

**Crafting identities:
Learning, curiosity
and career guidance**

**ESRC Presentation
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South Africa**

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Crafting Identities

*'Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day!
And yesterday things went on just
as usual. I wonder if I've been
changed in the night? Let me
think: was I the same when I got
up this morning? I almost think
I can remember feeling a little
different. But if I'm not the same, the next
question is, Who in the world am I?
Ah, that's the great puzzle!'*

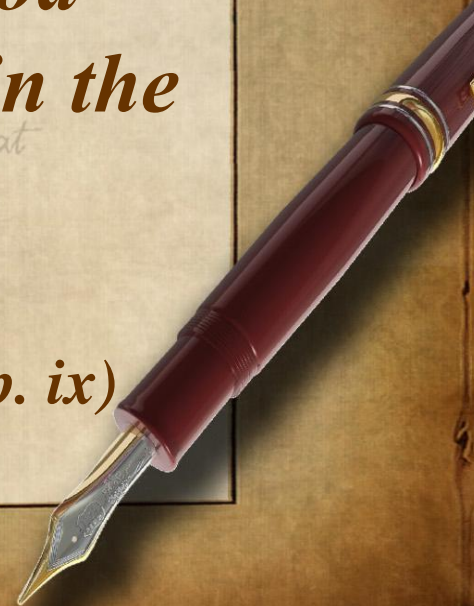
(Lewis Carroll, 1865, Alice in Wonderland)



Crafting Identities

*A challenge for career guidance:
“the construction of a new identity
and the production of a ‘good
narrative’ for career practice in the
21st century”*

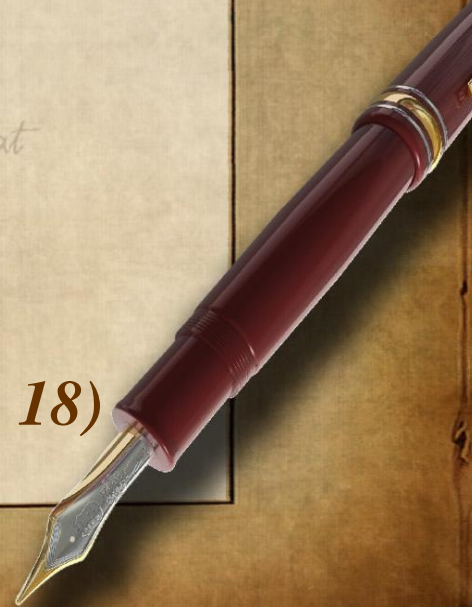
(Watson & McMahon, 2005, p. ix)



Crafting Identities

“Story is a human universal”

Dear Mr. Brendon
Thank you for your last letter I hope you are happy for you have
my heart and rejected me in every possible way imaginable You've made it clear that
I am most trivial to you You've made it clear how egoist
how repulsive how pathetic how minuscule Surely you think that
I am heartless as well for you to write these careful words without guilt
I loved you so much How you rejected me and leave me with no symbs
athy but pain you leave me cold inside (Cochran, 2007, p. 18)
I have not yet shed a tear I accept the fact that you would never be mine
like the last two men who did the same as you
Both wrote a letter to me saying how much they loathe me
If you do feel guilt Do not worry I am used to harsh words



Crafting Identities

Where it all began ...

Dear Mr. Brendon

Thank you for your last letter. I hope you are happy for you have
my heart and rejected me in every possible way imaginable. You've made it clear that
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Crafting Identities

A chance event ...

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Crafting Identities

Stories are constructed in
context

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I am most trivial to you
how repulsive how pathetic how minuscule
I am heartless as well
I loved you so much
I have not yet shed a tear
like the last two men who did the same as you
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If you do feel guilt Do not worry I am used to harsh words
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You've made it clear how egoist
Surely you think that
for you to write these careful words without guilt
How you rejected me and leave me with no sympathy but pain
you leave me cold inside for
I accept the fact that you would never be mine



Crafting Identities

Constructing identity through story

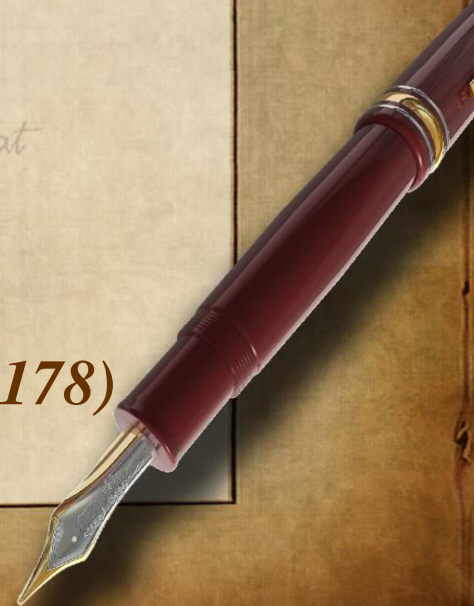
Dear Mr. Brendon
Thank you for your last letter
my heart and rejected me in every part
I am most trivial to you
how repulsive how pathetic how minuscule
I am heartless as well for you to write these careful words without guilt
I loved you so much
How you rejected me and leave me with no sympathy but pain
I have not yet shed a tear
I accept the fact that you would never be mine
like the last two men who did the same as you
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Crafting Identities

“Narratives not only portray identity, but they also fashion identity”

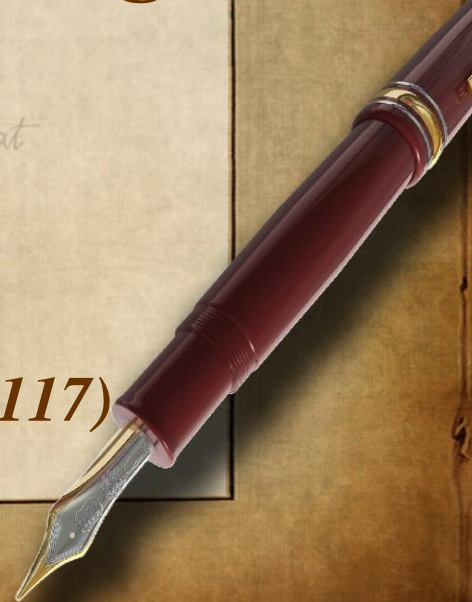
(Gibson, 2004, p. 178)



Crafting Identities

*Identity may be regarded as
“an internalized and evolving
life story”*

(McAdams, 2001, p. 117)



Crafting Identities

*Chance again
and opportunity ...*

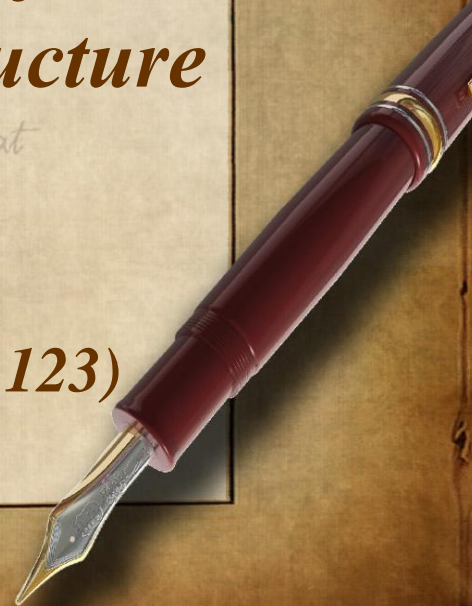
The Talent Scout



Crafting Identities

*people “live their lives by stories ...
these stories are shaping of life ...
they have real, not imagined effects
... these stories provide the structure
of life”*

(White, 1992, p. 123)



Crafting Identities

News of difference ...

Life continues ...

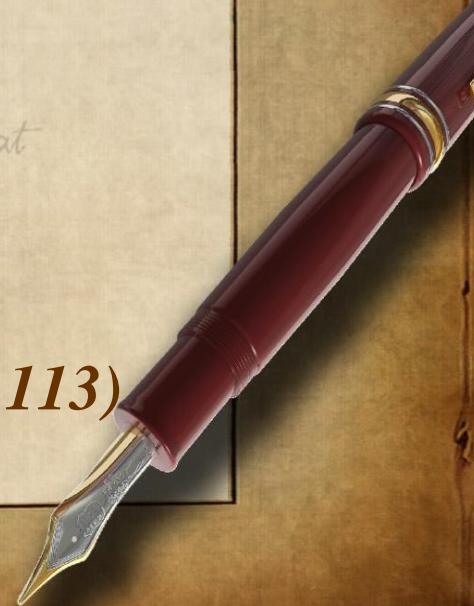
A new story is told ...



Crafting Identities

“building a new ‘narrative to live by’ is not simply a matter of inventing a new discourse”

(Gergen & Gergen, 2006, p. 113)



Crafting Identities

Future stories must be:

#believable – clients clearly see the elements of the future story in their role in previous stories

#actionable – clients believe the elements can be put into practice

(Gergen & Gergen, 2006)



Crafting Identities

Scaffolding:

Drawing the raw material for the future story from stories of past and present experiences

(McMahon & Watson, 2011)



Crafting Identities

*The journey experienced by
the storyteller is often more
rich than the story they tell*

(McMahon, 2003)



Crafting Identities

Stories:

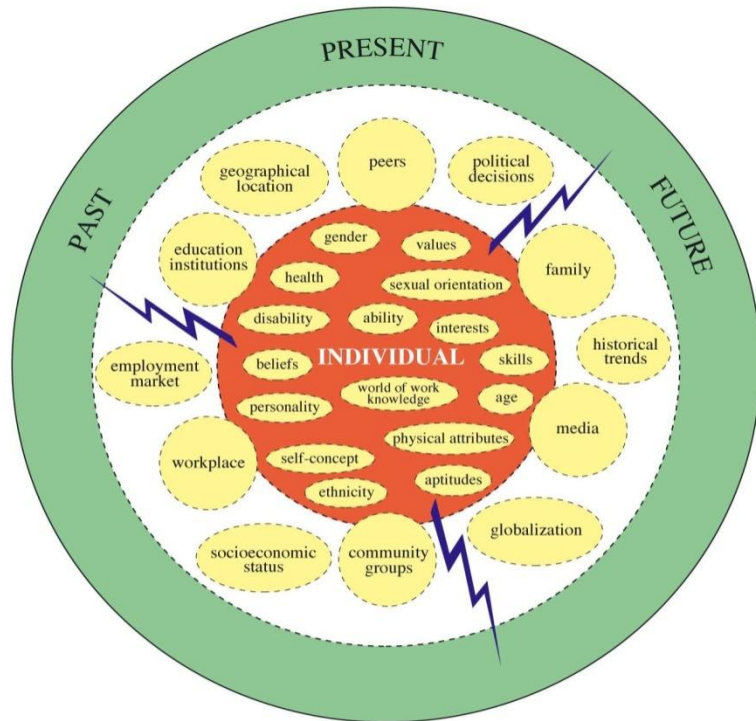
Katie and Ellen

Dear Mr. Brennan

Thank you for your last letter I hope you are happy for you have
my heart and rejected me in every possible way imaginable You've made it clear that
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how repulsive how pathetic how minuscule Surely you think that
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Crafting Identities



*Systems
Theory
Framework
(STF)
of career
development*

- recursiveness
- change over time
- ⚡ chance

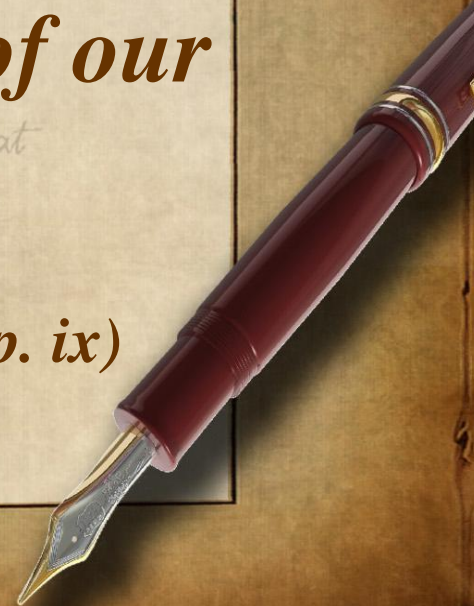
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Crafting Identities

“habits, perceptions, and inclinations that characterize our lives are clearly powerfully shaped by the experiences of our early years”

(Wachtel, 2007, p. ix)



Crafting Identities

“Career cannot occur in a social vacuum, and it does not occur wholly in a subjective inner life”

(Law, Meijers, & Wijers, 2002, p. 439)



Crafting Identities

Story telling and culture

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Crafting Identities

*develop an attitude of
“creative uncertainty” in
relation to cultural
diversity*

(Leung, 1993)

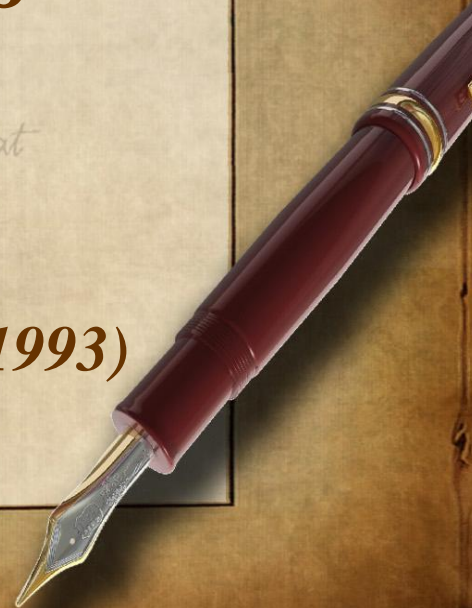


Crafting Identities

"cultural informants"

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(Leung, 1993)



Crafting Identities

Defining culture

*Clients bring a unique composite
of intra-individual factors as
well as their subjective and
objective experience
of culture*

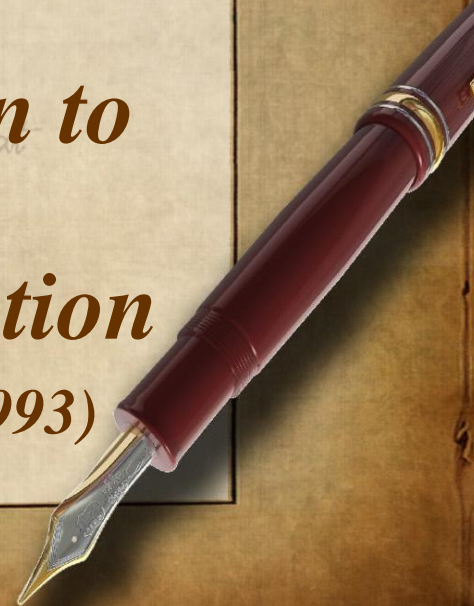


Crafting Identities

Crafting Identities: Cultural Variables

- #** *Level of acculturation*
- #** *Culturally dystenic – alien to an individual's cultural identity and value orientation*

(Leung, 1993)



Crafting Identities

*To give birth to children
is to add on to oneself*

Zulu: South Africa

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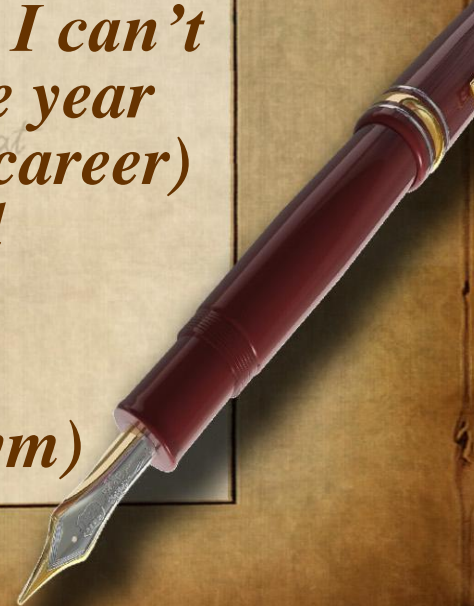


Crafting Identities

*Considerable parental pressure for adolescent to choose careers that gain parental improvement*

It has happened. It really has happened! I can't lie that it started. I think it was last or the year before, my dad started mapping out my (career) decisions for me and it was kind of weird because it was really not the stuff that I wanted to go into.

Patrick (16 years, pseudonym)



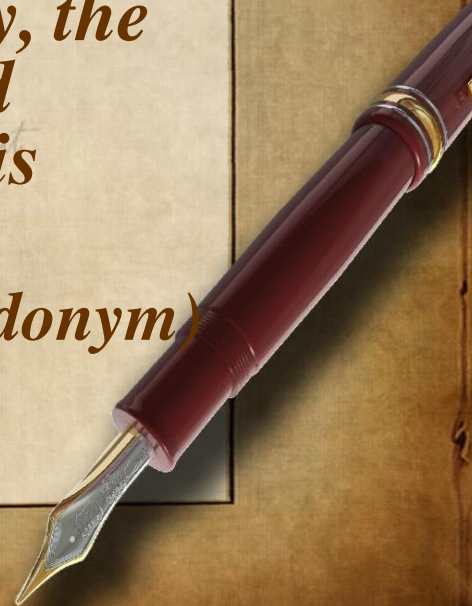
Crafting Identities

Sisa doesn't like colour ... I see that as a weakness.

(Sisa's mother)

... like 90% of the time I am like around my white friends type thing and so like my, the mother tongue has like kind of slipped away from me ... I think that culture is backwards.

Sisa (16 years, pseudonym)

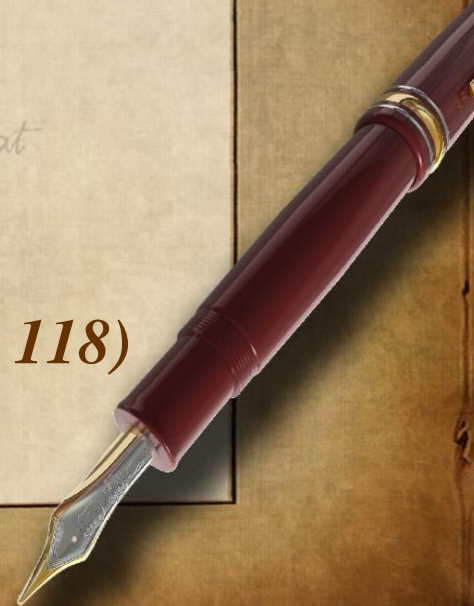


Crafting Identities

“Stories live to be told to others”

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(McAdams, 2001, p. 118)



Crafting Identities

“There is never a fixed, final, or true life story to tell, nor a single way to tell it, but a plethora of possibilities”

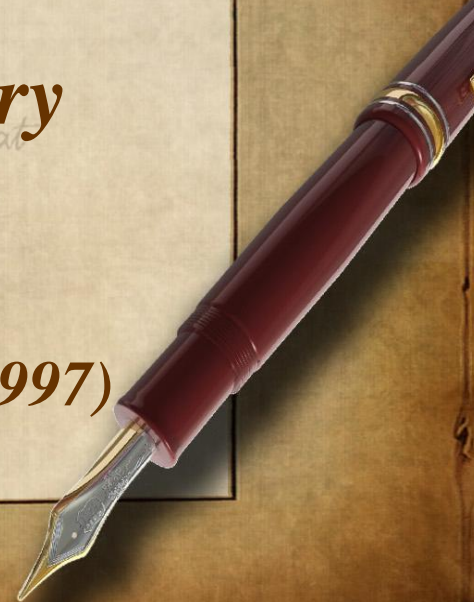
(Botella, et al., 2004, p. 122)



Crafting Identities

*assist clients to close the gap between
the present story
and the future or possible story*

(Cochran, 1997)



Crafting Identities

“bring these alternate stories out of the shadows and to elevate them so that they play a far more central role in the shaping of people’s lives.”

White (1989, p. 19)



Crafting Identities

“The starting point for many people in counselling is to be given the opportunity to tell their story”

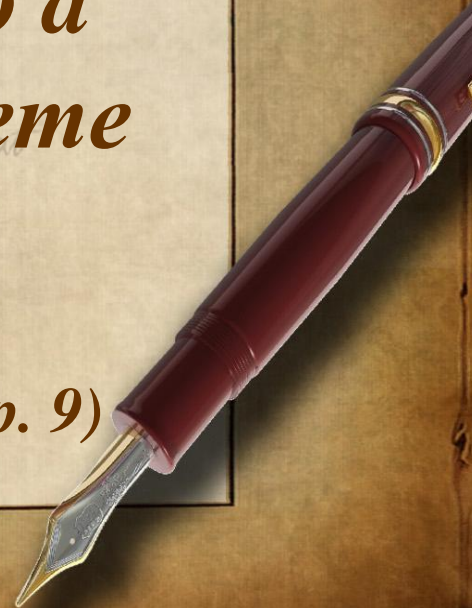
(Amundson, 2003, p.161)



Crafting Identities

*It is through stories that
counselors gain access to a
person's spirit and life theme*

(Savickas, 1997, p. 9)



Crafting Identities

Stories are connected in time. The past is inextricably linked to the present and together, past and present provide clues to the future

(McMahon, 2003)



Crafting Identities

Career guidance is
multi-storied

Dear Mr. [unclear]
Thank you for your last letter. I hope you are happy for you have
my heart and rejected me in every possible way imaginable. You've made it clear that
I am most trivial to you. You've made it clear how egoist
how repulsive how pathetic how minuscule. Surely you think that
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Crafting Identities

*Until lions tell their own
stories, tales of the hunt will
always glorify the hunter*
(Igbo, Nigeria)



Crafting Identities

*Who are YOU?' said the Caterpillar
... Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I--I
hardly know, sir, just at present--
at least I know who I WAS when I
got up this morning, but I think I
must have been changed several
times since then.'*

(Lewis Carroll, 1865, Alice in Wonderland)





*THANK YOU
ENKOSI
BAIE DANKIE*

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