Sandra Betts, Aled Griffiths, Fritz Schütze, Peter Straus

Biographical Counselling: an Introduction

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module deals with the complex task of professional counsellors in vocational rehabilitation to encourage and to support the biographical work of their clients. Firstly, the module stresses the importance of biographical insights into the life course of clients within the counselling processes of vocational rehabilitation. Secondly, the basic social science concepts that are important for biography analysis are developed: identity and self; developing identities; fluid, fragmented and fractured identities, situational identities vs. biographical identity unfolding as long-term processes. Thirdly, the concept of biographical work is explicated, and fourthly, a theoretical model for biographical counselling in rehabilitation situations is outlined.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Giving an understanding for the intricacies of identity formation in complex modern societies.
2. Providing insight into the importance of biographical work for persons with severe (and quite often multiple) inflictions, such as chronic illness and long-term unemployment.
3. Understanding the basic dimensions of biographical work.
4. Getting an overview over basic steps of professional biographical counselling for clients in situations of vocational rehabilitation.

CONTENTS

1 The Basic Idea of the INVITE Project
2 Institutional Processing vs. Strengthening Personal Autonomy
3 Two basic features of post-modern complex society: difference and identity as conditions for institutional processing and for strengthening personal autonomy
4 Narratives of Identity
5 Biographical work as central avenue for developing one's own biographical identity
6 Biographical Counselling in Vocational Rehabilitation Situations
7 Social Arrangements of Learning Biographical Counselling and the Structure of the Curriculum According to the Two Aims of the INVITE Project
8 Ethics
9. Exercises
10. References

1 The Basic Idea of the INVITE Project

The aim of the project INVITE is to construct, to try out and to put into practice a curriculum for further education, i.e., learning and training on the job, in biographical counselling using the methods of sociological biography analysis. The curriculum is addressed to professional counsellors (vocational teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, etc.), who work in the field of integrative vocational rehabilitation with clients living in the aftermath of a severe, life-changing medical crisis (caused by a sudden accident, by the contraction of a severe disease, by the deterioration of physical abilities under the condition of a chronic illness, etc.) and being unable to go on with their former occupation, and/or living in the critical life situation of having lost their former job position and being totally incapacitated to practice their former occupation.

INVITE adopts theoretical concepts and methodological procedures successfully developed and practiced in qualitative social research under the catchword of autobiographical narrative interviewing. These scientific theoretical concepts and research procedures are now applied to the professional work field of vocational rehabilitation, and therefore they have been transformed into a tool of exploring the life situation of the client and counselling him or her to do biographical work connected to the tasks of choosing a new occupation and getting educated for it and trained in it as a beginner or an apprentice. Clients in life situations of vocational rehabilitation have to choose new biographical options connected with the choice of the new occupation, and they must thoroughly open themselves for it. Hence, they have to change themselves tremendously and do biographical work in order to accomplish such a change. Vocational counsellors should assist their clients in such a task by strengthening their biographical abilities of working through their experiences of severe suffering, of regaining biographical sense and self esteem and of searching in their own personal history to understand under what life circumstances they gained biographical resources for developing action capacities and under what life circumstances they were afflicted by biographical dispositions of getting hurt and consequently incapacitated for certain types of circumspect action. Vocational counsellors should teach and train their clients to explore and decide when to focus and to work on their biographical dispositions of getting hurt and incapacitated to do certain elements of occupational work, and when just to circumvent those work situations that tend to hurt. And, of course, they should teach and train their clients how to exploit their biographical resources for developing action capacities and for biographical metamorphosis.

Vocational counsellors should spend at least some time to on personal assistance to teach and train clients to do their biographical work. This time span is specifically prolonged if the counsellor is involved in a stretched-out process of occupational re-education. (E.g. in some countries involved in the INVITE project clients get the chance to undergo an occupational retraining lasting for one or two years.) Vocational counsellors involved in prolonged training courses are in an ideal position to develop and/or to try out concepts of counselling, teaching and training in biographical work connected to occupational change. However, INVITE's specific approach to vocational counselling that harnesses concepts and methods of sociological biography analysis on the empirical base of the autobiographical narrative interview can also be applied to short term counselling situations. Even under short-term counselling arrangements the sensitisation for biographical underpinnings and depths of medical crises, unemployment traps and enforced occupational changes will be pivotal for the biographical self-understanding of the client and the professional hetero-understanding of the counsellor. And, in addition, under very specialized personal conditions of the client's life situation and ethically taking into account the professional paradox of teaching and learning (how much to prod the client that she or he should explore something new, on the one hand, and how long to wait for her or his own

inner development, in order to make sure that it is *her* or *his* personal way to follow up, on the other) the sociological research instrument of narrative interviewing and pertinent biography analysis as a specialized powerful version of social work case analysis could clear the life situation of the client in a dramatically short time span, if she or he is willing and personally strong enough to undergo such an intensive short endeavour of self-exploration.

The Leonardo project INVITE is run by four European universities in Finland, Germany, Poland and Wales (Helsinki, Magdeburg, Lodz and Bangor) and by ten practice institutions in the said countries and, in addition, in Italy and Austria. In cooperation between professional practitioners and social scientists, an on-the-job-training curriculum of further education for the biographical counselling of clients in severely difficult situations of vocational rehabilitation has been developed, tested and reshaped. In close cooperation with the practice institutions involved, INVITE will be made known and distributed through the networks of their substantive fields of counselling practice for various types of clients.

2 Institutional Processing vs. Strengthening Personal Autonomy

There are two different processes of handling clients in social assistance institutions: bureaucratic and professional ones.

Bureaucratic procedures are steered by conditional internal organisational programmes. The logic is: The organization has provided for alternative paths of handling problems; let's find persons with corresponding problems, who fit those alternative paths of handling. Bureaucratic procedures can be extremely helpful and efficient, if the problems of clients perfectly fit the problem definitions and the paths of handling provided by the social assistance organisation. Efficiency in terms of costs and counselling time to be spent is at its utmost if there are many similar problems of clients that perfectly fit the predefinitions and operative ways of handling by the organization. Part of the work of public and private job centres can be of that kind. But bureaucratic procedures would not be flexible enough to handle problems that are beyond their pre-selected and operationally defined patterns of handling and many problem constellations of vocational rehabilitation are of this kind. Quite often, the client carries a very specific, biographically conditioned problem constellation to the assistance organization. For example: A client may be forced into an apprenticeship by outer forces, as when a young man was kicked out of an advanced secondary school education and put into an disliked plumber apprenticeship; or when parents forced a young woman into adisliked apprenticeship which seemed to be easy to get into and fitting for a young woman. Therefore, he or she was trained in an occupation and would work in it for a long time, which he or she could not identify with, but at the same time had to integrate that work and occupation, which they experienced as self-alienating, into their everyday life. But if it then becomes a personal attitude to see work and occupation in general as self-alienating and if one never detects the powerful potential of work and occupation for self-identification, than it is for such a person very difficult to open up for intensive re-training into a new occupation. Thus, professional counselling work becomes important in order to let the client reassess the biographical value of occupational work as a potential for positive self-evaluation and for personal growth. This becomes an important precondition for successful retraining.

The other alternative to handling the clientele- the professional way- becomes pivotal in any problem constellation in which the problem of the client does not fit the standardized problem definitions and the various standardized paths of handling them offered by the assistance organisation. Most biographically co-conditioned problem constellations are of this kind. In these cases the assistance agent has to embark on the much more time-

consuming endeavour of doing a deeper case analysis including the scrutiny of biographical processes, and for this she or he has to take into account the personal perspective of the unique client. Case analysis and the exploration of the perspective of the client, especially regarding aspects of their lives which they do not understand or have a restricted focus on, is professional work. The problem presentation of the client must be basically done by narrative means, since she or he has personally been involved in it and this problem involvement unfolds as a more or less dramatic or tragic story. Thus, professional case work requires the narrative problem presentation of the client as partially elicited and encouraged by the professional as well as her or his interpretative analysis of that problem presentation and, of course, the following counselling of the client, and the counselling work of finding a way out of the problem constellation should be mutually shared by both parties.

The bureaucratic way to handle clients is to process them without taking into regard their own point of view and personal plans, their own perspective of experiencing, their own understanding of the problem and their own interpretation of the opaque activities of the practitioners and their organization. The expected order of the bureaucratic institution determines activities and the time sequence of events. The value relevancies, goals and assessment criteria of the interactive action schemes between clients and practitioners are dominated by the going concerns of the bureaucratic institution. The client is not allowed to embark on his or her own schedule of inner time in order to search, understand, evaluate, develop plans at her or his own pace and undergo a creative metamorphosis. For the client, many of the proceedings, procedures, rules and maxims of the bureaucratic institution are hidden behind the curtain of seemingly friendly and civilized proceedings of mundane conversational interaction. Nevertheless, the client feels driven by outer forces and develops lots of fear about what has happened already and what will happen in the future. But this is of no concern for the practitioner. To the contrary, in the understanding of the bureaucratic practitioner the fear helps to keep the client under control and at a comfortable distance. The client is just expected to accept the provisions of the practitioners and follow the rules of the organization. Difficulties and mistakes of handling the bureaucratic program of processing the client are concealed from the client as has been poignantly shown in Kafka's novel "The Trial". The bureaucratic processing with its standard procedures can be found in many types of governmental and private job centres, since the notorious lack of fitting employment opportunities and the scarcity of economic resources for subsidiary payments are the overall concern of such institutions. Hence, there is often evidence of the collective mental syndrome of Kafka's gatekeeper connected with such an institution that aims to protect the common good against the possibly illegitimate intentions and volitions of the private clients.

Bureaucratic practitioners – including those of job centres - tend to withdraw from listening to narrative accounts of the life history of their clients whenever the latter dare and struggle to put chunks of biographical rendering into their institutional conversations with the practitioners. (But normally this wouldn't happen since the atmosphere of the ongoing interaction does not encourage such time consuming and un-restrained behaviour of the client.) Listening to biographical accounts of the client would mean taking their perspective and their understandings seriously, and that would cause difficulties with the standard programs of the organization, since the ideas and plans of the clients might be totally different and time consuming. Autobiographical narration is an emergent endeavour, and neither the client nor the practitioner would know what new topics of, and insights into, new problems emerge Such emergent features of conversation and of evolving social relationships are totally against the logic of bureaucratic processing. Therefore practitioners would normally shy away from offering the floor to autobiographical story telling by their clients and, in return, clients are emotionally barred from autobiographical story telling

since there is no reason to trust the practitioner and her or his organization about how to use the autobiographical material properly and respectfully. Instead, the latter might use it to rule out urgently needed help for the client as well as to stigmatise, marginalize or even criminalize her or him.

The ruling out of autobiographical renderings can be extra-counterproductive for the counselling work of practitioners in job centres. In order to assist the client to find a new job position or even a new occupation, the vocational counsellor in a job centre should know the self-understanding of the client of her or his occupational history and the satisfactions, delights, annoyances and fears connected with it. Knowing about these subjective features the practitioner can assess what could be a promising direction of the search for a new position or even for a new occupation with which the client could identify and toward which he or she could develop new personal occupational strength. In addition, it would be helpful for the counsellor to know even "private", non-occupational aspects of the life course of the client and its subjective biographical details: e.g., that he loves to tinker with old materials and to construct new things out of them or – another example - that she loves to adorn her daughters with nice clothes. Such essentially peripheral knowledge about personal inclinations of the client could provide the counsellor with fruitful hints towards the new appropriate occupation to be chosen and personally developed by the client. It could help the counsellor focus the client on for example, becoming an construction engineer after having been addicted and psychically destabilized by the study of mathematics which was beloved too much, or to focus on becoming a tailor or a hairdresser after having been totally unsatisfied with work in a plant for metal constructions. Normally such information would not be provided by institutional communicative exchange in a bureaucratic setting, which resembles more an interrogation than a free floating conversation. A quite normal format of institutional interaction in work centres involves offering job or re-training opportunities available on stock. The reactions of the client towards the question of whether she or he would accept such a job (which is sometimes called the pinpointing and subtraction method) does not allow collection of experiential qualities and subjective perspectives (lived experiences and experiential gestalts) of the client connected with her or his former occupational situations as well as those peripheral features of her or his private life that could become a new potential for occupational life.

However, the work of the professional practitioner can be totally different, and this also applies to the professional group of vocational counsellors. The professional practitioner can be oriented towards the systematic strengthening of the action capacities and the personal autonomy of the client, i.e., towards her or his self-empowerment. There are three features that are pivotal for this client centred type of professional counselling:

-   The permanent endeavour of taking the role of the client: the practitioner systematically attempts to explore the experiential perspective of the client. This includes finding out about his or her definition and explanation of the problem situation, but at the same time it does not mean taking the explanatory argumentation of the client at face value; instead one has to embed it within the unfolding contexts of her or his experiences and mirror it back to her or him;
-   The stress on letting the client proceed with the speed and in the flux of her or his own inner time. This includes the organization and social arrangement and the dramaturgical offering of moratorium phases for the client's re-experiencing the fateful concatenation of events that led to the present problem situation, for making her- or himself a topic of search and reflection and for developing her or his own biographical (personal and social) identity; letting her or himself proceed with the speed of their own inner time also allows for some mistakes, re-evaluations, additional searches and repetitions of attempts. On the other hand, there has to be the obvious profile of an institutional time

schedule in order that a strong grid of expectation is available that orients the client towards her or his tasks for development;

- The encouragement of autobiographical narrative accounts of the client regarding their own experiences of the sequential unfolding of her or his predicament and the concatenation of events leading to these experiences. This involves the more or less critical and sober self-presentation of the client. Through the autobiographical rendering of the client, i.e., through the constraints of extempore story telling and the cognitive ordering devices of story telling, the own time of the client, her or his inner time of unfolding of identity and biographical process structures will become dominant in competition with the institutional time of the organization the counsellor is working in.

3 Two basic features of post-modern complex society: difference and identity as conditions for institutional processing and for strengthening personal autonomy

In the last section we dealt with three features of professional counselling: to seriously take into account the perspective of the client, to let the client proceed with the counselling process according to her or his own personal ("inner") time of learning and understanding, and to let the client tell her or his own personal experiences connected with the encroaching problem. Due to these three concerns the professional counsellor must seriously and in a circumspect way consider the biographical preconditions and the personal life situation of the client. The professional counsellor must take into account the client's identity development and its mutual relationship to her or his life history: the counsellor has realized that understanding the unfolding biographical identity of the client is pivotal for successfully working on her or his rehabilitative problem constellation calling for occupational change and/or re-retraining. Biographical identity, as we would like to call the mutually conditioning and conditioned relationship between identity development and life history, is a very complex process in the everyday world of globalised, and at the same time variously fragmented, post-modern society.

Biographical identity flows from two general sources: (a) The ascription of certain social categories by others and by oneself differentiates the individual from other social aggregates and groups in which it does not belong. This categorization ensures the otherness and difference of an individual from others. (b) At the same time the ascription and self-ascription of social categories also is the base of belonging to 'we-collectivities' and of personally identifying with them as well as of personal self-identification. Self-identification has as its natural base personal experiences with the concatenation of events of one's own unique life and one's own inner development as well as with the categorization processes included in those life experiences. In addition, it is a self-reflexive process that uses those social 'we-categories', collates and integrates them and interprets their special combination as part of constructing a personal self that fits these personal experiences and this inner development. From this the person's essential uniqueness and unity with oneself is ensured. The categorized otherness and difference of the individual is very much used to process him or her institutionally, to let him or her be an object of organizational control procedures and to include or exclude them from societal services. The personal self, instead, is the essential condition for individual autonomy and self-empowerment. But biographical identity as a social whole flows from both sources; it is the ever changing and at the same time constantly self-identical product of real socio-biographical processes of becoming an object for the social ascription of categorical differences, and of becoming the agency for constructing one's own individual uniqueness.

Identity – an introduction

Identity is to do with the way an individual answers the question 'Who Am I?' It is 'our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and others' (Jenkins 1996). It involves making comparisons between people and therefore establishing similarities and differences between them. Those who are believed by themselves and others to be similar share an identity which is distinguishable from the identity of people who are believed to be different and who do not, therefore, share the same identity. Identity is thus an integral part of social life. It is only by distinguishing the identities of different groups that people are able to relate to other people. An awareness of different identities provides some indication of what sort of person you might be dealing with, and therefore how you can relate to them. According to Jenkins (1996) 'Without social identity, there is, in fact, no society'.

If identity provides us with the means of answering the question 'Who am I?' it might appear to be about personality; the sort of person I am. That is only part of the story. Identity is different from personality in important respects. We may share personality traits with other people, but sharing an identity suggests some active engagement on our part. We choose to identify with a particular identity or group although sometimes we have more choice than others. Identity requires some awareness on our part. Thus, social identities do not refer to specific, discrete personality characteristics (such as shyness, honesty, or reliability), though any of these may be involved in an identity. They are, rather, clusters of personality characteristics and attributes that are linked to particular social roles, categories or groups. Examples of commonly employed social identities in contemporary societies include such labels as woman, child, parent, doctor, student, social worker, politician, Catholic, Jew, drug-taker etc. Some of these identities are based around clearly defined occupational roles, some relate to more general social positions, and others correspond more to stereotypes than to actual roles. Nevertheless, each designates a particular type of real or imagined person, to whom some particular moral characteristics and social attributes and abilities are imputed, and with whom people may identify themselves or be identified by others.

Someone identifies with a particular social type – or is identified in this way by others – when there is a feeling that the type adequately describes certain key features of his or her life. A social identity may be regarded as somehow fundamental to a person's whole way of being. However, it should not be assumed that people identify themselves in only one way. People have **multiple identities** and they may shift from one identity to another according to the situation or context in which they are acting and the roles that they take on. A man may, for example, regard himself as being a doctor when he is at work, a father when he is at home, and a football club supporter in his leisure time.

Identity is thus a social question because it concerns the groups with which we identify. It combines how I see myself and how others see me. According to Woodward (2000) it is partly internal and subjective, but also partly external and dependent on the judgement of others. Whilst there are elements of choice or individual agency involved with respect to some of the groups we identify with, it is more difficult to make a personal decision about, or to change others eg. Gender identity. A person may regard themselves as a man but if everyone else sees them as a woman, she or he may be unable to establish the identity wanted. Identity is always formed through a combination of individual agency and structural constraint. Although, as Woodward argues, there is increasing choice and fluidity in the construction of identities in contemporary society there are nevertheless structural constraints that continue to prevent some people from adopting the identities they would like to have. Among the important structures, which place constraints on individual choices, are structures of gender, nationality and class. 'Economic circumstances, changes

in employment, poverty, racism and lack of recognition of our ethnic or national identities all deny us access to identities which we might want to take up … Our own bodies put limits on what it is possible to achieve' (Woodward 2000).

Jenkins (1996) makes a similar point when he argues that the ability to claim identities for ourselves and to attribute particular identities to others is essentially a question of power. Some groups have more power than other groups to claim identities for themselves and to attribute identities to others. For example, the poor and the unemployed, living in inner-city areas, may have little power to resist being seen as part of an 'underclass'. Thus, identity is never completely fluid or simply a matter of choice. Social identities exist and are acquired and allocated within power relations. Identity is something which must be negotiated and over which struggles may take place. This alerts us to the fact that identities may be collective as well as individual. The Black Power movement in the USA, and feminist and gay liberation movements, are examples of groups organising to change the widely held perceptions of particular social identities. They were not simply the struggles of individuals to gain a more positive social identity. They were (and are) the struggles of social groups, which sought a more positive social identity for the group as a whole.

Identity and the Self

The word identity is widely used to refer both to what is called here **social identity** and to the related idea of **personal identity**. A social identity marks people out as, in some respects, the same as others. A personal identity marks someone out as a unique and quite distinct individual. Personal identity (central to which is a personal name) is the link between the concepts of social identity and self. Social identities are, in principle, shared with others. There are, for example, large numbers of people who might identify themselves as men, as fathers or as scientists. The word **self**, on the other hand, is used to distinguish a person's sense of his or her own uniqueness or individuality. A sense of self is built up when people reflect on their personal history and construct a biography of how they came to be the people that they are. They grasp their various social identities and characteristics and unify them into a conception of what is particular or peculiar about them as an individual (Strauss 1959: 144-7). Only in very extreme situations where a person has a single, all-encompassing social identity might a social identity and a sense of self totally coincide. In most life situations there is a productive, sometimes even creative tension between the various social identities and the self; this is the gist of personal identity.

Developing Identities

How are identities and selves formed? How do people come to recognise themselves in certain images and not in others? How much control do people have in the construction of identities and selves? In answering these questions a range of different social scientific theories have been drawn upon.

- **George Herbert Mead: Imagining Ourselves**.
  Mead (1934) offered useful insights into the link between how we see ourselves and the ability of human beings to imagine how others might see us. For example, if attending a job interview we are careful to select clothes which will encourage the interviewers to see us as we wish to be seen. Clothes are an example of **symbols** which signify particular things to others. A suit worn at an interview might be used to signify that we are serious candidates for the job. Through imagining the way others see us, our personal or subjective sense of identity and self is linked to the external identity that others have of us. Thus, for Mead, identities are produced in a social context through

individuals thinking about what links them to the various social worlds in which they live, work and/or have fantasies about and this is done through symbolising. The ability to visualise ourselves and to represent ourselves gives us some degree of agency, but "The repertoire of symbols upon which we can draw is always limited by the particular culture which we inhabit" (Woodward 2000). The meanings of different sorts of clothing, the sorts of identity they project, for example, cannot simply be chosen by us, but are also influenced by our culture.

- **Erving Goffman: Everyday Interaction**.
  There are some important features of Goffman's original theory on 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1959), which contribute to an understanding of identity and to how identities are managed and presented in linking the personal and the social. Goffman saw the social world as being rather like a drama or a performance in a play. His work is sometimes described as a **dramaturgical approach**. Individuals put on a performance for others to convince them about who they are. Like an actor, they have to believe in the role in order to be convincing. In the process they may become the person they are trying to project an image of. Through presenting themselves in particular roles individuals develop identities.

  In performing roles on the stage of everyday life not all of our actions are conscious or explicit. Appearance, clothes and gestures are all crucial to the public display we intend to make, but sometimes the information presented may inadvertently reveal more about a person than the information directly or intentionally given. We may 'give off' information which we do not quite intend, for example, the nervous interview candidate who twists his fingers is unintentionally 'giving off' an impression of anxiety whilst attempting to give a confident performance.

  Through presenting themselves in particular roles individuals develop identities. Goffman admits that the roles available for us to adopt are not unlimited. We are constrained by the range of social roles available in a particular society at a particular time and we are constrained by the part or the **script** in the play, which we are performing. Actors in a play cannot act out any old part that they had played in former stage productions and they cannot just say what they like. They have to speak the lines written. "However, even if the roles are written we can improvise and interpret our roles, although there are constraints" (Woodward 2000 p.14)

  But note, Goffman always reminded his readers that the stage image of the presentation of self in everyday life is just a productive metaphor, in order to get analytical insight into the almost unconscious, "seen but unnoticed" (Harold Garfinkel 1967), processes of the actor to present her- or himself to others. Of course there is a qualitative difference between the script-controlled real (professional or lay) stage play and the vicissitudes of everyday interaction and handling one's going concerns and personal affairs in it. Play-acting in the strict sense is a very special type of endeavour for which one must cross the social frame of stage acting in order to enter the inner world of drama – leaving the everyday world of existence behind oneself in one's own imagination -, but at the same time one must to do it with the work means of mundane activities; e.g. one has to be concerned to speak up in order that the audience can hear you, one has to take various bodily postures in order that one's enactment is suited to present the character you have to play-act, etc. (Goffman discussed all this beautifully in "Frame Analysis" 1974.) Instead, action and interaction in the everyday world of existence is very serious – it is not just a playful symbol for something else -; it can always happen that you "give off" something from yourself, which you did not want to convey to somebody else (see the last paragraph), or you could even fall out of your adopted official role, and there are always backstage situations, where you don't feel forced to show off to somebody else. In addition, the range of possibilities to show off

to yourself is normally quite limited; since you always have in front of your own eyes all your unsuccessful attempts to handle things, all of your own failures and all of your suffering in your life history up to now, even if they might be partially faded out off your awareness.

- **Sigmund Freud: The Unconscious**.
  Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory gives some insight into the way in which mechanisms of which we might not be consciously aware, determine our identities. Freud argued that people possess an **unconscious mind,** which contained repressed feelings and desires, which they are not aware of. Many of these are concerned with pleasure seeking and sexuality. According to Freud, to develop into a psychologically well-balanced adult, the child needs to learn to control these desires and learn to identify with the same-sex parent. Childhood experiences are vital for the development of identities in adulthood. The identity positions, which we take up, may be the result of unconscious feelings, which we may try to rationalise but which we do not know for sure. We bring childhood experiences, even those about which we are not conscious, to the decisions we make as adults. Identity is thus constructed by the past as well as through the present.

    For a professional counsellor, it is quite often difficult to find out about unconscious tendencies in the minds of clients. But through listening to autobiographical narratives (or even through reading the respective transcripts) the professional counsellor can easily detect signs of fading-out difficult, hurting, painful or shameful experiences in the life history of the client. Those signs are vague textual passages, strange textual discrepancies or even contradictions, abounding textual self-corrections and hesitation pauses and persistent attempts to rationalise and legitimise one's activities or non-activities. Most of these textual phenomena are very much conditioned by biographical processes and could reach back to childhood difficulties, which Sigmund Freud was talking about, e.g., on the one hand, obstinate dispositions to get seduced by promising incentives which you know yourself to be indulgent to, but which stubbornly turn out to harm you, or on the other hand, dispositions to get hurt by seemingly harmless activities of interaction partners known to you as benevolent.

Primary and Secondary Identities

It is widely agreed that there are **primary identities** acquired in childhood – gender or ethnicity, for example – that are relatively durable. Even these can be changed, as trans-sexuals will attest (Garfinkel 1967a; Morris 1974). In later life, there may be important moments of transition in identity, as in the process of moving from childhood to adulthood. There may be numerous other transitions involving the acquisition of **secondary identities**, such as changing occupations, becoming a parent or even moving house. All these involve alterations in the individual's sense of what kind of person she or he is. They also involve a process of **negotiation** (Mead 1934, Strauss 1978) between the self and external agencies. Someone who is a Muslim, for example, has that identity confirmed in constant negotiation between his or her sense of being a Muslim and others' definition of what that means.

Fluid, Fragmented and Fractured Identities

Many commentators argue that identities are more fluid in contemporary societies. People can change identities over their lifetime. They can choose who they want to be in a society in which traditional loyalties are breaking down. In the recent past, individuals would have had a number of central elements to the construction of their identity – family, locality,

nation, social class, ethnicity, gender. However, modern or post-modern societies introduce more sources of identity, which crosscut these, producing a more complex pattern of identity and belonging. For example, there is more geographical mobility, with the result that individuals lose their ties to locality and family. Globalisation and supra-national political communities (like the European Union) might undermine the sense of nationhood. (On the other hand nationhood might become a symbolic shelter against all the vicissitudes and strange forces of globalisation, although the powerful economic changes involved in globalisation tend to transgress national barriers.) Large social class formations break up. Identities based upon a multiplicity of lifestyles come to be important. According to Bauman (1996) identity has become simply a matter of choices and not even choices that are necessarily consistent or regular. Individuals can change – following Bauman - their identity as and when they choose. Others (Woodward 2000) believe that there is evidence of increased uncertainty over identities and there is increasing choice and fluidity in the construction of identity, but nevertheless there are still strong structural constraints which restrict and constrain people's choices. (There are even new ones, e.g. the paralysing conditions of mass and long-term unemployment.) In addition, there is *pressure* to choose one's own unique individual life course in order to be able to function as a consistent and expected social and personal identity in society whose   institutional orders and social milieus more and more require the *authenticity and responsibility* of individual actors (Kohl 1986). There also is the pressure to juggle between alternative future life courses in order to *calculate and minimise the risks* that structurally come into the planning of one's future life through the impact of the complexity of late modern globalised society and the task of living one's own unique individual life history and developing one's own individualized personal identity. (Giddens 1991; Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994).

   According to Jenkins (1996) identity remains rooted in social experience and the membership of social groups, and it is not something that can just be changed at will. Harriet Bradley (1997) argues that in contemporary societies identities are becoming fragmented and she raises the notion of '**fractured identities'**. People might lack a single identity that overarches all others. Nevertheless, even fractured identities are still essentially social. According to Bradley, while there is an element of choice over identity this is not as great as post modernists believe. As Bradley says "few of us can, as yet, choose to be English, male and middle class if we were born Indian, female and working class" (Bradley 1997). To Bradley, the fracturing of identities is not new. There have always been divisions between and within different sources of identity, which have made it possible for individuals to have fractured identities. However, according to Bradley, recent changes in society (social, economic and cultural) have led to increased fragmentation and people have become more aware of the multiple sources of identity open to them.

Summary

The concept of identity raises fundamental questions about how individuals fit into the community and the social world and how identity can be seen as the interface between subjective positions and social and cultural situations. Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others as well as to the world in which we live, and of what is personally unique about ourselves. In particular the concept of biographical identity deals with the relationship between the vicissitudes of one's life history and the question of the consistency of the personal self. The later is very much related to activities of explicit or implicit autobiographical narration. Some of these issues, especially questions of identity change and identity crisis and its working through by means of autobiographical story telling, will be further explored in the following section.

4 Narratives of Identity

As has been noted, identities are not totally fixed attributes of individuals. The identities that people see as salient vary according to the particular situations they find themselves in. People have a stock of identities, on which they can and do draw as seems appropriate. Identities are multiple, diverse and constantly shifting. However, not all aspects of identity are completely negotiable. Primary identities are more stable and underpin the more shifting and transient secondary identities, and some secondary identities may be particularly salient and shape the ways in which individuals orient, construct and present themselves in a range of situations, e.g. in the realm of occupational work. Nevertheless, the fundamental flexibility of identities must be acknowledged. – The finding-out of, the making-out of, the understanding of, the orientation towards, the construction of, the interpretation of, as well as the change of identities of oneself and of others is very much linked to personal narratives of remarkable event constellations one was involved in and to the personal experiences connected with them. There are two social science perspectives towards the social and biographical function of personal narratives connected with one's own life history.

A) The situational perspective

A major strand of recent work on identity involves the claim that the production of identities must be seen in relation to the **narratives** that people construct to account for their actions, problem involvements and courses of life. People give accounts and explanations for their actions, problem involvements and courses of life, and in doing so, construct and reconstruct their own biographies, drawing on their memories (Garden and Gerden 1983; Gerden 1994). Such accounts and explanations draw on a cultural stock of acceptable explanations, many of which tend to have a standardised form.

A range of character types and patterns of motivation are to be found in the culture of any society. These allow people to construct stories with characteristic plots that others will recognise and see as acceptable accounts of their behaviour. These narratives shape their future action and the likely reactions of others. Narratives are, in part, self-conscious attempts to create continuity and coherence in personal experiences, but they may shift in response to the varying situations in which people find themselves. There is no 'real' identity in mundane interactions of the everyday world of existence, but when people do succeed in producing a coherent account of their 'true' identity in those mundane interactive encounters, this is a consequence of their narrative success and their ability to persuade themselves and others of this 'truth'.

People can, then, present themselves in varying ways through the appropriate use of narratives. This may vary depending on the form of communication. Forms of communication at a distance – letter, telephone and email – allow people to escape some of the constraints of face-to-face encounters and to present themselves in alternative ways. For example, it is possible to say things in writing that may be very difficult to say in person. Internet communication has increased this greatly and opens up new possibilities of self-presentation where people can engage in 'identity play' and try out an identity before presenting it in face-to-face situations.

B) The long-term biographical perspective

There is another mayor strand of research work on the function of narratives of personal experiences in relationship to the understanding and construction of coherence of one's

own personal identity. There are severely critical life situations, in which a person must come to terms with serious problems which happened in her or his life and/or which are still going on, e.g. a life endangering accident, an incisive chronic illness, a situation of sudden or long-term unemployment, a situation of a new inner development or learning which causes new and as yet unanswerable questions regarding one's own future course of orientation, identity unfolding, partnership, social relationships, work style, etc.. The critical life situation is experienced as a condition, which could destroy or has already destroyed the consistency of one's own biographical identity as built-up over a long time. A severe chronic disease or a sudden body paralysis conditioned by an accident could cause such a critical life situation and put into question the consistency of one's biographical identity up to now. Another condition for such a severe life crisis which puts into question one's biographical identity could be unexpected unemployment or long-term unemployment after depressing experiences of turned-down applications and/or the cutting-off of assistance payments. The life crisis could be even harder if both conditions come together. The afflicted person, as well as their life partner, family members and friends, has to come to terms with it, and the basic means for this is autobiographical narration.

Social science literature has mainly dealt with this type of biographical reconstruction and the involved autobiographical story telling through qualitative research in the field of medical sociology. In their important book "Unending Work and Care. Managing Chronic Illness at Home" (1988) Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss state: "When severe chronic illness occurs, it breaks into the stream of biographical time, interrupting and possibly forever changing past performances from those of the present and the future. Accordingly, time conceptions are likely to be altered for dealing with and taking into consideration these changes. (Who am I now and will be is not who I was and thought I would be.) New biographical projections that correspond with the trajectory projections [i.e., the ideas the afflicted person has about the course of her or his illness and/or her or his other kind of problem constellation] must be arrived at." (Corbin & Strauss 1988: 61)

Corbin and Strauss stress the implication of the loss of self that could be connected with such a central life crisis caused by the encroachment or unfolding of a severe chronic illness: "When people are unable to complete actions enabling them to carry out tasks associated with various aspects of the self (whether inability to perform as a teacher or "normal" father or even to carry out the activities of daily living), then certain aspects of the self become "lost". Since the integration of these various aspects of the self forms the more inclusive self, or identity, with that loss comes an accompanying sense of loss of wholeness." (Corbin & Strauss 1988: 65)

Corbin and Strauss make clear, that the most basic means for working on this loss of self are mutual forward and backward biographical reviews (as one version of ideational processes in the understanding of George Herbert Mead (1932:76), who we mentioned already): "There are accounting reviews, among them a self assessment and evaluation of past failures and successes in life, failures that can no longer be made right. Another type of accounting involves taking stock of strengths and weaknesses in order to plan the resources needed for the long struggle ahead. There are also single flashbacks, momentary remembrances of past events that pass through one's mind, such as those that sometimes happen when a still-conscious person is being wheeled into the surgery. There are biographical replays of important biographical events, such as childhood scenes involving oneself, parents or others. And there are future forecasts, such as projecting oneself as confined to a wheelchair in the years ahead." (Corbin & Strauss 1988: 70-71)

Compared with the first mentioned type of research on narratives of personal experiences, it is clear that the use of this review-type of narratives of personal experiences dealing with the consequences of decisive life crisis situations has basically nothing to do with showing-off, with selling one's still unquestioned previous biographical identity and

role identities to others and to oneself. There is basically no rationalization, neutralization and legitimising involved, since the predicament is too serious for all types of constructing facades. The whole biographical identity has been questioned or even destroyed by that central life crisis, and therefore the question of a new or at least systematically reconstructed biographical identity comes up, which at the same time is consistent with the present life conditions, the expectations of the changed outlook into one's future life and the experiences of one's past life history. The narrative accounts are not basically focused on mundane interaction episodes of daily life, which could cause doubts especially for others and partially for oneself about one's still powerfully existing self-presentation and self-conception; instead, they are focussed on the whole life history and life course, since the central life crisis (e.g., caused by severe illness or unemployment with long-term gloomy auspices, or both as in cases of vocational rehabilitation) is putting the sight and interpretation of one's whole life history up to now and one's previous biographical identity into question; a review of ones whole life and not just of certain episodes now becomes pivotal.

The desired product of such a biographical review would be a new conception of one's biographical identity. There are two features of it:

- The first is the systematic re-evaluation of one's biographical past and the integration of the latter into one's newly developing self-understanding, including the projection of one's personal future. This basically means to detect or dig-out important productive features and auspices of ones former life from old remembrances, which are not yet understood in this sense. These newly detected features and auspices could then be basic construction elements for a new biographical identity conception. The necessary precondition for this new biographical self-conception is the partial re-casting and re-interpretation of one's own biographical past in the context of a newly crystallizing self-historical shape of one's own life and personal identity. "Self-historical shape" means that the outlook on one's personal life is formed by an overall "grand narration" of oneself and by oneself, which productively combines one's past, one's present and one's future perspectives. The self-historical shape is the evolving ego- and/or we-perspective of being entangled in one's own life history with its consequences and forecasts (Schapp 2004). Of course, this new self-historical shape must take into account the experiential facts of the former life – seen by oneself and partially by significant others, too. These experiential facts of former life of the afflicted person exert a factual and mental pressure on her or his remembrance, on her or his focussing of awareness and on her or his interpretation and evaluation; therefore the experiential facts cannot be circumvented or faded-out in the course of re-casting one's biographical past without severe personal detriment.
- The other aspect of the new biographical identity relates to necessary basic assumptions of the afflicted person about her- or himself regarding the ability to efficiently act and/or work on the predicament and the involved problems. These are assumptions about the authenticity and solidity of one's own biographical identity. More specifically these assumptions consist of the following beliefs: that the mode of one's experience, of one's interpretation, of one's evaluation and of one's problem solving is realistic and rational and can be demonstrated to anybody to be reasonable; that there is security of expectation regarding the consistency of one's biographical identity in present, future and revised past; that there is enough personal agency and ability to handle one's serious problems connected with that incisive life crisis; that the state of one's own body and its health will be sufficient to deal with the upcoming life and the involved difficulties (this is the belief in the dependability of the new developed biographical body conception; this belief refers to "conceptions of self (identity) arising directly or

indirectly through body, as they evolve over the course of biographical time" – Corbin & Strauss 1988: 52); as well as the belief that envisioned future biographical projects are productive, sensible, and manageable. The gist of all these basic assumptions is the belief in the essential meta-stability and essentially realistic empirical groundedness of one's own biographical identity, although, at the same time, one knows about the permanent small changes of one's personal identity by undergoing new experiences and by just growing older and about the dramatic changes due to central life crises (Strauss 1993:32 and especially 44-45). The central belief in the meta-stability of biographical identity and in its essential empirical groundedness (its realistic character), although there are all these smaller and bigger changes of the (experiential and emotional) inner and (event-caused "factual") outer state of one's identity, is founded on the consciousness of the self-historical shape of one's own biographical identity and on the self-evident awareness of being entangled within one's own life history with all its constraints of consistency.

The latter consciousness of the self-historical shape of one's own biographical identity is only possible on the basis of narratives of personal experiences that explicitly consider the whole of one's life history. Explicit autobiographical narratives have not to recapitulate the whole life history of the afflicted person, but they must deal with the before and the afterwards of the central life crisis and must realize that both parts of the personal life history belong together – even if the experiential content and the images (and possibly even the involved biographical value orientations) might be juxtaposed in an irreconcilable contrast set. Of course, the recapitulation of the whole life history in an overall autobiographical narrative might be immensely helpful in realizing or even reconstructing the self-historical shape of one's own biographical identity.

Conclusion on the two types of studies regarding situational and long-term narratives of personal experiences

Two strands of social science discussion dealing with narratives of identity have been identified. The importance of the first strand of research on situational narratives of personal experiences (basically stemming from the traditions of enthnomethodology and of Goffman) should not be denigrated. As we already know from the teachings of George Herbert Mead, the self is constructed by the interface of the me-pictures, we assume others would have about our own presentations and activities, the productivity of the I as our personal energy to produce our activities and to change ourselves and the reflexive activity of bringing the two together comparing them and developing a conscious image of ourselves. We attempt to influence the me-pictures of our interaction partners and especially significant others by the rationalistic short-term stories that should account for and explain doubtful or difficult episodes of our life. This is important not only for the images our interaction partners have about us but of our own belief in the rationality and acceptability of our identity or identities. The small narratives of mundane encounters basically stabilize the present overall biographical identity. But many detrimental or even disastrous mundane encounters and the neutralizing stories about them step-by-step and without our conceptual knowledge can undermine our biographical identity and could cause – triggered by an additional detrimental event of mundane encounters – a central life crisis. In such cases the short-term episodic narratives of actors and sufferers in everyday interaction are of implicitly autobiographical import. The importance of the second strand of social science dealing with narratives of personal experiences (basically stemming from the tradition of the Chicago Sociology and its academic child Symbolic Interactionism) is connected with the analysis of the long-term consistency of the self, which – to remain in

the theoretical frame of reference of George Herbert Mead - is endangered by the discrepancies of the various me-pictures assumed by myself and/or to be held by others about myself or of different impulses of the I that turn out to falsify one's me-pictures or of different self-conscious conceptions of the self generated in reaction to those falsifications of me-pictures by impulses of the I or to the impact of central crisis event constellations on one's life history. For the working on central life crises explicit autobiographical narration is extremely important. Since the sense of inner biographical time and consistency has been lost, it is the first step of *biographical work* in order to restore biographical identity, which was impaired or even destroyed through a central life crisis, e- g. through a mutilating accident, a severe chronic illness or a sudden and/or long term unemployment.

5 Biographical work as central avenue for developing one's own biographical identity

Biographical work follows up the task of reconciling the expectations and urgencies of social differences and resulting otherness (the "reality principle") on the one hand and the preconditions and the logic of production for constructing a unique personal self (the "creativity and self-empowerment principle") on the other. The product will be a biographical identity that is both realistic and permanently striving for personal autonomy. For this it is important to learn to see oneself as a developing personal and social entity that matters and to realize that it makes a big difference whether one focuses on that development or not: that you try to support it if it seems to be "benign", or to stop it, if it seems to be "detrimental"; and to understand that, at the beginning, you don't really know the quality and the dynamics of the unfolding of that development and that therefore you have to find out about it.

The task of finding out basically means to tell – at least in some bits - one's own life history. Through at least partial autobiographical narration to significant others (who are important for one's own identity development and biographical decisions), to professional counsellors and/or to oneself (the latter, of course, is done in an inner conversation with oneself) one understands that it is important to see the self-historical shape of one's own biography and identity unfolding; one expresses to oneself what are possible overarching features of one's life; and how they are linked to each other in that overall self-historical shape of one's own biographical identity. At the same time extempore autobiographical story telling means to realize the combination of real socio-biographical process structures one has been involved in and partially still is involved in within the sequence and competition of biographical process structures of biographical action schemes, of trajectories of suffering, of institutional expectation patterns, especially careers, and of biographical metamorphosis developments. Through a biographical action scheme a person attempts to intentionally shape the course of her or his life. Conditioned by a trajectory of suffering a person is not capable of actively shaping her or his own life anymore, since they can only react to overwhelming outer events, and in the course of their suffering the afflicted person becomes strange to themselves.. Via an institutional expectation pattern a person follows up institutionally shaped and normatively defined courses of life, e.g. careers in organizations or the family life cycle that starts and shapes family life in the first part of adulthood. By creative metamorphoses of biographical identity a new important inner development is starting in one's biography. This might be miraculous and irritating in the beginning, since it is new, and that may initially prohibit one's pertinent competencies and ability to find out what the very quality of it might be. One has to realize how to follow up and to work on (strengthening or fighting) each of the of the four types of general biographical process structures, and one has additionally to realize their factual and

potential interconnections in order that one can find out about the realistic overall shape of one's biography. Biographical work also is concerned with the potentials of getting distracted from that self-historical shape and of getting personally hurt (e. g. by the breakdown of favourable social and societal conditions, by discrepancies and disappointments in significant social relationships, by failures to follow up one's own life expectations or those of others, by getting disoriented through unrealistic, personally unfitting, trap-like competing life orientations) and on social forces that hinder the unhampered unfolding of the self historical shape of one's biographical identity. For example, by being forced to experience detrimental social categorization resulting in systematic stigmatisation and being set apart, by getting seriously ill, by losing one's job position or by not being able to practice one's former occupation anymore.. Biographical work attempts to find out how to hinder those barriers and forces and/or how to circumvent them or push back on them in order that one can still go on with the unfolding of the self-historical shape of one's own biography or to develop a realistic, and at the same time, promising new one using the resources of biographical processes one has factually been involved in up to now.

Biographical work is most important in incisive crisis situations of one's life, e.g. the life situation after a mutilating accident, the break-out or the sudden fast unfolding of a severe chronic illness, the expected loss of one's occupation or the paralysing impact of a new and difficult experience of being turned down and/or stigmatised in a job application process or of being controlled and criticised by a job centre for not being successful in getting new work. Regarding the crisis experience of the outbreak of a severe chronic illness or the affliction by a mutilating accident Corbin and Strauss (1988) provided a conceptual dimensionalisation of biographical work. According to Corbin and Strauss (1988: 68) biographical work of "putting life back together again" after such an outbreak or accident consists of four processes:

"(1) contextualizing (incorporating the illness trajectory into biography), (2) coming to terms (arriving at some degree of understanding and acceptance of the biographical consequences of actual or potential failed performances [of the body – addition by the authors of this module]), (3) reconstituting identity (reintegrating identity into a new conceptualisation of wholeness around the limitations in performance), and (4) recasting biography (giving new directions to biography)".

The processes analysed by Corbin and Strauss also hold for life crises that are not conditioned by severe chronic illnesses or mutilating accidents. Therefore it is appropriate to consider them in more detail.

The *contextualization* process consists of the following activities: Firstly there must be an understanding that the severe problem, e.g. unemployment, which has caused the incisive life crisis, is an integral part of one's own life. For the impact of an unexpected unemployment crisis this would mean that it is detrimental to hide the unemployment from one's significant others, to try to fade out its long-term consequences from one's own awareness or to persuade oneself that it doesn't change one's biographical outlook and capabilities. Secondly there must be a search and discovery of what remains of one's own occupational knowledge, capabilities and orientations and what has now become valueless or will be lost because of the lack of work routine and the disconnection from work experiences, and what must be totally changed in order to become usable again in a new work position. Thirdly one has to find out about the new limitations of ones own occupational action capacity (agency) because of the paralysing effect of unemployment: e.g., the loss of the sense of the rapid course of work time, the loss of the work-organizational order of the daily time schedule as well as the loss of trust in one's own future work capacities. Fourthly one must find out what will still be possible alternatives and strategies of managing future occupational life (searching for a new job in the same or

in a different trade or even work area, searching for a re-training for a different occupation, concentrating on voluntary work, etc.).

The process of *coming to terms* consists of the following activities: Firstly one has to find out the facts of impairments caused by the central life problem; for example, unexpected unemployment and accept them. Secondly, one must understand the mechanisms of their impact on one's general life situation and one's future possibilities and accept them as new powerful conditions of ones life. This could include the loss of capability to shape interaction situations and to carry through complex actions schemes, or the feeling of being stigmatised and the connected tendency of circumventing personal encounters and isolating oneself. Thirdly one must find out what are the consequences of the impairment caused by the central life problem for the life situation of partners, family and other significant others. For example, upcoming financial problems, the insecurity of the educational life course expectations of children, the general emotional climate in the family, etc. as well as understanding their mutual impact on each other possibly giving rise to a 'cumulative mess'.

The process of *reconstituting identity* consists of the following activities: Firstly one must redefine the impaired parts of one's personal identity features and capacities. In the case of the impact of severe chronic illness this means the redefinition or the new generation of a biographical body conception, e.g., not being able to work as a dancer anymore but being still perfectly fit to do mental choreographic work. In the case of the impact of unexpected or long-term unemployment this means the redefinition or the new generation of impaired occupational identity features, i. e. the redefinition of the reduced special or even general, occupational action capacity. The reduction is caused by the devaluation of one's occupational knowledge and routines, the loss of analytical equipment, the impairment of the sense for occupational time and of trust in occupational interaction, as well as the questioning of the belief in oneself as an efficient occupational worker. Secondly one must change one's value orientation regarding certain or all bodily performances (in the case of an illness problem) or occupational performances (in the case of an unemployment problem) For example, in the case of the unemployment of a man, who could not continue with his occupation as a plumber because of a severe chronic illness, this could involve substituting the value orientation of mental paper work as held within the occupational world of service organizations, for the value orientation of manual work held within the culture of the occupational world of artisan work. Thirdly one must recast one's biographical past and one's personal future in an incipient new self-historical shape of biographical identity. This could involve transcending the negative definition of the impairment as a trajectory of suffering into a re-interpretation of it as a chance for the metamorphosis of occupational identity, e.g. changing from the identity from manual worker to the identity of organizational or even mental worker. Fourthly there must be a re-focusing of one's biographical and daily orientation. Existing capabilities and practices must be positively re-evaluated and there must be a shift from one realm of activities to another. In the case of chronic illness this may involve a shift from bodily activities to mental substitutes or in the case of occupational work a shift from manual work to mental work. Fifthly assisting devises or support services can be used and if practicable, these have to be emotionally accepted and deployed.

The process of *recasting of biography* consists of the following activities: Firstly one must work on a stable and at the same time flexible structure of the new self-historical shape of ones biographical identity envisioned in the course of reconstituting identity. This will basically be done by explicit autobiographical story telling and by reflection about the recapitulated experiences. In the case of the unemployed young plumber, used as an example above, he could realize by autobiographical narration that he had more or less been forced into a plumber apprenticeship without his inner acceptance, and living with this

unloved occupation for many years meant that he never attempted to find out about his real interests, talents and potentials for occupational self-identification. Being so used to this occupational situation he did not think about it at all, and only by autobiographical story telling in reaction to, and working through, his double predicament of becoming chronically ill and being out of work, does he start to think about this former fading out or even self-delusion. This is the beginning of the biographical work of the recasting of his occupational past as a building block of the new self-historical shape of his biographical identity. Secondly there is the final overall assessment of the new impossibilities, the still existing possibilities, and the new possibilities of biographical unfolding to be followed up. Thirdly there is the focus on the control of the dynamics of the difficulties connected with the central life problem. In the case of chronic illness this means control of the health predicament and the attempt to halt the further unfolding of the chronic disease. In the case of unemployment this could mean delaying the total decline of occupational action capacities by voluntary work, by a strict time schedule for the management of one's daily life and/or by searching for personal contributions for losing one's occupation.

    Corbin and Strauss developed their four categories of biographical work by focussing on severe chronic illness and the impairments of the overall life of afflicted persons and their spouses, caused by it. Naturally they would not focus on biographical difficulties which would have been caused by other central life problems. They assume that at the onset of chronic illness there already exists a solid sense of biographical identity. But looking at persons in vocational rehabilitation situations, one has to realize that quite often a solid sense for the existence and importance of one's own identity development is missing. In addition, amongst this group of afflicted persons quite often an analytical sensibility regarding the mechanisms of both the retardation of identity development, and the support of identity development is absent. Thirdly, since Corbin and Strauss were dealing with a basically biologically conditioned predicament, they did not take into account that two typical biographical problems involved in the predicament of persons in life situations of vocational rehabilitation are basically contributed – though conditioned by social constraints and socialization processes of society - by the afflicted persons themselves: the first by their lack of differentiation between the time schedule, the social categorizations and the expectations of work institutions and agencies of vocational education on the one hand, and those of one's own, on the other.   The second by the incapacity to realize, to analyse and to reflect on one's biographical tendencies – via personal vulnerability dispositions - to fall into the traps of central life problems, e. g. losing one's work position. – In then following section we will especially deal with the difficulties, importance and development of biographical work of clients of vocational counselling and with the question, how it can be encouraged and supported by professional counsellors.

6 Biographical Counselling in Vocational Rehabilitation Situations

We must take into account that for many individuals occupational work is of central biographical importance in their life and especially for the unfolding of their personal biographical identity. Ironically this is particularly true for individuals who have lost their occupational position. It might be even more important for persons who have lost part of their work ability by a severe chronic illness or a mutilating accident. Generally speaking, by losing the ability to work in one's position or general occupation, life has lost one of its most important features and this could cause a systematic general disorientation of one's present life and/or general fatigue, or even a systematic paralysis penetrating all spheres of one's non-occupational life (Heinemeier 1991). However, and generally speaking again, it can be observed that non-occupational features of one's present life and biographical

identity and, in addition, features of biographical identity coming out of almost forgotten occupational experiences in one's earlier life can gain a central importance of finding, taking and following up a new road to occupational life. - We therefore must realize that the central concern on the overall life history of the client and on the (unrestrained or restrained) unfolding of her or his biographical identity can be of utmost importance in vocational rehabilitation counselling. In vocational counselling that integrates the biographies of clients into its analytic concern, the task of finding out and implementing new approaches to support their occupational developments must be emphatically understood as a focus on true biographical counselling work regarding the personal identity development of clients.

For the analysis of biographical counselling in vocational rehabilitation situations we might differentiate between the following general categories of the professional's tasks and her or his client:

Tasks of Biographical Counselling in Rehabilitation Situations

(a) Reminding about the treasure of personal identity: checking for the possibility of the non-existence or weakness of a client's sense for the value of uniqueness of her or his personal identity and its development; in such cases, sensitising the client towards the importance of her or his biographical identity is a pivotal task;

(b) Understanding overall biographical structuring: bringing out and considering the overall biographical structuring of the client with its specific process logic: the specific sequence, competition, hierarchy and overall combination of the four biographical process structures of biographical action schemes, trajectories of suffering, institutional expectation patterns and metamorphosis processes; focusing on trap situations with special scrutiny to detect the unfolding of trajectories of suffering;

(c) Reflecting on distractions from one's identity development and self-theoretical distortions: searching for and detecting the fading-out practices of the narrator regarding her or his personal experiences of severe suffering, of being stigmatised, ashamed and/or feeling guilty, of respective delusional redefinitions of biographical situations as well as rationalization attempts and legitimising activities for personal mistakes done by oneself and/or by significant others;

(d) Coming to terms: contextualizing and helping the client to come to terms with her or his predicament, i.e., realizing and accepting the kind and the extent of impairments and systematic difficulties caused by her or his central life problem(s) such as unemployment and/or chronic illness;

(e) Realizing one's personal conditioning: finding out about and letting the client realize her or his specific biographical resources and basic positions as well as her or his vulnerability dispositions; and finally:

(f) Belief in one's own action capacity: encouraging the client to develop a sound belief in her or his action capacity to work on the difficult predicament brought into her or his present life through one or more central life problem(s).

All the just listed tasks of biographical work must essentially be truly accomplished by the client her- or himself. The partial role of the professional rehabilitation counsellor is only to focus the client on these tasks and enable her or him to understand them and circumspectly follow them up. It would be detrimental for the unfolding of the problem handling capacity of the client, her or his identity development and her or his biographical work, if the professional counsellor would essentially work on the tasks of biographical work alone, would dominate the client's decision or even force the client to focus and take up special tasks (perhaps, in addition, even in a certain sequential order – cf. Riemann 2000: pp. 68-74). On the other hand, the client is quite often in a very difficult personal cognitive and

emotional situation, where she or he needs incentive, a carefully mirroring listener, analytical scrutiny, counsel, encouragement and sometimes even concrete material and/or organizational help. Therefore, the counsellor cannot take the simple position just to request: "Do something!" This would quite often discourage the client, since she or he doesn't have the insight and the biographical power (and quite often the material, technical and/or organizational means) to tackle the problem.

An integrative vocational counsellor must therefore follow up two combined tasks: She or he must enhance the client's own capacity for self-exploration and self understanding, and this is without any alternative. In addition she or he might cautiously embark on her or his own search for the deeper problem conditions and constellation of the predicament the client is in, for her or his vulnerability dispositions as well as biographical resources, vague biographical ideas and mundane (hobby type) interests, since the self-insight of the client might be too vague and the time span for her or his thoroughgoing autonomous problem analysis and self-exploration too short. Of course, the professional counsellor's biographical search has to be negotiated with and approved by the client. And after the counsellor's careful and circumspect presentation of her or his incipient findings to the client – where the professional must take the personal weaknesses of the client into account to be able to stand the results of her or his analysis – the latter has to consider, to interpret, to understand, to assess, eventually to (partially) reject, to correct and to improve the analytical results of the former or take it as an argumentative incentive for her or his own intensified analysis. The client should be totally free to accept or to reject the analysis of the professional counsellor. In any case, the best way of integrative (biographical) counselling is that the counsellor strengthens the analytical power of the client to do her or his own analysis of the central problem constellation and its biographical implications. The work the professional rehabilitation counsellor must do is shaped by the general intervention patterns of counselling (including the data collection and the analysis of the problem constellation as well as including scrutinizing ways of working on those problems), education (enabling learning, self-reflection, self-criticism and identity metamorphosis); and classical social work help of planning and assisting in shaping and stabilizing the life situation of the client (Richmond 1922).

In the following section we would like to make the formulated list of joint tasks for the client and the counsellor a bit more explicit:

(a) Reminder of the treasure of personal identity:
Firstly, the counsellor must check the possibility of the non-existence or weakness of a client's sense for the value of uniqueness of personal identity and its development. This is the case in the life situation of Mr. Funke, whose interview we already introduced as an empirical example. After having been kicked out of the elite sports school, Bernd Funke did not realize that this would systematically harm his identity development. In his main autobiographical narrative, Mr. Funke is only able to use vague descriptions about his inner state and inner change in this very severe trajectory predicament: "incisive things of great importance which I had there." (Funke-interview, page 2, line 20); "and eh . was alone (-) .well that was actually a really deep low point let me say that" (page 3, lines 8 and). In the questioning part of the interview the narrator Mr. Funke remembers that he actually felt part of the precipitation of the incipient trajectory after having been kicked out of the elite sports school: "that was all of a sudden ('). that was like struck by lightening (')+. everything at once (-)." (page 10, lines 41 and 42), but that he then did not realize what it really meant for his identity development. This non-realization becomes obvious in the following formulations, when the narrator Mr. Funke is talking about when the opaque decision was forcibly imposed on him, regarding the question of his apprenticeship as plumber and machine fitter: "I' can't remember yet on that, although it was actually fixed already, what

kind of occupation I do (,) well I didn't have much of a choice right (?)" (page 10, line 51 up to page 11, line 1). And when he is asked by the interviewer whether he would have been reflecting on his being dumped in the unloved apprenticeship ("did you have any ideas for yourself at all what you want to do (?)" – page 11, lines 31 and 32), he answers: "no not at all. … I couldn't think of anything. My head was totally empty. (') … ehm. there haven't been any ideas (,). nothing (,)" (page 11, lines 31 to 38). Looking at these quotations it might become clear, that Mr. Funke did not develop a sense for his personal identity development during the period of his former trajectory predicament of having been forced into a self-alienating occupation. And even at the very beginning of the actually ongoing autobiographical narrative interview there is still the imprint of this former lack of awareness and reflective consciousness of personal identity. Only in the course of the actually ongoing and unfolding interview the informant's sense for his personal identity development becomes clearer step-by-step, as we can see, e.g., by how he formulates his realization of the former lack of his own awareness, regarding his missing and neglected identity development ("My head was totally empty.").

From empirical data like these we can draw the following conclusion: If there is such a lack of awareness of the importance of one's own identity development, the rehabilitation counsellor must attempt to entice the client to embark on autobiographical extempore narration as the most elementary step of autobiographical work. This extempore autobiographical story telling has the astounding effect to considerably raise the level of awareness regarding the importance of one's own biographical identity development. In the course of the ongoing narrative rendering the client gets an incipient deeper understanding of the mechanisms of difficult biographical process structures that were faded out before in her or his life and the respective rescue mechanisms. In the last part of his interview, Mr Funke can formulate the following deeper insight into the escalation of trap mechanisms of his trajectory of occupational self-alienation, of unemployment, being severely chronically ill and the rescue from it:

"9   that with the illness (`) . that was the (-) . . "well now you can (-)   jump (,)" like that . well that was a real
body blow (`) .
                    yea . yeah
                              well let me say that (-) . "well now you are down here and now you get even deeper . now it gets even deeper again" .
well it wasn't the end (,) . and of course that was of great
importance (,) . but I think that would/ everybody feels like that who is at some point in his life
                    yes
                         who had some status and all of a sudden you don't have it anymore .
because it is (-) . for whatever reasons
healthwise right (?) . it is really going downhill and that was well eh . well (-) . in that moment that was it didn't matter that everybody came up "oh well I am sorry for you" . .
pfhew . all of that just didn't bother me (,) . and that didn't interest me at all (,)
                    mhm
                              whereas I (-) . to that time
nothing interested me at all let me say that (,) . because you were pretty deep down there (,) . right (?)
                    yes . mhm
                              and eh (-) . as I said (`) . if that retraining wouldn't have come up (-) . . then eh . I believe I still would be down there (,) .
if nobody would have cared about that or nobody looked
33 after (-)."

(page 21, lines 9 to 33)

In the context of a lack of awareness of the value of one's own identity development, the client must also develop a special sense for the dangers of interchanging one's personal ("inner") and institutional ("outer") time schedule.

(b) Understanding the overall biographical structuring and especially focussing on trap situations:

Secondly, the counsellor has to assist the client to consider the overall biographical structuring of her or his life course and identity development with its sequence, competition, hierarchy and overall combination of the four biographical process structures of biographical action schemes, trajectories of suffering, institutional expectation patterns and metamorphoses by creative processes. The specific impact, i.e. the difficulties, the constraints and the creative dynamics of each of these biographical process structures and their joint conditioning of the present life situation of the client and her or his current overall biographical outlook should be scrutinized and reflected by both parties. Especially interesting might be the unfolding of a trajectory of suffering that results in a systematic trap situation the afflicted person is in. We could see such an instance already in dealing with the phenomenon of background construction more generally before using an example from the Funke interview (section 6 of this module). Young Bernd Funke doesn't realize the long-term impact on his life of his being forced into an apprenticeship for an unloved occupation. He can only dimly remember the "counselling" session of the job centre after having been removed from the elite sports school:

50   I've been to a consultation then in ehm . in the children and youth sports
51   school (-) . where then/ . ((faster till+)) I've can't
52   remember on that+ where actually it was already <u>fixed</u>
1   what kind of occupation I do (,) well I didn't have much of a choice right (?)
3   you have to imagine it like there are five envelopes and the first one who
4   gets one has <u>the best one</u> (-) . and ehm. It was …
8   like that. well I didn't have a <u>choice</u> there I had/ <u>wasn't even asked</u> (-).

(page 10, line 50 up to page 11, line 8)

Only in the course of his autobiographical rendering and especially by the insertion of the two background constructions, the narrator Mr. Funke realizes the overall impact of the trajectory of occupational self-alienation: that exactly by the superimposition of the unloved apprenticeship he did not learn and partially even unlearned to ask himself what would fit the development of his own biographical identity and what not. Additionally, through his narrative rendering Bernd Funke also understands that the "normality" impression of the career pattern of this apprenticeship could deceive him about what had really happened to him: that he had lost the red thread of his life course and identity development (or even more accurately: that he was systematically hindered to find it again) and that it seduced him to accept a phoney renormalization of his severe trajectory predicament. Now, during the ongoing autobiographical story telling, Mr. Funke understands that the biographical process structure of institutional expectation pattern of an apprenticeship career has concealed to him the basic feature of the unfolding of his biographical identity: of having been trapped within a self-alienating trajectory of forced occupational training, which neglected most potentials of his personal identity development.

All trap situations of a trajectory have quite a long pre-history, which the afflicted person also contributed to. In the case of the life history of Mr. Funke, this is his swift acceptance of the apprenticeship imposed on him by the job centre. Of course, one can "excuse" young Mr. Funke by demonstrating that he had never learned to ask himself what would be good

for his personal development. The career in the elite sports school was offered to him when he was quite young, and there was no consideration by adult significant others and teachers whether or not this would be fitting his personal potential of identity development (taking into regard his other talents than sport). And, of course, he was not counselled by anybody to ask himself such a complicated question. Only the institutional demand of the elite sports school was relevant to recruit for the cadre of a special branch of team sport that was meant to become nationally and internationally competitive.

(c) Reflecting on distractions from one's identity development and self-theoretical distortions:

Thirdly, the counsellor must assist the client as narrator and story carrier to search for and realize her or his negligence of lines of identity development, her or his fading-out practices, her or his delusional redefinitions of biographical situations, her or his rationalization attempts and legitimising activities. This task has to be focused by both parties in order to strengthen the client's sense for the reality principle and to support her or his fight against the distraction from the self-historical shape of her or his unfolding biographical identity.

The negligence of one's line of identity development might be more or less small and concealed. E.g., there is the case of the Polish lady Pola (interviewed and brought to our attention by the Polish team of our Leonardo project "INVITE"), who later faces long periods of unemployment. After attending the general (secondary) school in her rural village, she decides early on to attend an agricultural vocational school, since a girl friend goes there, too. At this time Pola knows already that the family will soon move to the big industrial city of Lodz, where there won't be agricultural jobs. In addition, after finishing general school, Pola would like to learn a craft like sewing (which would have fitted much better to the dominantly textile industry in Lodz; Pola later works in the Lodz textile industry as *unlearned* worker). Since it would have been necessary for such a craft apprenticeship to travel to Lodz or another urban region, and this would have meant to afford travel and accommodation costs, she didn't seriously consider her deeper personal wish what to become in terms of occupation. In her rural family there was no tradition for daughters to learn a complex occupation; instead, there was the expectation that they would marry early, which Pola was actually talked into by her mother after finishing her apprenticeship in the agricultural school. Pola remembers: "Later, basically after general school, following my friend's suggestion, because this school… aah didn't attract me too much perhaps, but following my friend's suggestion I went to the agricultural vocational school. Though I just knew that sooner or later we would move out from the village because father paid some money for flats … in the city, and we just waited for these flats. Basically I was interested in something else, so I thought about sewing." She adds in an explaining background construction: "So there in the country one had to travel […] to this vocational school. It was o.k. for the parents as there was a bus. It was free, and elsewhere to school I'd have to pay….. So everything was connected, so one can say, with money. […]" *(Pola interview of Lodz team, page 2, lines 6 to 14)* Later, after long periods of working as unlearned worker in the textile industry in Lodz and long phases of unemployment, Pola is yearning for a craft or artisan occupation, in which she could follow up her own artistic design ideas. (Later she attempts to become a hairdresser.) Her occupational life would probably have developed more satisfyingly, had she learnt a craft immediately after finishing general school. The decision for the agricultural school was not circumspect but almost self-understood if taking into account the attitude of the family towards the life courses of women, the uneducated state of the parents and their small belief in education, the weak material circumstances of the family and Pola's clinging to the example of her friend. But it was factually a distraction from the red thread of Pola's

identity development already, since she had originally developed other ideas for her further education. In the case of Bernd Funke there is the biographical action scheme of becoming a state athlete, but this is destroyed by the "outer" decision of his trainers to remove him from the cadre. Therefore in his case it is not possible to speak about a move of self-distraction. But his swift acceptance of the unloved apprenticeship can be seen as something similar.

There are many possibilities for self-theoretical distortions. Some can be just too intensive or too literal identifications with values of the educational tradition or of the intellectual history of science and higher learning (in the sense of "absolute morality"). In the case of Felix (Schütze 1994), who later becomes a famous construction engineer for the repair of medieval buildings, the adolescent Felix in grammar school believed in the Platonic concept of ideas and attempted to understand abstract cognitive concepts and operations like the mathematical calculus by an attitude of inner seeing and understanding. Whereas such a "visual" attitude to mathematics is still possible in grammar school, it becomes too difficult in university studies of mathematics and physics as major subjects. After he successfully passed the first level of exams after three years, Felix abandoned his studies since this type of learning by inner seeing became to exasperating for him. In two sessions of biographical counselling on the empirical base of his autobiographical extempore narrative he then had to realize that mathematics with its double face of inner seeing, on the one hand, and automatic algorithmic operations, on the other, was not only attractive but also dangerous for him, since he could be trapped in his futile attempt to understand the automatic algorithmic operations by inner seeing. Therefore - that was the outcome of the two sessions of biographical counselling - mathematics should not be the centre of his further studies, after returning to the university in the future. Instead, the learning, studying and testing of concrete operations for planning, shaping and managing material processes should be central in his future university study. The short term biographical counselling process produced the idea of a future study of construction engineering, and Felix' following-up of that idea was then factually very successful. In this case, the afflicted person, Felix, had to gain analytical distance to the Platonic concept of abstract learning by inner seeing, but at the same time find a way of still practicing it and making creative use of it without becoming trapped by it. Felix accomplished this through learning and following up the relatively concrete and material operations of construction engineering, which are combined with some mathematical procedures.

Other phenomena of self-theoretical distortions are beliefs in one's personal features that are seen by the client as strengths, although in fact they must be seen as weaknesses: e.g. Bernd Funke's belief that his attitude and capacity to personally identify with every required or even superimposed institutional task and his aptitude to carry it through were a moral virtue and show personal strength is in fact one of the central conditions for his undergoing a protracted trajectory course of occupational self-alienation, for he accepts the unloved plumber apprenticeship and remains in it without any protest. He, for example, states at the end of his interview:

50   but actually that was always like that (-).
51   I made every effort everywhere I liked to do everything then (,).
52   in my other fields of work too at that time (-). in the
53   steal construction or
1   as a plumber (-) . ehm . that was always a fulfilment for me (,).
4   But when it was over with that it was said then "so that's it (,) from (-) . now
on 5   it's done with". then a new thing came up (-) . you got to (….) again
(page 25, line 50 to page 26, line 5).
Of course, even in Mr. Funke's future, such a self-conception could become detrimental again, when he would be confronted with a task that wouldn't fit his biographical identity.

The counsellor should not formulate her or his detection of self-theoretical distortions of the client when the latter is not prepared for it, i.e. when she or he did not begin to raise and answer these questions her- or himself. Self-theoretical distortions can be part of the self-protective psychological defence mechanism of the client; they should not be touched in a non-therapeutic setting, when the client is neither inclined nor willing to delineate and tackle them. And even if the client is interested in her or his self-theoretical distortions, the counsellor must be very cautious regarding the question whether or not there is enough inner strength of the client to face her or his theoretical self-distortions.

(d) Coming to terms:
Fourthly, the counsellor must assist the client to contextualize and come to terms with, i.e., realize and accept, the kind and the extent of the impairment or predicament caused by her or his central life problem, e. g. the onset of her or his chronic disease or being out of work. E.g., Mr. Funke has to realize two central features of his double predicament of being chronically ill and of being unemployed: On the one hand, he has to realize that the necessity for a central change in his future occupational life is not just conditioned by the inability of his chronically ill body to carry through heavy manual work anymore, but in addition that he cannot use the social world categories and values of manual work in his further occupational life anymore. This means that educationally, i.e. socially and mentally, he has to enter social worlds of non-manual work, which are totally new for him, and to learn their unfamiliar categorizations and styles of thinking, planning, proceeding and evaluating. And, on the other hand, he has to realize that he did not learn to focus on the inevitable task of his own delineation and development of biographical identity, but that this task must be commenced right now and accomplished in a circumspect way. This also jointly includes the necessary ability to say "no" to institutionally requested tasks that do not fit the unfolding of his own line of biographical identity, as well as the necessary reflection about why he could not refute such alienating tasks in his former life up to now (referring to misconceptions about his own strengths and weaknesses dealing with his habit of super-identification with all sorts of occupational expectations).

The counsellor must then start to assist the client to reconstitute the self-historical shape of her or his biographical identity by the joint task of redefinition of her or his biographical body concept and/or action capacity and of her or his change of orientating value system and the social world(s) referred to. The first type of biographical work Mr. Funke had accomplished already when he entered the counselling process: after receiving the diagnosis he soon realized his bodily condition and started to re-define his biographical body concept. On the other hand, in the beginning of the counselling process the counsellor very much had to assist the second type of biographical work Bernd Funke still needed to accomplish: entering the new social world(s) of paper work and mental work and learning new systems of classification connected to it (them). - In addition, after having accomplished all this, the client still must learn to control the dynamics of the unfolding of her or his central life problem(s). In the case of Mr. Funke, this means both to realize and to monitor the further impact of his (controlled or progressive) chronic illness on his future life course, as well as to learn to understand and work through the specific dangers of his general attitude of over-identification with all types of alienating work tasks.

(e) Realizing one's personal conditioning:
Fifthly, the counsellor has to assist the client to analytically consider her or his biographical past, especially her or his specific biographical resources and basis positions as well as her or his vulnerability dispositions, i.e. the biographical proneness of getting hurt. The counsellor must also assist the client to make productive use of her or his insight into the

self-historical shape of her or his past in considering how to make use of biographical resources and basic positions and how to control vulnerability dispositions.

The task of depiction as well as of circumvention or working through of biographical vulnerability dispositions, i.e. dispositions of getting hurt, is quite complex. Both in the life of Pola and Bernd Funke there is the vulnerability disposition that they are prone not to focus or that they are even unable to focus on the red thread of their own biographical identity development, since either of them tend to think that their own life and biographical identity are not important at all. In addition, both Pola and Bernd Funke don't believe in their personal talents. Bernd Funke doesn't feel competent enough to compete with West German machine fitters, and this is due to his being forced into the unloved apprenticeship as fitter of heavy machinery, as we saw already. Therefore he doesn't move to West Germany after the breakdown of the East German heavy machinery industry. And Pola believes not to be gifted to academic learning in school, since in general school she normally earned bad marks, probably due to the systematic skipping of school hours, not doing her home work and learning at home and, in addition, not getting any help from her parents. Pola therefore doesn't have the courage to insist on an apprenticeship or vocational education of her own liking, and only much later can she focus on this inclination of her biographical identity towards work in a craft connected with creative design (in her case: glass painting and hairdressing), although up to now, at the time of the interview, she could not yet develop this into an occupational position.

Only later, in the vocational school, Pola gets a dim idea of her intellectual potential, when she experiences the curriculum of the agricultural vocational school as very easy. But even then she doesn't realize her academic talent, although there she is one of the best students even in foreign languages; instead she assumes that her new excellent achievement scores in the agricultural vocational school are just due to the repetition of the subjects of the former general school. And she vaguely remembers only in a background construction the fact that in general school she had been good in a test of the Russian language, but was seen by the teacher as having cheated the test, since the teacher assumed that a student with generally low achievement marks could not be good in the most difficult and prestigious academic subject: "So when I completed this vocational school […], it wasn't hard, because this was something like repetition from the last years of my general school, something like a reminder of all these, just 'cause normally subjects like Polish, Maths, Russian … such subjects even /// frankly speaking I did better in Russian than in Polish. … I even remember still at the general school it happened that I got a four in a test and the teacher told me that I had cheated. This hurt me very much, as it simply was impossible for me to get a four. …[The teacher had thought – appendix by the authors of this module] if I had bad marks in other subjects, it was impossible that I get a better mark just then. /// So what else, I came [almost or practically – addition by authors of this module] back to the general school again ((laughter)) in the vocational. Just as I already said, it was easier there, because there it was like a repetition." *(Pola-interview of Lodz team, page 2, lines 20 to 29; the start and end of the background construction are marked by the graphic sign of three slashes: "///")* The fact of remembrance just in a background construction expresses Pola's suffering of having been misjudged and stigmatised by the teacher, still at the time of the interview many years later. Thus, background constructions in pertinent textual contexts can be powerful formal text markers of vulnerability dispositions.

In the counselling process it is important to find out the specific biographical conditions (i.e., a special set of trajectory experiences), under which vulnerability dispositions are built up in the course of the life history and the specific conditions (a set of highly symbolic experiences that resemble the first ones) under which they will be reactivated in later life. In the case of Mr. Funke, the latter specific conditions for the activation of the vulnerability disposition can be any requirement by the organizational hierarchy of his employer to fulfil

self-alienating work tasks, since he had learned to unconditionally obey to organizations of the powerful East German state in his childhood and adolescence. (On the other hand, he must also learn to differentiate this from the pivotal tasks of learning something new, which might be irritating and cumbersome.) In addition, the client has to find out how these vulnerability dispositions can aggravate the predicament of the rehabilitation and unemployment situation of the client. For example, in the case of Felix, any recommencement of a partial university study of mathematics or any special concentration on mathematics in his later study of construction engineering could complicate his endeavour to find a way towards a satisfying occupational life, since the lure of mathematical "inner seeing" is a permanent vulnerability disposition of Felix. Of course, the counsellor's assistance of the client in the task of working through her or his vulnerability dispositions must be done in a very cautious and circumspect way, since they belong to the sphere of the most hurting experiences in the personal life of the client, and they put the strengths and the abilities of her or his biographical identity for positive development into question. The professional counsellor should tackle vulnerability dispositions only if the client is personally searching for them.

At the same time, the counsellor has to assist the client to search in his past life history and his present life situation for his biographical resources, basic positions and meaning potentials, in order to develop a way out of the predicament and, eventually, to start a new biographical process structure if necessary. In the case of Pola this would mean to search for her life historical and situational base of academic giftedness and her inclination to creative design and crafts work and for ways how to develop these two biographical resources. In the case of Felix it is the love for his handling and using concrete materials and to shape them, in which mathematical calculation plays an important part, – he has a special inclination to wood work and stone masonry -, which could create a new meaning potential in order to hold the lure of mathematics at bay. In the case of Bernd Funke, it is his detection that he can have good academic achievements in intellectual subjects, which levels his way back from the values and categorizations of manual work to the world of planning and organizational (i. e., mental) work.

7 Social Arrangements of Learning Biographical Counselling and the Structure of the Curriculum According to the Two Aims of the INVITE Project

The INVITE project generally aims at sensitising integrative vocational counsellors for the biographical work of the client. This can be done by gathering a professional team for case analysis and jointly looking at the autobiographical rendering of life histories, their biographical process structures, their overall biographical structuring, the precipitating conditions for central life crises and their impact on life courses. Also the clients' processes of biographical work should be jointly looked at, especially focusing on the delineation and the reworking of their biographical vulnerability dispositions and the respective substitutive or critical use of their biographical resources, and the question of professional ways of assistance of the clients by biographical counselling. In addition, INVITE can teach – as a second more technical step - biography analysis proper on the empirical base of the autobiographical narrative interview. This professionally informed biography analysis of qualitative social research specifically deals with biographical process structures, biographical resources and biographical vulnerability dispositions in their typical textual (and partially even formal) representation. (See chapter 6 and the textual examples in chapter 8). There are formal markers of autobiographical narrative rendering that allow the empirical grounding of biography analysis, and at the same time the formal markers

facilitate a specific sensitising for the shape biographical process phenomena can generally take. Enhancing the sensitivity of the professional for general shapes of biographies through the swift identification of formal markers can enable her or him to a powerful shortening up of professional biography analysis, which doesn't run too much risk of not empirically grounded biographical insights and assessments.

The most feasible social arrangement for training on the job and further education of vocational counsellors in biography analysis is the developmental workshop arranged after the model of the research workshop (Riemann and Schütze 1987, Reim and Riemann 1997, Schütze 2005, chapter 11). To keep an appropriate level of competence and to further develop the counsellor's capacity of facilitating biographical work means to regularly participate in case discussions focusing on the analysis of biographies. The necessary research strategies of biography analysis (and, in addition, the analysis of collective identities) will be situated in various traditions of social research: Chicago Sociology and Symbolic Interactionism, Polish Sociology of Culture and Biography Analysis, Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge, Psychoanalysis, socio-linguistics and conversation analysis, post-modern ethnography or ethno-history, etc. The pivotal research capacity will be to produce overall single case analyses of autobiographical materials, to realize and to overcome specific difficulties of analytical writing about texts, and to master the required stylistic devices in writing up the single case analysis.

Members of a developmental workshop are always personally expected to become active inquirers or researchers by intensely and directly working on qualitative empirical data representing the biographies and life worlds of the clients. There is always a common empirical database representing a single case of a client with a difficult occupational and rehabilitative problem. Jointly looking at the material of this single case among the round of professional colleagues and the collective exchange of initial impressions about it make it possible for participants to mutually add to their individual analytical concerns regarding the case and at the same time also to correct each other in their personal perspective and assessment. The intensive collegial co-operation in the meetings of the developmental workshop is especially marked by the experience of mutually taking the perspectives of the interacting others. Thus, for example, a female professional counsellor who is taking part in the research workshop might see important features in the life history of the client more clearly than a male participant does, since she might be able to imaginatively identify with a difficult life situation of the female client in question – say: of the Polish client Pola in our example above -, because she similarly experienced being in disagreement, competition or even conflict with her own mother when it came to establishing an occupational career for herself as a young woman. (In our case of Pola, for example, her mother managed to have her daughter be married as soon as possible, although Pola was not really happy about this almost prearranged marriage with its typical rural cultural background, which has not changed so much since the times of the first quarter of the 20iest century, when the famous analysis of the "Polish Peasant in Europe and America" was written by Thomas and Znaniecki, 1918/1927/1958).

The different types of emotional and ideational identification with features of the life history of the client in question, on the one hand, and the different types of emotional and argumentative distancing from her or him will become the imaginative and interpretative power house for the production of commentaries. These commentaries will then be developed in interactive reciprocity as well as in argumentative competition by the workshop participants, they will further on be contrastively compared with each other and jointly studied in regard to the different perspectives taken by the various participants of the developmental workshop – this is the cognitive operation of the triangulation of perspectives -, and they will then become the topic of a joint process oriented analysis of all the participants regarding the unfolding of the central life problem(s) of the client in the

course of her or his life history and the development of her or his biographical identity. This joint analysis uses the cognitive operation of following up the course of the "natural history" as developed by the Chicago sociologists Thomas and Park, looking at the sequence of conditional relevancies that one event of an unfolding social process is setting for the next, the next setting for the following one and so on up to the point where the potential for the unfolding of the social process in question has been exhausted. The operation of following up the course of a natural history, i.e. of the sequential analysis of the unfolding of a single case (mostly presenting the unfolding of a central life-historical problem, but it could also be the unfolding of creative project development), is one of the basic steps for doing an exhaustive scientific and professional analysis of a single case. (Other cognitive operations are involved, too, which we cannot deal with in this introductory module.) - It is essential for the success of the joint analytical work in a developmental workshop that members have at least the chance to focus on new and open questions of inquiry or research, i. e., on questions that make heuristic surprises possible. They should offer a personal creative potential of exploration even for the experienced inquirer or researcher leading the discussion to discover and to learn something new. This is quite often the case with all kinds of deeper problems of the relationship between biographical identity development, on the one hand, and occupational development and its interruption or even distortion by a severe chronic illness or a mutilating accident, on the other.

Connected with the active participation in a developmental workshop is the acquisition of the following elementary abilities:
- The capability of the professional counsellor or researcher to assess and define the complex interaction situations of autobiographical story telling.
- The capability of the professional counsellor or researcher to establish a trust relationship between the conversation partners or interview partners as strangers – a trust relationship that is required for sharing one's own autobiography with the communication partner.
- A sense for the extempore production of verbal texts with its formal structures of orderly and chaotic features; this sense will be enhanced by the ability to careful listening or even meticulous transcription and reading of extempore autobiographical text productions.
- A sense for the careful presentation work of the producer of narrative texts, who attempts to make them logical, impressive, convincing, legitimate, important or harmless, non-offensive, etc., but at the same time has to realize, that – dealing with chaotic life historical constellations – this will not always be possible and might lead her or him into presentation difficulties of implausibility, obliging her or him to use correction devises (such as background constructions) and to take the chaotic phenomena of biography and one's own presentation difficulties into account.
- A sense for the stylistics and the artistry of verbal texts about (individual and collective) identity developments in all their diversity of conditions for text production, of strategies for presentation, of genres, of orientations in style, etc. – in order to understand the presentation work of those (identity focussed) texts in expressing essential features, the "gist" of social and biographical processes.
- An attitude of open listening and sensitive understanding regarding the textually presented activities and suffering of the protagonists encountered in autobiographical texts, who will then emerge as quasi-interaction partners of the analyst.
- An ability of looking at, sequencing, contextualising and retrospectively assessing the presentation activities of the autobiographical text in order to grasp the faculty of the text production to express social and biographical processes in a (partially) "oblique" or "indirect" way.

- An ability to withstand the pseudo-sociological suggestiveness of ready-made (but often quite misleading) general statements of the informant's theorizing found in the autobiographical text material and to "refract" them through looking at their "embeddedness" within the sequential and contextual order of the formal text structures (the cognitive operation of pragmatic refraction).
- A sensitivity for analytical professional coding in order to continuously interrelate empirical data, on the one hand, and theoretical professional categories (and propositions), on the other; a sense for the openness and fallibility of the professional and social science theorizing as well as for the hidden "theoreticity" of the empirical text materials.
- A sense for the process-type, perspective-bound, interpreted, symbolically represented, interactive, negotiated, subjective and, at the same time, objective character of social and especially biographical reality.
- A sensibility for, and understanding of, the dialectical relationship between the production of social and biographical reality by individual biography incumbents, on the one hand, and the forceful structural restrictions for their activities of production through obligations, constraints and mechanisms of institutional and organizational processes, on the other hand. Awareness as well of collective processes in general; *within* collective identity units, such as a nation crystallized in her special societal formation as, e.g., the organized order of the state socialist society that would "play fate" in the life histories of Pola and Bernd Funke, and also *between* collective identity units, e.g., when Bernd Funke loses his opportunity to work in his occupation of fitter of heavy machinery, since the West German heavy machinery industry thoroughly took care to almost totally destroy its East German counterpart in order to get rid of its competitor.
- The inclination and openness for cooperative research work in the sessions of the developmental workshop: firstly, looking at the empirical (textual or visual) material together, i.e. structurally describing, coding and abstracting the textual and/or visual data collectively by the communicative scheme of description; secondly, formulating various, often discrepant, perspectives of interpretation in the workshop group, mutually criticising them by referring to empirical data in the textual and/or visual material and triangulating the different perspectives of analysis; and thirdly, utilizing the dynamics of the communication scheme of argumentation in the session of the developmental workshop for joint theorizing.

The application of the methodology, the collaborative process and the meta-writing that it involves, is associated with a number of essential skills that the participants of the developmental workshop partially have already developed through their former interactive professional case analytic work with clients and through their sessions of joint professional case discussions, supervision groups and Balint groups. But these skills, in addition, must be clarified in terms of their epistemic procedures and cognitive operations; they must be more deeply trained and partly even newly acquired within the developmental workshop and its collaborative mood. For the success of the developmental workshop it is most important that the participants engage in mutual scrutiny and analysis of each other's data. This should be done not just in terms of the comparability of the component parts of the dataset(s) and their analysis, but also in terms of the consistency and cross-individual intelligibility of the materials and their interpretation (especially taking into regard the different perspectives of clients and professionals).

As we said already, it is not essential for the success of a developmental workshop to elaborately practice the socio-linguistic base of narrative analysis. In their professional practice, good professional rehabilitation counsellors have already developed a sense for biographical process structures and the sequential unfolding of central life problems resulting

in trap situations. But it might be helpful for them to see more clearly the complex biographical conditioning of the unfolding of central life problems and the overwhelming biographical impact of occupational problems, especially unemployment, and/or severe illness in the life situation and the future biographical identity development of the client. Presenting autobiographical narrative interviews of clients in the stable collegial group of the developmental workshop and jointly looking at the autobiographical narrative texts and analysing them can accomplish this. The ability is thereby enhanced to identify vulnerability dispositions of the client, such as sliding into a biographical trajectory in the sphere of occupational work and to get trapped by it. The joint focus on autobiographical texts and their joint analysis enhances the ability as well as the use of text-related cognitive operations to explore hidden biographical resources, i.e., basic contexts of biographical sense making, biographical interests and natural skills. This can lead the counsellor to entice the client towards additional biographical planning, to elicit formative and enactment power in him, to help bring it out, supporting and accelerating it. - Looking at the history of the developmental workshop of the Lodz, Helsiniki and Magdeburg groups of the INVITE project, we can state that the involved professional counsellors who participated in the developmental workshop developed *themselves* quite a lot in their ability to look at the biographical ramifications and biographical dynamics of their clients' unfolding of central life problems of unemployment and/or of the precipitations of their severe chronic illness or mutilating accident.

Learning about the formal structures of autobiographical narrative rendering will additionally enhance the analytical ability of the professional rehabilitation counsellor. In a certain sense she or he knows these formal structures already as a common member of the everyday world of existence by virtue of her or his communicative competence, and, in addition, she or he has already listened to many partial autobiographical renderings of clients and has made sense of formal markers of the client's story telling (e.g. she or he has noticed self-corrections and their meaningful implication of world irritation and self-doubt of the client). All these formal markers of autobiographical story telling are normally "seen but unnoticed" (Harold Garfinkel) by the common member of the everyday world of existence and – as we could additionally say – *known* but unnoticed and interpretatively handled in a routine way by the professional. The analytical noticing of the formal textual markers of autobiographical narrative rendering, as learned in a developmental workshop through jointly looking at transcribed autobiographical extempore narratives will certainly enhance the professional ability to identify biographical vulnerability dispositions, which might otherwise contribute to the proneness of the client to become unemployed and to be trapped by it in a central life crisis. It will also help the professional counsellor to detect hidden biographical resources of the client and to find alternative ways of her or his future occupational and/or biographical development and rescue ways out of the trajectory trap of the central life crisis. We could see this in the Magdeburg developmental workshop, in which the joint analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews has been practiced for more than two years. Whereas the acquisition of the formal apparatus of socio-linguistic narrative text analysis might be quite time consuming in the beginning, it later on will not only make the case analysis of central life problems of clients safer, but in addition will allow the swift detection of formal markers and the respective biographical process structures and other important biographical phenomena as vulnerability dispositions in the very process of listening to the actual autobiographical narration of the client and, in addition, in re-listening to it from the audio-recording one or two days or a week later. In this special sense of sensitising, the formal analysis of autobiographical narrative texts will even speed up the professional analysis of central life problems of the client. But in order to reach this swiftness of analysis, one first has to undergo the cumbersome practice of looking at transcriptions of autobiographical text materials again and again, although this is very much made less onerous by the joy of joint

detection and discussion of formal textual phenomena of autobiographical narratives and what they might mean in terms of biographical process phenomena.

Of course, in the developmental workshop there will also be the question how to communicate with the client about her or his specific biographical problems and phenomena. The basic feature is that the advocated biographical analysis will be done together. Even the autobiographical narrative interview itself cannot be even commenced, not to say finally accomplished, without the establishment of a basic trust relationship of the two participants of the interview situation, i.e. the client and the professional. The presumptive narrator must be able to deeply trust the presumptive listener, that she or he will not misuse the information and the general impression coming out of her or his autobiographical extempore narrative; otherwise she or he would never offer the personal gift of her or his personal life history at all. And just as this gift has been freely given, the analysis of the narrative rendering must again be done in a joint mood of cooperation. This especially means that the professional's confrontation of the client with findings of the analysis of her or his biographical case problem or creative project without her or his own formulated interest and obvious cooperation in it would be unethical, since it might hurt the client and since there would be no effective psychotherapeutic setting of working it through and finding a way out of the deep valley of emotional pain and depression. In addition, a non-interested client would not be able to make fruitful use of the findings because they are not the result of her or his own insights. Additionally, in the ongoing counselling process the counsellor must always take into account whether the client is strong enough to stand the tacitly drawn conclusions of the counsellor coming out of her or his listening and tacit inner insights in the course of the joint biography analysis or not.

But in this regard, surely a lot of professional tact and sensitivity will be already assembled at the beginning of the sessions of the developmental workshop. The colleagues will automatically and thoroughly ask themselves and each other about the question how much the client really could make productive use of the findings of the joint collegial biography analysis within the developmental workshop, where she or he, the client, is not present her- or himself, and what could be dangerous or even detrimental to tell her or him about them. Such considerations regarding the poignancy of a biography analysis the client doesn't take part in - which is unusual for a normal professional biographical counselling process – and where the knowledge gap between professional and client can be dramatic, will sensitise the professionals for the problem of a much less severe knowledge gap in awareness, regarding the results of a joint analytic work situation between client and professional, where the client is face-to-face and actively present and will take part in the different steps of analysis. As professionals always do, when they work together in a meta-group for the analysis of professional work (as they practice in Balint groups, supervision groups, focus groups of joint case analyses, etc.), they also search for, and reflect on, the professional paradoxes (Schütze 1992, 2000), that are very much involved in professional case analysis and counselling, and especially in counselling dealing with biographical problems. This is because such counselling involves personal identity issues, which are intimate and value laden, the inner life sphere of the client is open then to the access of the professional stranger. In addition, these biographical problems are extremely complex since they belong to two spheres of reality, the individual and the collective, and they are shaped by their complicated mutual relationships. Such professional paradoxes consist of contrastive as well as competing necessities or urgencies of work tendencies and work steps. Such professional paradoxes are:

Paradoxes of Professional Action:

1. The need for the use of general categories for the classification and understanding of the case, on the one hand, and the need for specifying the problem situation and the personal ramifications of the case, on the other.

2. The need for projecting a prognosis for the social and biographical processes of the future unfolding or development of the problematic case or the creative project, on the one hand, and the unavoidable condition that one has to do it on a vague and non-dependable empirical base.

3. The perseverance of waiting for the creative development of the client or for the further unfolding of the case problem up to the point, where loss of time cannot be endured and accepted anymore, on the one hand, and the option of instantaneous powerful intervention of the professional, on the other.

4. The surplus knowledge of the professional regarding the dynamics of the unfolding of the trajectory of suffering of the client and the dreadfulness of this surplus knowledge, on the one hand, and the endangering of the trust relationship between client and professional when hiding this surplus knowledge in order to protect the hope and spirit of the client, on the other.

5. Considerations of keeping order and insuring the safety of proceedings, on the one hand, and the reduction of the liberty of the client to decide for her- or himself, on the other.

6. The biographical wholeness of the unfolding of the project case or problem case, on the one hand, and the specialisation of the expert (in the sense of Talcott Parsons "specificity" of the professional work – Parsons and Shils 1951, p. 77), on the other.

7. The educational dilemma: exemplary demonstration by the professional, how to handle the problem or the creative project unfolding of the client, on the one hand, and the danger of making the client dependent on the permanent assistance of the professional, i.e. the risk of endangering her or his autonomy, on the other.

8. The fight against the dominant and mighty power of the potential of the trajectory to unfold the case problems as well as the control of the connected sceptical concerns regarding the high societal and personal costs of working on the case, on the one hand, and the low rate of a successful handling and outcome of the case management, which conditions a trend towards the putting up with the case problems or at least indulging in them and not fighting them, on the other.

9. Organization as necessary and enabling instrument for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of professional work, on the one hand, and the tendency towards an alienating control of body and agency of the client by organizational mechanisms – a control that exerts an automatic and schematic constraint towards taking action regarding the predicament of the client, which is orientated just on outer criteria of effectiveness.

10. Being oriented towards the division of labour and the expert specialisation of professional work regarding the analysis of the complex case problem and the handling of it and the accompanying slicing of different aspects and levels of the case problem, on the one hand, and the orientation towards the overall arc of work of handling the case problem and the necessity of connecting its several features and sequential phases according to an overall structuring, on the other.

11. The dilemma of the safety value of routine procedures, on the one hand, and the reduction of professional openness and alertness of mind, on the other.

12. The orientation on state authority tasks and/or collectivity oriented tasks of the professional, on the one hand, and the connected danger of reducing the potential of the client to develop her or his own personal potential, on the other – where the professional is either oriented towards the well-being or common good of the involved

collective identities (or state or governmental order) or towards the afflicted individual client.

13. The dilemma of addressing: focusing of the professional orientation on one single client or on a single party of clients, on the one hand, or focusing on the overall gestalt or the network of interaction processes and social relationships of clients, who might be – and very often factually are – in bitter conflict among themselves.

14. The orientation of the professional towards gaining and keeping the power of interpretation and disposition within the orientation frame of a higher symbolic mode of analysis in the sense of Alfred Schütz' "finite provinces of meaning", and/or within the orientation frame of a special professional "social world" in the sense of Anselm Strauss (Schütz 1971, pp. 263-298; Strauss 1991, pp. 233-268), and within the respective sphere of higher-symbolic interaction, on the one hand, and the dangerous tendency of the professional as "controller of the institutional procedure" to focus just on the amassing and maximizing of interactive and procedural power, on the other; there is especially the danger of destroying the base of cooperative reciprocity of the social relationship and interaction between the professional and the client.

15. The urgency for the non-inhibition, naturalness and authenticity of professional work contributions, on the one hand, and the risk of fading out of one's awareness the impact and the effects of one's own individual work contributions (especially "interventions") with their personal ramifications and radiations to the unfolding of the case problem.

Mistakes at work occur when the professional doesn't take into account the permanent contrastive urgencies of the two sides of the paradoxes, or even the conflicts between them and doesn't work towards a circumspect, balanced handling of both sides of the paradoxes at the same time or in close sequence. E.g., Bernd Funke's counselor, Mrs. Brühl, would make a serious mistake if she just pre-decided for her client the handling of central biographical "switches" without personally letting *himself* work on the biographical decisions (paradox 7). Of course, such mistakes can be additionally conditioned by structural constraints: for example, if the case load of Mrs. Brühl of social worker in the rehabilitation field would be that high that she would feel not to have enough time, energy and circumspect attention to be entitled to wait for the accomplishment of the time consuming self-exploration of Bernd Funke, in finding out the right personal moves and decisions for the upcoming biographical switches.

In the workshops there could be – as we said already - two alternative ways of further education for the vocational counsellors in biography analysis, and this is reflected in the structure of the curriculum: Section A and parts of section C (C 2 and C 3) tackle the general sensitising task of biographical considerations in rehabilitation counselling; section B and parts of section C (C 1 and C 4) work on the more technical task of teaching biography analysis in a narrower sense, i.e. the meticulous formal and substantive analysis of autobiographical narrative texts on the empirical base of autobiographical narrative interviewing. - Here is the outline of the curriculum; the various topics are self-explanatory:

Biographical Counselling in Rehabilitative Vocational Training– Further Education Curriculum

0.   Biographical counselling: an introduction
Sandra Betts, Aled Griffiths, Fritz Schütze, Peter Straus

A. Biography Between Social Constraints and Creative Constructions of Individual Identity

A.1   Social responsibilities and the orientation towards collective identities
Sandra Betts

A.2   The interplay between personal identity and the others: the interaction partners and competitors of all kinds

Agnieszka Golzynska-Grondas

A.3   Social constraints and the free will – life course and vocational career
Johanna Björkenheim, Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski

A.4   Biography, narrative, and rehabilitation
Johanna Björkenheim, Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski

B.   Understanding Biographical Processes

B.1   Social work case analysis of biographical processes
Johanna Björkenheim, Johanna Levälahti, Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski

Appendix:
The case of Matti
Eila Sundman

B.2.1   Biography analysis on the empirical base of autobiographical narratives: how to analyse autobiographical narrative interviews – part one
Fritz Schütze

B.2.2   Biography analysis on the empirical base of autobiographical narratives: how to analyse autobiographical narrative interviews – part two
Fritz Schütze

B.3   Conversation analysis of counselling interaction. The action scheme of counselling, problem versus solution orientation, and the place for biographical counselling
Bärbel Treichel

8 Ethics

The INVITE project's association with the name of Leonardo is both appropriate and a salutary challenge. Leonardo da Vinci's polymath genius included an exceptional ability to translate ideas into practice. The contributors to this project come from diverse academic and professional backgrounds and include practitioners engaged in the day-to-day delivery of vocational advice and counselling services.

As indicated in a later chapter, it is a moot point whether the biographical interview and the methodology advocated in the modules can stand alone as a beneficial intervention in the context of an individual's rehabilitation (see module C.2). The potential for good and the risk of harm in the context of both research and rehabilitative practice must be managed and to this end we have adapted and adopted existing ethical guidance as operation principles.

The EU Code of Ethics for conducting Socio Economic Research inter alia suggests the following principles as guidance for research (Dench, Iphofen, Huws 2004):
- The research aims of any study should both benefit society and minimise social harm.
- Researchers should endeavour to ensure that the research team has the necessary professional expertise and support.
- Researchers should endeavour to reflect on the consequences of research engagement for all participants, and attempt to alleviate potential disadvantages to participation for any individual or category of person.
- Researchers should endeavour to ensure that reporting and dissemination are carried out in a responsible manner.
- Researchers should endeavour to ensure that methodology and findings are open for discussion and peer review.

- Researchers should endeavour to ensure that any participation in research should be voluntary.
- Researchers should endeavour to ensure that decisions about participation in research are made from an informed position.

Similar principles are elaborated in national and International Codes for professional intervention. For instance, The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) have developed a code[1] which recognizes that ethical awareness is a fundamental part of professional practice. In particular the Code emphasizes that Social work is based on respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and the rights that follow from this. Social workers should uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and well-being. We believe that the application of the methodological and practice procedures implied by the biographical approach advocated in this project to be both consistent with and a heuristic step forward in the achievement of the above aim. Moreover, we have endeavoured to ensure that the fieldwork undertaken by the project team has been consonant with the principles espoused[2].

9 Exercises

- Professionals working in vocational counselling are encouraged to think about those clients in their own counselling and support practice where a deeper knowledge about life history and biographical processes would be important for the counselling process. What would be these important biographical informations? How to get them? How to talk about them with the clients?
- The reader is encouraged to take an autobiographical text from the published belletristic literature – it could be a *fictional* autobiographical text, too - and to apply the theoretical concepts of identity, self, fractured identities, situational identity, long-term biographical identity and biographical process structures to this text. If these categories do not totally fit, one should think about other concepts to be developed.
- The reader is encouraged to think about one's own biographical work she or he had to do in the past. What are one's own vulnerability dispositions and one's own biographical resources? What were the specific tasks of that former biographical work?
- The reader who is working in vocational counselling might check the list of tasks of biographical counselling given in section 6 of this module. Are they applicable on a case from one's own practice? What of the mentioned task concepts would not work on one's own clients? Should other tasks be added?
- Professional counsellors might think about the possibility of a developmental workshop for jointly analyzing autobiographical texts of persons in situations of vocational rehabilitation. Think about the possibility of taking anonymized cases, which one could get from colleagues not involved in the joint analysis and discussion of the case.

---

[1] The document „Ethics in Social Work, Statements of Principles" was approved at the General Meetings of the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in Adelaide, Australia, October 2004

[2] (See, e.g., Medrau Letter 4; 11:2004 – Appendix)

10. References

Bauman, Z (1996) From Pilgrim to Tourist-A Short History of Identity, Sage, London

Beck, Ulrich, Giddens, Anthony, Lash, Scott (1994): Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition, and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order. Cambridge: Polity Press

Bradley, H (1997) Fractured Identities: Changing Patterns of Inequality, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK

Corbin, Juliet, and Strauss, Anselm (1988): Unending Work and Care. Managing Chronic Illness at Home. San Francisco and London: Jossey-Bass

Dench, S., Iphofen, R., and Huws, U. (2004): An EU Code of Ethics for Socio-Economic Research. In: The Institute for Employment Studies (IES Report 412) (ISBN 1 85184 3426) (www.Employment-studies.co.uk)

Freud,S (1905) The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. J.Strachy, 1965, Avon Books, New York

Garfinkel, Harold (1967): Studies in Ethomethodology. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall

Garfinkel, Harold (1967a): Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an Intersexed Person. In: Garfinkel, Harold, Studies in Ethnomethodology, pp. 116-185

Gergen,K.J (1994) Realities and Relationships, Harvard Un. Press, Cambridge

Gergen,K.J. and Gergen,M (1983) Narratives of the Self, in T.R.Sarbin and K.E.Scheibe (eds) Studies in Social Identity, Praeger, New York

Giddens, Anthony (1991): Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in Late Modern Age. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press

Goffman, Erving (1974): Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience. New York: Harper and Row

Goffman, E (1959) The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Doubleday, New York

Heinemeier, Siegfried (1991): Zeitstrukturkrisen. Biographischen Interviews mit Arbeitslosen (Crises of Time Structure. Biographical Interviews with Unemployed). Opladen: Leske + Budrich

Jenkins,R (1996) Social Identities, Routledge, London

Mead, G.H. (1934) Mind, Self and Society, University of Chicago Press, Chicago Ill.

Morris, Jan (1974): Conundrum. London: Farber and Farber

Parsons, Talcott, and Shils, Edward A., with the assistance of James Olds (1951): Values, Motives and Systems of Action. In: Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, eds: Towards a General Theory of Action. Theoretical Foundations for the Social Sciences, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, pp. 53-109

Reim, Thomas, and Riemann, Gerhard (1997): Die Forschungswerkstatt – Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit mit Studentinnen und Studenten der Sozialarbeit/Sozialpädagogik und der Supervision (The Research Workshop – Experiences from the Work with Students of Social Work / Social Pedagogy and Supervision). In: Gisela Jakob and Hans-Jürgen von Wensierski, eds., Rekonstruktive Sozialpädagogik. Konzepte und Methoden sozialpädagogischen Verstehens in Forschung und Praxis (Re-Constructive Social Pedagogy. Concepts and Methods of Socio-Pedagogical Understanding in Research and Practice). Weinheim and Müchen: Juventa, pp. 223-238.

Richmond, Mary (1922): What is Social Case Work? New York: Russel Sage Foundation

Riemann, Gerhard (2000): Die Arbeit in der sozialpädagogischen Familienberatung. Interaktionsprozesse in einem Handlungsfeld der sozialen Arbeit. (Work in Socio-Pedagogical Family Counselling. Interactive Processes in an Action Field of Social Work) Weinheim and Munich: Juventa

Riemann, Gerhard, and Schütze Fritz (1987): Some Notes on a Student Research Workshop in Biography Analysis, Interaction Analysis, and Analysis of Social Worlds. In:

Newsletter of the International Sociological Association Research Committee 38 / 1987, pp. 54-70

Schapp, Wilhelm (2004): In Geschichten Verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding. (Entangled in Stories. About Being of Man and Thing.): Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann

Schütz, Alfred (1971): Gesammelte Aufsätze (Collected Papers), Vol.: Das Problem der sozialen Realität (The Problem) of Social Reality), here especially: Über die mannigfaltigen Wirklichkeiten (On Multiple Realities). Den Haag / The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

Schütze, Fritz (1992): Sozialarbeit als „bescheidene" Profession. (Social Work as „Humble" Profession). In: Dewe, Bernd et al., Erziehen als Profession. Zur Logik professionellen Handels in pädagogischen Feldern (Education as Profession. On the Logic of Professional Action in Pedagogical Fields), Opladen: Leske+Budrich, pp. 132-170

Schütze, Fritz (1994): Das Paradoxe in Felix' Leben als Ausdruck eines "wilden" Wandlungsprozesses (The Paradoxes in Felix' Life as Expression of a "Wild" Metamorphosis Process). In Koller, Hans-Christoph, et al, eds., Biographie als Text (Biography as Text), Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, pp. 13-60

Schütze, Fritz (1997): Kognitive Anforderungen an das Adressatendilemma in der professionellen Fallanalyse der Sozialarbeit (Cognitive Requirements Regarding the Dilemma whom to Address in Professional Case Analysis of Social Work). In: In: Gisela Jakob and Hans-Jürgen von Wensierski, eds., Rekonstruktive Sozialpädagogik. Konzepte und Methoden sozialpädagogischen Verstehens in Forschung und Praxis (Re-Constructive Social Pedagogy. Concepts and Methods of Socio-Pedagogical Understanding in Research and Practice). Weinheim and Müchen: Juventa, pp. 39-60.

Schütze, Fritz (2000): Schwierigkeiten bei der Arbeit und Paradoxien des professionellen Handelns. Ein grundlagentheoretischer Aufriß (Difficulties at Work and Paradoxes of Professional Action. A Basic-Theoretical Approach). In: ZBBS (Zeitschrift für qualitative Bildungs-, Beratungs- und Sozialforschung – Journal of Qualitative Research in Education, Counselling and Social Research), Vol. 1, pp. 49-96

Schütze, Fritz (2005): Eine sehr persönlich generalisierte Sicht auf qualitative Forschung (A Quite Personal and yet Generalized View of Qualitative Research). In: ZBBS, Vol. 5, pp. 211-258

Strauss, Anselm (1991): Creating Sociological Awareness. Collective Images and Symbolic Representations. New Brunswick &London: Transaction Publishers

Strauss, Anselm (1993): Continual Permutation of Action. New York: Aldine De Gruyter

Strauss, A (1959) Mirrors and Masks:The Search for Identity, Free Press, Glencoe Illinois.

Strauss, A (1978) Negotiations, Jossey Bass, San Fransisco

Thomas, William Isaac, Znaniecki, Florian (1927/1958): The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. New York: Alfred Knopf / New York: Dover Publications

Woodward, K (2000) Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity, Open University Press, London