(c) Exploration

1. This year has been hard because he has been without his parents. He sometimes feels panicky as he has to cope alone and organise his biathlon entries and travel. He does, however, regard himself as a "loner" socially (and is "afraid of going to parties") preferring to be with his family.
2. His family is very close, possibly as a result of having been transferred so frequently.
3. His family is sporty, his father being a Junior Springbok athlete and Mark having achieved significant success in a variety of sports - especially athletics and biathlon.
4. Mark recognises that he is "dedicated and single-minded", almost obsessively so, to the extent that he often neglects his relationships.
5. His "conscientiousness" leaves him no time to relax. He sees himself as anxious, neat and unable to "say no". However he is not as aggressive in his races as he would like to be, and "is the first to apologise". He recognises that he needs others to like him and is almost narcissistically afraid of being rejected.
6. He needs to be recognised for his own achievements and easily feels rejected. Achievement and success are very important for him, possibly resulting in his interest in careers which carry social status. He "needs to be in the limelight" (see also point 10).
7. He finds it difficult to make his own decisions, seeking instead the advice of

others. His self concept is fairly low and he often regards others as "better" than him but this drives him to train even harder. He struggles to accept his achievement and abilities.

8. Family life is important to him: there are numerous reflections on the positive role played by parents, pets and grandparents.
9. Actually seeing a casualty ward unnerved him and, he thinks, prompted his reluctance to become a medical doctor.
10. Mark struggles with the pressure which he and others place on him to succeed. He **needs** success so always needs to drive himself harder, than others as a result of which he obtains little pleasure from his achievements.
11. He broke his tooth while on holiday. His Gran, whom he always admired, had perfect teeth and he felt that he could no longer attempt to be like her. He is very aware of feeling "not good enough".
12. He liked his English teacher and didn't feel threatened, unlike Afrikaans where he felt "shy and anxious".
13. While this is recorded as a Peak, Mark expressed some uncertainty because it was his "first time away from home" even though it was only for one week. However he realised that he **did** cope!
14. When discussing why he liked school he spoke in terms of enjoying the logic involved in Geography but struggling with Maths and Physical Science. He enjoys mapwork and the "deductive reasoning" required. He seldom reads and does not regard himself as creative.

(d) Themes

Mark was able to identify a number of themes which have a bearing on his career/life planning.

1. His main skill is his sport to which he devotes most of his time and energy. As a result working is not very important to him at present.
2. Achievement and recognition is important in whatever he does and he needs to be

successful. He expects a lot of himself and is aware that other people do so as well. As a result he is perhaps stricter with himself than he is with other people.

3. His family and his relationship with them is very important to him, and he finds it difficult to be independent of them, feeling shy and insecure.
4. While he is fairly shy and struggles in social situations, a sense of community and belonging provides important security.

(e) Conclusions from the Life-Line

It is tempting to suggest that Mark consider a sport related career (coaching, fitness and health, administration, etc.) because of his obvious primary involvement in his own sport. However he also displays significant need for recognition and prestige, as well as for the closeness and security of family life. He displays communication skills despite his obvious shyness and lack of confidence, but he relates better on a one-to-one basis. This is reflected in his decision making difficulties and suggests that he may experience difficulties with career planning and decision making. It is likely that Mark will be attracted to fairly conventional and safe careers - as such he is unlikely to plan towards a sport related career, especially professional performance which involves significant risk. His intense self-discipline and drive has lead to his devoting a great deal of time to studying and he would probably do well in a university context, given he could find an attractive course. At this stage, however, any decision about working or any career information, would be fairly meaningless to him - as was his experience at the Department of Manpower - since this is not central in his life at present. Counselling should explore this, being aware that his fairly conventional background will probably encourage his career thinking.

(f) Psychometric Tests

1. Career Development Questionnaire

(Norms for Standard 10's and for High School English Speaking pupils are provided in brackets).

		(Std 10)	(H.S.Eng)		
A	Information About Myself	16	(15,2)	(15,1)	
B	Decision Making	11	(15,4)	(15,6)	
C	Career Information	16	(13,4)	(13,3)	
D	World of Work and Myself	13	(15,4)	(15,5)	
E	Career Planning	10	(14,1)	(13,8)	
	Total Career Maturity		66	(72,4)	(72,1)

Mark's career maturity is significantly low and he needs to do a fair amount of career development work before he can be expected to make realistic decisions. While his "Career Information" score is above that of both comparison groups, it is likely that he has information in only a limited range of career fields so that this information is not particularly useful to him. This assumption is born out by the low score in "World of Work and Myself" which suggests that the information he does have is not integrated with what he knows about himself. He displays a very limited ability to make independent decisions and thus to engage in future "Career Planning".

2. Self Directed Search

Holland Code I S/E

Examples of occupation areas which match Mark's code include:

Medical and para-medical (including optometrist and dietician), Psychology and Counselling (including personnel management and industrial relations), Law, Service Industries (eg tourism, hotel industry) or Sales.

3. Value Scale (Max 20)

High	Low
Advancement (18)	Aesthetics (11): Altruism (9)
Economic Rewards (18)	Authority (12): Creativity (6)
Economic Security (19)	Cultural Identity (11): Risk (6)
Physical Activity (19)	Social Interaction (13):
Prestige (20)	Social Relations (9)
	Spirituality (12)
	Variety (6)

Mark appears to be driven by relatively externally ascribed and conventional values and is unlikely to take major risks in his career life, focussing instead on jobs approved of by significant others in his life. He does not seem to wish to be a leader, relying instead on the guidance of others.

4. Life Role Inventory

(Scaled scores are reported and the norms for males and for Std 10 English speaking pupils are given)

	STUDY	WORK	COMMUNITY SERVICE	HOME AND FAMILY	LEISURE ACTIVITIES
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	3,4 (2,3) (2,5)	1,1 (2,2) (2,2)	1,6 (1,7) (1,8)	3,4 (2,5) (2,6)	4,0 (3,1) Males (2,9) Std 10
<b>COMMITMENT</b>	3,7 (2,7) (2,8)	1,8 (3,0) (3,1)	1,8 (2,1) (2,3)	4,0 (3,0) (3,1)	4,0 (3,2) Males (3,1) Std 10
<b>VALUE EXPECTATIONS</b>	3,1 (3,6) (3,6)	2,0 (4,1) (4,1)	1,9 (3,0) (3,17)	2,9 (4,0) (4,1)	3,9 (4,3) Males (4,2) Std 10

Mark clearly demonstrates high levels of participation in "leisure" (i.e. sport) as well as "study" and "family". He also displays commitment in those areas. He expects his values (reported above) to be fulfilled in the areas of "leisure" and "study" but not in "work". His scores for the "worker" role are low in all areas, suggesting that he has had minimal

exposure to the world of work and that it is not yet a major part of his life.

(g) Conclusion from the Psychometric tests

Mark's career thinking and exploration seems to have been fairly limited in scope so far. He is looking at high status careers (eg Medicine) and is in danger of ignoring occupations which are more appropriate but which do not have such obvious prestige. At the moment his main concern appears to be his sport and achievement in this area is important earning him significant recognition from others. This coupled with his low Career Maturity scores and the low involvement in the "worker" role, suggests that he will not be able to make any realistic decisions about working at this stage. His somewhat obsessive nature is manifest in his Investigative personality which suggests that research and academic study are fields to which he is currently drawn. The low scores achieved on the Values Scale for Social Interaction and Social Relations are somewhat surprising, given his Holland code, but indicate that he would be most comfortable in a one-to-one situation rather than in a public/performance role. This is not necessarily in conflict with his need for recognition. A para-medical study direction might be an appropriate starting point for Mark since it could combine the Investigative study (of science and research) with his ability to relate well to people in individual situations. He might be able to link this with his interest in sport by studying Sports Medicine, Physiotherapy or Human Movement Studies. Counselling and legal fields could also meet many of these requirements and are worth exploring further. All these options would probably be sufficiently secure and socially acceptable.

### III MABO

(a) Background

Mabo is a 17 year-old girl, in the first-year of a BSc degree, reading Computer Science, Maths, Chemistry and Physics. She is not coping with the amount or with the level of the work and finds that she is failing despite her best efforts. As a result she is feeling

depressed, afraid and panicky.

She initially made her subject choice by virtue of being able to obtain a bursary for science and because Computer Science "sounded new and interesting". She selected the other subjects because she had "at least done them at school so I knew what they involved". She wanted to know if she was "in the right degree".

As a result we decided to explore what "right" meant for her and I offered to see her again. She completed a life-line and a Self Directed Search (SDS) which she gave me before the next counselling session.

Before the session I worked through Mabo's life-line to formulate initial points for discussion in the session. The following noteworthy points were raised.

(b) Life-Line

PEAKS

Going to boarding school at the age of eight.  
Passing my entrance test.  
Improving my performance the following year.<sup>1</sup>  
After knowing how to knit the teacher asked me to knit the class a sample.<sup>2, 8</sup>  
Being one of the top kids in the class for the whole year.  
Representing my house in athletics and winning my races, we obtained best house and people couldn't believe it as they said

TROUGHS

Not doing very well my first year at boarding school.  
Couldn't do my needlework.  
After staging a play which we were taught by a teacher and supposed to play, she send a message that we mustn't stage the play," and the head send the opposite of that and later we were bended in front of everybody.<sup>3</sup>  
When a teacher accused me of not doing my work and that somebody had done it for me and somebody I called a friend

we were a losing team. <sup>4</sup>

Doing well in my school work and my athletics.

Being elected president of the Junior Legion of Mary.

My cousins from Botswana came for the summer holidays for the first time, I really enjoyed being with them.

Representing my school in athletics and winning the race. <sup>1,2</sup>

Returning to school after the suspension and being told what went on while I was absent.

Being top kid in the class.

Obtaining a scroll for best student in Biology. <sup>2</sup>

Elected a Deputy Head Girl.<sup>2</sup>

Finally in Matric (just being a matriculant).

Being in the school netball "A" team.

Going for prefect's weekend.<sup>5</sup>

Going for winter school course. <sup>1,5</sup>

Passing my exams.

Receiving a Rhodes bursary.

Coming to Rhodes.

Making new friends. <sup>5</sup>

After completing to write a play on drugs my friends told me it was very good they liked it. <sup>3</sup>

agreed with the teacher.

When I came back from my holidays going to school only to find my friend has gone to a new school and we no longer kept contact with each other. I'm still hoping that we will bump into each other and talk of the good old days and keep up with the past.<sup>5</sup>

When my father lost his job.

When I had to leave my cousins, 'cos I had to go to school and didn't know when I'll ever see them again. I miss them a lot as we had so much fun. <sup>5</sup>

Not doing as well as I should in my JC.

Being suspended from school. My parents were very disappointed about it.<sup>6</sup>

When my science teacher told me that my work was unsatisfactory. <sup>1</sup>

When a teacher told me my contribution in the classroom was no longer needed after being a good student.<sup>7</sup>

On prizegiving the Headmaster forgot my Merit Awards in his office, and I didn't get anything and he came to apologise and presented them during assembly.<sup>2</sup>

Having to leave for school and mock exams, but still I was looking forward to going back to school again and telling all my school friends about the winter school.<sup>5</sup>

Having to leave my school friends.<sup>5</sup>  
Not knowing whether I'm in the right field  
or wasting time.

(c) Exploration

1. Mabo obviously had academic ability and achievement is important to her.
2. She needs recognition for her achievements.
3. Mabo writes well and is fluent in North Sotho as well as in English and wrote two plays which she and friends performed.
4. She thrives on challenges!
5. Mabo is a gregarious person for whom friendships and social interaction are very important.
6. Mabo's church boarding school seemed fairly lax about rules. However she and a group of friends "bunked out" one night and were caught by the new headmaster and suspended.
7. She enjoyed contributing and participated actively in class. Her teacher felt that she was being "cheeky".
8. Being able "to show the others how to do things" made Mabo feel good. She felt that she was able to help and be useful to her friends.

(d) Themes

The following themes stood out as Mabo and I reviewed her life-line:

1. Her need for achievement and recognition, but not at the expense of others.
2. Her obvious ability in many fields including academic and sport - she could probably succeed in most academic areas if she was sufficiently interested in them. Unfortunately her educational background was somewhat limited by circumstance and she entered her degree insufficiently prepared for the courses for which she registered.
3. Friendships are very important to her but there is a strong theme of loss:

separation from friends, suspension from school, her father losing his job, her own loss of recognition, her lack of direction and academic failures.

4. She enjoys participating in group activities (plays, sport, etc.) and she demonstrates an affinity for communication and language, relating well to others. Her strong need for a sense of community drives her to seek and facilitate stable and supportive social situations. She enjoys talking to others and sharing ideas. She likes "words and reading".
5. Her independent nature often brings her into conflict with authority, especially strict discipline orientated authority.

(e) Conclusions from the Life-Line

After discussing the life-line, I asked Mabo what it seemed to be saying to her and she responded tearfully that she had been wasting her time doing a science degree. It was clear to her that many of the incidents which had meaning for her revolved around interpersonal relationships - even her receiving recognition for successes was only important to the extent that it enhanced her position and her "status" amongst her peers. She was also aware how easily she had been hurt by thoughtless comments of those in authority, especially her teachers, and how these hurts had tended to result in her withdrawing from contact and failing to pursue her real interests, "words and reading". She understood that what was really meaningful to her were her relationships with others and "ideas" rather than science which felt somewhat "far away and cold".

Mabo realised that a B Sc was perceived by many of her peers as a "good degree to do - you must be clever to do it so they look up to you". This externally ascribed status had attracted her but was less meaningful than the fulfilment she would achieve from interpersonal sharing. She acknowledged that she had registered for a B Sc because funding was fairly readily available for it, even at the beginning of the first year, and that she really wanted to do something "with people and with ideas, where I can think and work with the community".

When I asked Mabo what kind of degree she felt she would rather be doing she responded that she would like to do some kind of counselling work, possibly with languages as part of her degree and courses such as "philosophy - to find out how people think and why they make a lot of money and become selfish".

I reflected on this last comment that, "people forget their friends" and Mabo went on to speak about feeling rejected by peers who "made it" and being very hurt by this. She also spoke of feeling very degraded when her father lost his job ("some people don't care anymore"). She said that this was where she'd like to work, to "help those people who feel hurt and rejected". Mabo also expressed an awareness that she does have significant ability which she needs to fulfil and for which she needs to achieve recognition. The appreciation of those with whom she comes into contact may meet this need.

Clearly Mabo's academic planning needs to be reality based - perhaps it is true that she cannot find the funds for a non-science degree. Our discussions went on to explore this and look at restructuring her course so as to include more appropriate subjects, as suggested from Mabo's life-line and the resultant counselling.

(f) Psychometric Testing

I had also asked Mabo to complete a SDS, on which she recorded a **Holland code of SEI** which is typically found amongst those who work as social workers, counsellors, nursing administrators and so on.

## COMPARISON OF CONCLUSIONS

(a) ELIZABETH

Both the life-line and the tests indicate that Elizabeth's work role salience is low, while her social/community involvement is greater. The role of her family emerges strongly from the life-line and provides a definite context within which her values and her life

roles can be understood. Her need to achieve extrinsic recognition for her work can be understood in light of this information. That she has invested so much in her studies and now hopes for so much from her work makes sense but the low career maturity scores suggest that she does not have an appreciation of how to achieve the recognition she seeks. Clearly she needs to be involved in work involving significant social contact - this is clear on the life-line and from the SDS, and her communication skill can be seen. The SDS refines this by identifying the strength of her investigative personality which the life-line does not really pick up. The value placed on social recognition and prestige is seen in the Value Scale as well as the life-line and the anomalies concerning the low Value Scale scores for Social Relations and Altruism should be noted and explored within the context provided by her life-line. Counselling for Elizabeth should focus on exploring and clarifying the role of work in her life and helping her develop her career maturity related skills. By making public the family pressures which are directing her, she will be able to reassess their appropriateness and her response to them. She can be helped to gain an understanding of why she seeks the values which she does and thus permitted to reevaluate their role in her life. Specific development tasks should include exploration in breadth to expand her range of options within the social/communication fields, and a reassessment of her current university studies. Her initial research could begin within fields of computer industries (most importantly) or teaching and training, as well as some combinations of these. While an option such as computer user support services might prove to be suitable, in line with Super's approach it is important that she be assisted to explore the entire field rather than be offered definite and limiting alternatives at this early stage in her exploration.

**(b) MARK**

Mark's case illustrated the usefulness of the autobiographical approach for a counsellee who has previously received counselling based on psychometric measures but has been unable to use the information provided. In reviewing his life-line and his present battery of tests, one is struck by the low level of career maturity evident from both approaches and by his concentration on roles other than that of worker. Clearly he is not ready to use

the information provided by trait-and-factor testing. His predominantly extrinsic values as measured by the Value Scale are reflected in his conventional and emotionally quite conservative life-line on the basis of which his reluctant risk taking behaviour makes good sense. Because of his current intense involvement in a non-work role and the extent to which it fulfills his value expectations (such as Prestige and Advancement), his present search for meaning should focus around this role, while he is assisted to develop his career maturity through learning decision making skills, exploring work options, and developing a sense of planfulness. It seems that Mark should be considering a "holding decision" - which would permit him sufficient time and energy to fulfil his sporting ambitions without offering too much academic distraction. While studying remains important to him it is possible that this is part of the externally ascribed wisdom which has been projected onto him, and trying to combine study and sport, at this stage, may lead to success in neither. Instead he should:

- (a) explore the meaning of work as a life role;
- (b) expand his range of options by exploring broadly;
- (c) consider the effect of a "Moratorium Year" on his chances of being accepted into the University course of his final choice;
- (d) continue career counselling to integrate the material and to consider what preparation and planning needs to happen.

While being aware of the dangers of foreclosing on options, Mark could explore fields such as "Education" (not just school teaching); "Counselling" since he is open to people on an individual level; "regional development" which would tap his interest in Geography as well as Investigative and Social aspects of his personality; "Sport Administration/Coaching" and the "health/fitness industry". This last may profitably be linked with his medical interest in fields such as "Human Movement Studies", "sports medicine/rehabilitation" and "physiotherapy". A career in Law, specifically Labour Law can also be considered. He should be permitted to relate these to the intrinsic meaning they could provide for his life rather than having them offered as suggestions in the first instance.

(c) MABO

While work appears to play a significant role in Mabo's life - of the three clients she seems to have the clearest awareness of the role of paid work in her future - her Career Maturity score would probably be low because of her lack of planfulness, her insufficient knowledge of alternatives and her consequent difficulty relating what she knows about herself to the realistic alternatives available to her. The life-line provides the context within which this can be understood and the role of her socio-economic pressures can be seen. For her the life-line was all that was required to make her predicament clear and the SDS supported the alternative, more congruent, directions. Counselling should help her explore the range of alternatives available that would meet her needs and values since she seems to have seriously limited knowledge of her options. For her to read for a general Social Science degree, or a Science degree with a Psychology major, would be a sensible first step since her university experience itself would provide her with significant opportunity to develop her Career Maturity. The way in which non-work roles can fulfil her needs and values must also be made clear because of her financial constraints and she should be supported in exploring and accepting these constraints. At present her feelings of powerlessness, expressed in the life-line, prevent her assuming active responsibility for her life planning which is externally determined, and this needs to be explored in counselling, bearing in mind the cultural context which puts higher value on such group conformity and directedness, rather than on individuation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The way in which the life-line can be used in career counselling and development work is illustrated by the three cases presented in Chapter Five. In each case the counsellee is not presented with conclusions or recommendations based on objective test data, but is offered a range of possible life options which can be explored and expanded in dialogue with the counsellor. Consequently, those who hope or expect to be given a number of suggestions from which one may be chosen, may be disappointed.

The three cases presented show how the conclusions reached from the life-line and those reached through the use of more formal assessment techniques are essentially similar and neither one technique appears to provide significantly different information than the other. However, in assessing the usefulness of the techniques, we need to look beyond the conclusions reached. As was pointed out by Watkins and Savickas (1990), the real value of a more phenomenological approach to career counselling seems to be to complement, rather than to replace, the logical-positivist approach. In the cases presented the counsellees' experience of, and reaction to, the different approaches is as important, if not more important, than the end result. The phenomenological process encourages counsellee empowerment and the development of an internal locus of control. As such it appears actually to assist the counsellee become more career mature by encouraging and nurturing an exploratory attitude and the independence required for planfulness and accurate decision-making.

In Mark's case we are reminded of comments made by Watkins and Savickas (1990) who see subjective approaches as being useful for "difficult cases ... who have already finished vocational counselling with a different counsellor" (p. 103). Mark had received a significant amount of input from the Department of Manpower but was still unable to use the information provided. The subjective perception obtained through the life-line helped him

understand his "private-sense" and see his interests and skills within the context of his broader life experience and social embeddedness, which Mosak (1989) regards as the context for all behaviour. His increased awareness of the role of his family in the development of his life pattern helped him, as has been suggested by Stoltz-Loike (1992, p. 105), identify "the many factors that influence career decision making". The same is true in Elizabeth's case where the life-line made the family context explicit and enabled her to make conscious decisions about complying with their expectations or resisting them. This resulted in her experiencing herself as more in charge of her own life and so more able to engage in information gathering, planning and decision making - all critical components of career maturity. It was only after realising how she was being overly influenced by her family's will that Elizabeth was able to explore the possibility of leaving university without the previous feelings of guilt and failure. She was also able to understand why she wanted to remain at university - despite her academic difficulties: the sense of community she had found in residence fulfilled a number of very deep needs in her.

The interplay between personal and career issues is clearly highlighted in Mabo's case. She presented with feelings of anxiety and depression but, as stressed by Brown (1985), such traditional symptoms of mental health disorders may not indicate severe psychological problems. The life-line seemed almost to give her permission to talk about her life problems: lack of finance to study, her disadvantaged and limited academic background, her resultant frustration (even anger and jealousy), her conflict with traditional authority and her various feelings of loss. In this way she appeared to be freed to think about what she really wanted from her life and she became able to talk more realistically about reaching her goals. The link between life experience and work became clearer to her, freeing her from its inevitability and re-empowering her.

As mentioned above, the usefulness of the life-line approach needs to be seen in process - rather than purely outcome - terms. The three cases which are presented were selected not as representative examples but rather as illustrative of the technique. All three counsellees had Holland codes with predominant Investigative and Social personalities (Elizabeth - ISC (E);

Mark - IS\E; Mabo - SEI) and could be expected to work well in such an interactive exploration. Clearly other counsellees might not respond as well, and the technique could prove to be totally unhelpful - even counterproductive.

In Chapter Four a variety of authors suggested the kinds of clients for whom such phenomenological approaches might be more suitable. Rosenberg and Smith (1987) point out that "not all clients respond similarly to the same counselling strategies" (p. 16) and counsellors need to develop strategies to meet individual needs rather than regarding one or other strategy as intrinsically superior. Perhaps one should also consider the match between counsellor and technique, and challenge counsellors to discover the range of approaches with which they are comfortable and which are suitable for their clients. Thus the life-line approach is not being suggested as suitable for all clients, all counsellors or all situations - indeed, this goes against its very nature. It is being offered as another approach, useful in certain contexts.

Brownell (1992) points out that "school-based adolescent career counselling lacks credibility" (p. 64), largely as a result of "unrealistic consumer expectations" whereby school leavers evaluate the counselling they have received in terms of the prevailing social expectation that "specific career decisions should be made by the time they leave school, and that it is the school's responsibility to see that this is done" (p. 64). He goes on to point out that career development theory questions this assumption since many school leavers are not yet ready to make this kind of decision. He notes that the "so-called professional career counselling fraternity in this country does not have a particularly impressive record" (p. 65) and cites a number of possible reasons for this including:

- (a) a dated theoretical and practical framework which is based in a static logical-positivist model;
- (b) counsellor resistance to career counselling in favour of more contemporary issues which are uppermost in the minds of most adolescents and which possess greater spontaneity and immediacy;
- (c) low levels of pupil motivation because of the future relevance of career

counselling rather than the immediate relevance which is more attractive.

He suggest that the "posture of seeming indifference by adolescents often masks a bewilderment about who they are and what they might become ... this manifests itself in avoidance behaviour ... and a general slowing down of the process of career development" (p. 68).

The case studies presented earlier demonstrate a number of points about life-line based career counselling which may well go a significant way towards overcoming some of the problems mentioned by Brownell (1992) and improving the credibility of school-based career counsellors and counselling.

- (a) Pupil motivation for career counselling is low but the life-line concentrates on the total lifestyle rather than merely the distant worker role, thus retaining a present focus and relevance. Since the issues raised by a life-line are personal and of more immediate concern, the counsellors' resistance to traditional "career counselling" - which implies the choice of a job - is also lessened. As mentioned previously the worker role is something that can be explored once the entire lifecareer has been examined, as was seen in the cases of Mark and Mabo.
- (b) Those pupils whose indifference masks their bewilderment are helped to put their lives into some kind of context through the use of the life-line and are enabled to gain a sense on continuity and meaningfulness. Their skills, values and interests take on a meaning more than merely a test score and can be more readily related to their lived experiences. In the case of Mabo, it is clear how the focus shifted from an unrealistic future plan to a more immediate concept of her life based on her lived experience. She was able to gain a sense of continuity and of the relevance of her past to her future possibilities.
- (c) The unrealistic expectations on the part of counsellees, parents and even counsellors, that the counsellee should be able to select a specific job/course of study by a specific age or life stage are challenged by the developmental emphasis of the life-line approach. Once again the case of Mark clearly demonstrates this point.

- (d) Because counselees are far more actively involved in the process than they are in the more traditional logical-positivist approaches which tend to dominate career counselling practice, they become more able to accept responsibility for the outcome. Elizabeth's case shows how she was able to stop relying on external (family) factors and independently to seek her own range of alternatives. Thus counselees are better able to engage with and relate to the outcome of counselling, as was Mark.

While these arguments related specifically to school-based career developmental work, they are not necessarily limited to an adolescent client population and may also hold true for older populations for whom phenomenological approaches seem appropriate. Niles and Usher (1993) suggest a similar autobiographically based approach in working with a 35 year old counsellee, in an effort to increase her "commitment towards career exploration" (p. 64).

Although the case studies have focused on one-to-one intervention, one may speculate about the use of a life-line technique in group situations as well, since de Haas (1992) suggests that certain pupils will respond best to group work - which is both time-saving and more cost effective. The life-line approach has been used as an introductory and exploratory technique with groups of school pupils (Weinrach, 1979) and university students in Career Development Workshops by the Student Adviser's Office at Rhodes University. In such group situations it may easily be coupled with a more traditional psychometric measure such as the Self Directed Search and can become a way of involving counselees in the counselling process which can be continued individually at a later stage. The clear disadvantage which needs to be borne in mind is the reduced level of confidentiality for more intimate or personal material raised and the possible resultant hesitancy to produce a comprehensive life-line which might lead to themes being misrepresented or unrecognised. The approach has also been used with mid-life career counselees' and in cross-cultural situations, as suggested by Watkins and Savickas (1990), by the Student Adviser's Office at Rhodes University.

Oleksy - Ojikutu (1986) describes how he successfully introduced the use of a "career time-line" into Nigerian secondary schools despite its initial criticism as being "foreign and

awkward for the Nigerian context" (p. 48). The technique is similar to the life-line and Oleksy-Ojikutu points out that many Nigerian career counsellors do not have any budget for the purchase of the standardised test material which does exist and so must develop their own materials and techniques. Apart from its affordability, he sees one of the advantages of the career time-line being its usefulness in group situations after which the counsellor can meet with those counselees who are in need of individual career counselling. The value of the life-line in situations such as these mentioned above does not form part of this study but should be recognised as possible further areas of exploration.

It is interesting to note that a recent edition of *The Career Development Quarterly* (September 1993) analyses one case using three approaches: the Career Development Assessment and Counselling Model (C-DAC) of Super (see Chapter Three), a Person-Centred approach, and an Adlerian approach. The approaches are essentially different but a traditional logical-positivist approach is avoided. The trend is clear and South African counsellors need to rethink their theoretical approach to career counselling in light of recent developments in the field. While arguments about dwindling resources and increasing demands require counsellors to find innovative ways of doing more with less, the danger remains of forgetting the person behind the problem and approaching the case as a puzzle to be solved rather than as a phenomenological search for daily meaning which, as we have seen, does not necessarily imply reduced service delivery.

Such an understanding of the process of career counselling is based on a broader yet more fundamental understanding of the concept of career - as a vocation; a calling to a way of being in the world - and requires the counsellors to relate to counselees in a way that supports and accepts them and so relieves their anxiety and confusion and enables them to move towards greater self-acceptance and self-understanding. It does not necessarily lead to concrete decisions about careers.

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