Envisioning the Future: Worklife and Counselling

R. Vance Peavy
University of Victoria

Abstract

This analytical essay describes scenarios of what work and personal life may be like in post-modern-post-industrial society and how societal changes may impact on the lives of people. Based on these futuristic observations, suggestions are offered about how counselling can be revised to prepare counsellors to more adequately meet the needs of clients in post-industrial society. One of the principal recommendations is to infuse counsellor preparation and counselling practice with constructivist concepts including a psychology of the self based on narrativity.

Résume

Cet essai analytique décrit comment le travail et la vie personnelle peuvent se vivre dans une société postmoderne postindustrielle et comment les changements sociétaux affectent la vie des gens. Basées sur ces observations futuristiques, des suggestions sont offertes sur comment le counseling pourrait être révisé dans le but de préparer les conseillers à répondre plus adéquatement aux besoins des clients dans une société postindustrielle. Une des recommandations premières est d'imprégner la préparation du conseiller et la pratique du conseling de concepts constructivistes comprenant une psychologie du soi basée sur la narrativité.

This analytical discussion will have two goals in mind. First, it will present a highly condensed sketch of changes which are occurring in society and in the lives of people as a result of transformations from industrial to post-modern, post-industrial, (PI) society. What are some of the predicted consequences which evolving PI societal changes present to individuals in their daily lives?

Second, it will suggest revisions of career counsellor preparation and practice so as to better prepare counsellors for working with post-industrial, post-modern clients. What are some of the implications for counsellor training and for the practice of counselling which these changes and consequences imply?

ANTHONY GIDDENS AND THE COMING YEARS

This section will briefly describe some of the main points of analysis which Giddens (1991) makes of our current social context—which he refers to as the late modern age but which will be referred to as PI society. Borrowed from Giddens will be those ideas which seem to bear most forcibly on issues which concern counsellors.

Seven topics have been selected from Giddens for discussion: "self as reflexive project," "lifestyle," "meaning and meaninglessness," "linguistic life," "shame vs guilt," "pure relationship," and "dilemmas of the self."

Self as Reflexive Project

Under the influence of information technology, and new forms of mediated experience, especially television, self-identity is progressively becoming a reflexively organized project. In pre-modern and modern times, self-identity and life-roles were strongly influenced by various traditions, cultural customs and stable norms. To put it bluntly, one did not have to think very much about who and what one wanted to be since the guidelines for culturally approved identities were firmly in place. With the decay of all forms of tradition and the greatly increased risk, doubt, uncertainty and social instability which this decay of tradition produces, people now must depend much more on their own reflexivity as a means of developing self-identity. It is necessary to sustain "narratives" of self-identity which have some degree of coherence even though more-or-less continuously under revision.

The following is a brief summary of the main features of the self as reflexive project. First, in the absence of reference of external authoritative criteria, the self is an internally referential system. Instead of referring to sources of external authority the self questions itself and its own system of meaning through reflexive acts. In this way information from others is weighted, and the self decides on its next moves through reference to its own memories, perspectives and constructs of meaning.

Second, the self presumes a narrative or complex of narratives which express self-identity. This is a radical shift from an "objectivist" view of personality as a rather stable entity composed of traits and variables to a constructivist view of self as story.

Third, self-identity, self-adequacy and self-fulfilment depend upon two processes for their formation. These are the activities which the individual chooses and becomes engaged in and the vocabularies which the individual uses for describing life experiences and events.

Finally, just as social life and institutions are becoming more and more reflexive, so too is the project of the self.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle becomes an important concept as individuals have to negotiate choices amongst a diversity of lifestyle options on a daily basis. For the past half century, there has been an assumption that individuals developed in a linear fashion, completing one developmental task and moving on to the next. Linear development is not a satisfactory way of describing PI lives. Nonlinearity, transition and negotiable options are more closely descriptive of how individuals now experience their lives. It must be added, however, that the vast majority are caught between a yearning for "how it used to be" and perplexity about how to move forward into the new PI world. Certain standardizing influences continue, especially "commodification." However, with the increasing "openness" of social

life, the pluralization of contexts, the diversity of "experts" on every conceivable topic, and the increase in electronically mediated experience, reflexively, organized lifestyle and life-planning are now central features of self-identity.

Personal Meaning and Meaninglessness

In industrial society meaninglessness issued from lives of routine and boredom (assembly-line work). Alienation resulted from individuals no longer being able to sense any personally meaningful connection between their own work and the eventual product. In the PI society, meaninglessness will stem from the fact that while a reflexive project of the self generates actualization and competence in living, it is separated from oral and spiritual resources needed for living a full and satisfying life.

One of the very grave problems of PI society is that two classes of people are on the increase. One is a "have" or "first" class of individuals who possess symbolic skills and have been educated and trained to function well in an information intensive environment. They have the ability and desire to lead lives characterized by high degrees of symbolic interaction. The second "other" class is comprised of youth, unemployed, displaced blue-collar workers and families, minorities, and the aged. This "other" class is increasingly marginalized and ineligible for participation in PI society. They lack the symbolic interaction skills and knowledge required for work in PI workplaces and often have neither the wherewithal nor the desire to acquire skills needed for successful employment in these workplaces. This population is almost certain to experience increasing amounts of ontological insecurity. Increasingly, members of this population find their ways of being no longer adequate. Any over-all remedy to this problem is most likely to be the result of changed political, economic, educational and social policies. Of course, counsellors will have much work to do with indiviudals who are trying to move from marginalized status in the "other" class to symbolic competency status in the "first" class.

Human Life is Lingusitic Life

Language is a kind of time machine which makes possible the reenactment of social practices and differentiation of past, present, and future. Through the use of electronic networks we can be with each other in the same moment of time while at great distances spatially. Linguistic skills take on much greater value and importance in PI society than in industrial society. One of the most serious problems facing PI societies is how to make adaptations for large populations of people who do not possess the linguistic competence required of PI society workplaces and family relationships.

Counselling and psychological practices of the future will quite likely
be influenced more and more by such disciplines as symbolic interac-
tionism, narrative psychoplogy, and constructionist social psychology—
disciplines which seem more adequate for describing and explaining PI
selves than the current objectivist, behavioural paradigm which is preoc-
cupied with individualistic assumptions (Denzin, 1991).

Shame Replaces Guilt

In pre-modern and early modern society when traditional sources of
authority were still in place, "inhibitions," "sanctions" and authoritative
"reprimand" served to instill guilt and thus control the self and conduct.
With the onset of PI society and the decay of tradition and the lessening
of guilt as a guide for self-formation, shame is emerging as a widespread
psychological condition. Shame should be understood in relation to
personal integrity and personal insufficiency (low self-esteem) while guilt
is a correlate of wrongdoing. Self-esteem is a topic of wide interest in
psychology and pedagogy and in the popular literature as well. Self-
empowerment is another topic of emerging interest and one that is
directly related to the self as a reflexive project. Helen Lewis (1971) has
distinguished two types of shame, "overt" and "by-passed." Overt shame
refers to feelings when humiliated by others while by-passed shame
comes from experienced inadequacies of self. Shame indicates that self-
identity and trustful relations with others are under threat. The risky,
unpredictable conditions PI society bring on the experience of anxiety as
more and more it is becoming difficult for indivdiuals to answer such
basic self-identity questions as "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?"
Shame is the negative side of the motivational system of the individual.
Pride and hope constitute the positive side. The individual with high self-
esteem is infused with pride and hopefulness—in other words, confi-
dence in the coherence and integrity of the narrative of self-identity.

Developing a coherent sense of one's self (biography) and engaging in
activities which establish feelings of adequacy are primary means of
freeing oneself from shame and at the same time opening oneself out
into the future. Adequate or "empowered" selves are constructed
through activity and reflexivity.

Pure Relationships

In both traditional and modern cultures, family life and work life rela-
tionships have been guided by external criteria. This means that relation-
ships were constructed on understandings of rights, duties, privileges,
obligations and defined responsibilities. In PI society the concept of
relationship is changing to a negotiated structure rather than a pre-
defined structure. Giddens refers to this emerging relational phenome-

non as the "pure relationship." Some features of this pure relationship are that:

1. It is not anchored in externally imposed duties and obligations— rather it is negotiated and remains open to re-negotiation.

2. It is sought only for what the relationship can bring to the interactants involved and is not much invested with traditional meaning.

3. The pure relationship is reflexively organized more-or-less on an economic life by way of newspaper articles, magazines, specialist books, television talk shows and documentaries, networks, and special topic courses and weekend workshops.

4. It is concerned with commitment in as much as commitment essentially replaces the external anchors of more traditional relationships. Commitment provides a degree of emotional support during periods of perturbation in the history of the relationship.

5. The pure relationship requires sensitivity to nuances of feeling, meaning, gesture and speech. Pure relationships are much more personal and customized than traditional relationships. They are socially constructed and interactants must be able to "read" each other and reflexively redirect their acts so as to maintain freedom from unacceptable levels of relationship stress or inequity.

6. It assumes reciprocal trust as an essential ingredient. This includes the ability to listen as well as to talk, and attempts to "get to" feelings behind issues.

7. Finally, the pure relationship, according to Giddens, is a key environment for constructing the reflexive project of the self. It allows for and demands organized and continuous self understanding. The moral basis for the pure relationship is "authenticity," rather than recourse to traditional values. Authenticity derives from knowing oneself, and being able and willing to disclose that knowledge to others, discursively and through action.

Dilemmas of the Self

This section on Giddens' work will finish by reviewing "dilemmas of the self" characteristic of PI society. The first dilemma is unification vs fragmentation. Every day the reflexive project of the self incorporates diverse contextual happenings and must chart a course through this experience. The reflexive activity of the self can lead to coherence and sense-making or toward fragmentation and doubt.

The second dilemma is powerlessness vs empowerment. The diversity of lifestyle options made available in PI society offers numerous opportunities for empowerment, and perhaps even more which lead to powerlessness. The experience of personal power or its lack is an extremely

important and all-pervasive phenomenon in daily life. It is useful to distinguish between modes of "being overpowering," "being overpowered" and "being empowered."

The third dilemma is authority vs uncertainty. Under conditions of little or no traditional authority to guide one, then the reflexive project of the self must steer a way between commitment and uncertainty. Risk-taking, trust-building, and authenticity are directly implicated in the effort of the reflexive project of the self to chart a course in the uncertain waters of PI social order.

To sum up Giddens' thesis: the emerging conditions of PI society, globalization, deskilling, and commodification, produce change which is rapid, unpredictable, and risky to individuals. This accelerated change, together with the decay of nearly all forms of earlier moral authority, requires that individuals be viewed in new ways. Namely, they must take charge of (a) constructing a reflexively and internally referenced project of self, and (b) they must co-construct relations at work and at home out of conditions of uncertainty, conflict and lack of external moral criteria. These observations suggest the need to adopt a constructivist view of social life and raise many implications for counselling in the PI context.

In 1931, the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers (1931) presciently wrote about the coming era of globalization, mass-order and technological life. He believed that the levelling and unsheltering effect of modern, objectivist, commodified life was unavoidable, yet he held out a hope for those with the courage and the willingness to risk self-empowerment. To paraphrase, he wrote that people are more than what they know of themselves. They are not just a static entity, they are a process. Each individual is not merely a life, but within that life is endowed with possibilities through the freedom to make oneself what one will by the activities on which one decides. He predicted that there would be many who would find ways to pull themselves back from the anxious borderline of self-destruction and banal existence and ". . . take matters into their own hands, realize they own selfhood, and enjoy true being" (p. 227). In 1931 Jaspers was already envisioning an era in which the self as reflexive would become necessary for a successful and meaningful existence.

HAGE, POWERS AND THE COMING YEARS

As a second source of analysis of what the future is likely to mean for family and work life, and therefore for counsellors, *Post-industrial lives: Roles and relationships in the 21st century* (Hage & Powers, 1992) was consulted. Like Giddens, Hage and Powers believe that a new epoch — post-industrial society — is not being constructed out of global events and through the decay of local, traditional communities. Their primary interest is in understanding the meaning of PI transformations for work roles and personal relationships. They too believe that the macro changes

taking place in economies and social orders will have profound conse-quences on the way people will lead (or already are leading) their lives. In their opinion, the very character of the social self is being altered into a more complex and pluralistic or polyphonic phenomenon under the impact of PI conditions.

There are a remarkable number of similarities between Giddens and Hage and Powers. The following discussion includes those observations which seem to have the most relevance for counsellors and the practice of counselling.

The transformation to post-industrial society means that more and more work tasks will be defined in terms of information gathering, problem solving, creation of new ideas and products, and the ability to respond flexibly to new situations and interact in new and adaptive ways. In general, both physical labour and routine labour will be replaced by various forms of mental, symbolic activity. Service and tourist industries will continue to be human labour intensive, but even these will call for higher quality symbolic and interactional skills and attitudes.

In the family, we can already find clear evidence of PI impact on marriage and child-rearing. Divorce rates have risen drastically over the past few decades, a sure sign that the institution of marriage is being re-defined. Spousal roles have been moving from "rights" and "obligations" to "negotiation." The marriage vow is no longer "until death do us part" but more like "until we agree that this is no longer working." The interpenetration of "experts" into family life via television, radio, tab-loids, magazines, workshops, books and so on is phenomenal.

There are changes in work and family roles that not only are occurring in tandem, but that are also interactive with each other. For example: (a) team effort is more evident both in families and on the job; (b) rais-ing children and doing work is taking on more plasticity as greater adaptation to changing societal pressures and individual variation is required; (c) an increasing number of parents—both dual and single—are working; parenting and working roles interpenetrate much more now than in earlier times; (d) an increasing number of people work "at home" at least part time; (e) work which involves symbolic problem solving is much more likely to be taken home at night, at least in the head, than work that involves operation of machinery; and (f) increas-ingly, parents, spouses, workers, and managers are all expected to be better communicators and to know how to listen responsibly and to attend to emotional nuances of communication.

What the foregoing suggests is that there is an increasing "blurring" of distinctions between work and family, between personal and public life. In large part what Hage and Powers contend is that societies transform-ing under the influence of PI or postmodern influences will require more and better quality interactional competencies from members of

society in both work and family contexts. This is, in part, based on the earlier discovery of G. H. Mead (1964) that members of society are more likely to participate at higher levels of satisfaction and competence to the extent they are able to take varying roles, engage in imaginative rehearsal, adjust their interpersonal responses in different contexts, and read conventional gestures in local contexts.

Hage and Powers' central argument is that the rapid development of an informational and service society, together with increasing complexification will create a labour market demand for more people with creative minds and complex selves. Such persons will need to be more interpersonally competent and responsive to others and will spend more time on innovation than on routine production.

With the complexification of social order and the accompanying decay of external authority, there are fewer and fewer situations for which there is one right way to act, or problems for which there is one right solution. Moreover, a complex self is more than an aggregate of selves, each one of which may be called forth in the appropriate specific situation. In the complex self, all of the role-identities are capable of co-activation. For example, through the use of the portable telephone we can remain "in touch" with friends, family and work colleagues virtually simultaneously.

In more traditional contexts, individuals learn "scripted" speech. Scripted speech is a standardized set of responses which one is to make in a given situation. A good example is the famous "sales pitch." Scripted speech works well in social contexts where the assumption is that there is a "right" way to act and speak according to conventions—a kind of conversational etiquette, so to speak. Under conditions of increasing social complexity and the blurring of conventional social situations, script-speech fails. Interactants must be able to "read" others, know how to listen, take the other's roles, and adjust to varying perspectives on a given topic. If this type of creative flexibility is missing, the trust required to maintain role-relationships falters. "Impression management" will not do. Instead of giving standardized responses designed to produce predetermined effects, both workers and family members will be asked to produce more "authentic" speech and gesture. The uniqueness of the other and the nuances of communication will have to be attended to, so that the interpersonal relationship is customized to fit the person, the need, and the event.

The individual who navigates PI society well will be accomplished at role-definition. In the view of Hage and Powers, the capacity for role-redefinition will be the pivotal micro process in PI society. They identify factors which tend to hinder the capacity for role redefinition and factors which favour it.

Some factors that hinder role-definition are: (a) over-commitment to role "scripts" and impression management, (b) routinizing of behaviour,

(c) over-control or suppression of feelings imbedded in role scripts, and
(d) preoccupation with securing approval and validation from others.

Factors supporting role definition are: (a) learning to interpret both cognitive and emotive gestures (linguistic competence), (b) the ability to "take" roles on both cognitive and emotive levels (empathy), (c) the ability to engage in imaginative rehearsal (envisioning alternatives), and (d) the ability to adjust responses (context-action congruence).

There is a rapid development, particularly on the economic level, of human capital intensive organizations. These are organizations where highly specialized knowledge, much of which is carried around in people's heads, is on the increase. For example: (a) the upgrading of many semi-professional organizations such as police departments, schools, and nursing, into knowledge-intensive organizations; (b) the creation of many new small joint-venture and partner companies; (c) the establishment of many small, high-tech companies; and (d) the establishment of knowledge-intensive networks amongst cooperating researchers and amongst some industries.

While PI development proceeds unevenly from region to region there is very good evidence that organizational structures are moving from linear, hierarchical and fixed structures to fluid, organic structures with a good deal of plasticity between organizational structure and worker activity and between workers themselves. This requires complex symbolic and innovative acting and thinking, as well as finely-tuned abilities for taking theories of others on the part of managers and workers alike. In a knowlege-intensive organization, individuals typically will interact with a large number of others in widely differing roles but only a few people in each role-set.

To sum up, there are five analytic points emerging from the work of Hage and Powers which have relevance for counselling:

1. A major premise of symbolic interactionism, that individuals can construct their own life-roles (selves), is likely to be realized in PI society. A corollary to this premise is that role-defining becomes a core activity.

2. Interactional competence, which means ability to take the role of others, emotional sensitivity, and general linguistic and symbolic mental abilities, will be much more important in the future than they have been in the "working" past.

3. In knowledge-intensive workplaces, networking, consulting, and interpersonal negotiating become central skills.

4. Distinctions between personal and public, between family and work roles become harder and harder to maintain. Roles are interpenetrative and in continuing redefinition.

5. Profound and perplexing problems must be faced in the movement from industrial to PI social status. Two such problems impact on the work of counsellors. Firstly, individuals of the present and previous generations (including counsellors) have all been socialized into industrial society which is much more fixed and role-stable than the emerging PI society. This means that a great many people have difficulty even conceiving of the changes underway, not to mention trying to re-organize or redefine their self-identities in order to resonate with the emerging social context. Secondly, there will be (and there already is, to some extent) a large population of individuals who do not have, and perhaps do not want, or are incapable of acquiring, the interactional and symbolic functions required by an increasing number of PI organizations and industries, and by PI family networks. In theory, within just one or two decades, the literacy and numeracy levels required for the bulk of PI industries will approach what we now consider to be University level competence. The growth of an incapable, impoverished, marginalized New World Order, *lumpenproletariat* mired in despair, drugs and violence is a nightmarish possibility that all responsible individuals must wish to avoid. Certainly counsellors all over the world will be engaged in helping individuals to escape this fate.

REVISING COUNSELLING PRACTICE AND COUNSELLOR PREPARATION

This final section will discuss ways in which career counsellor preparation and counselling practice can be revised so as to fit the post-industrial, post-modern context. The first revision is to place counselling and the training of counsellors in a constructivist framework rather than an "objectivist" framework. Secondly, it will describe selected counselling strategies which are grounded in the constructivist framework, and are designed for use with clients in the emerging PI world of work and family. One can think of psychoanalysis as the "first force" in counselling and therapy behaviourism as the "second force," humanistic psychology as the "third force" and constructivism as the "fourth force." As G. S. Howard (1991) aptly put it, "All across the intellectual landscape, the forces of objectivism are giving way to the entreaties of constructivist thought" (p. 187).

The preparation of counselling psychologists and counsellors is largely instrumental and pragmatic. That is, counsellors learn techniques which are designed to work effectively and efficiently in order to achieve desired behavioural outcomes with clients. While skill-based training of counsellors certainly has value (Hill & Corbett, 1993), it also has drawbacks. Professional counsellors are trained to apply techniques to clients, ". . . though often without an adequate grasp of the relation of . . . [individuals] . . . to . . . their cultural contexts" (Kvale, 1990, p. 50).

Counsellors Who Also Think

Serious questions have been raised about the wisdom of specific micro-skill training approaches in counsellor education (Greenberg & Goldman, 1988; Mahon & Altmann, 1977; Martin, 1990). Three principal concerns have been voiced: (1) ultimately it seems to be the counsellor's ability to see, hear and understand the subtleties of client experience rather than the counsellor's ability to display specific "skills" that determines whether or not counselling is effective; (2) micro-skill training may produce robot-like behaviours in counsellors who by virtue of their habituated skills are incapable of perceiving and responding to diverse client needs; and (3) finely honed micro-skills do not necessarily transfer into useful behaviours in the everyday world of client and counselling (Galassi & Galassi, 1984).

There is fairly strong evidence that it is not simply the specific skills which the counsellor has which lead to effective work with clients as it is the counsellor's ability to construe and think about the client and the ability to assist the client to explicate the meaning structures of the client's lifeworld. In Martin's (1990) words: It is not the skill as such, but ". . . underlying conceptualizations, grounded in . . . knowledge and dispositional structures [that] . . . lead to effective, intentionally driven therapeutic actions" (p. 404).

It seems that counsellors face clients and contexts which call for indeterminate modes of practice. That is, they must make sense of uncertain, conflicted and unique situations of practice. It cannot be assumed that professional skill and knowledge fit every client case, nor can it be assumed that there is one right solution to each problem. Training should move counsellors along the way of being able to devise new methods of reasoning, constructing and evaluating new categories of understanding, using new ways of framing problems, and negotiating new courses of action and experiments with clients.

It is not so much that all skill training should be discontinued in counsellor education, but that counsellor education needs to go beyond skill training. One way this can be accomplished is by the artistry-in-action approach to developing professional skill and knowledge advocated by Schon (1987). Other "new-paradigm" models of training are the critical reflection approach as advocated by Mezirow (1990) and the nursing curriculum as outlined by Bevis and Watson (1989). While Bevis and Watson are proposing a caring curriculum for the training of nurses, many of their recommendations fit counselling.

The basic tenet for "new-paradigm" curricula can be found in what Greene (1978) calls a "wide-awakeness" in learning. The base of this "wide-awakeness" is critical self-reflection wherein both educators and learners can explicate their own life-world meaning structures, thereby facilitating the release of possibilities for "fruitful" action.

Learning carried on under the spotlight of critical self-reflection is both emancipatory and transformative (Watson, 1989). A great deal of counselling is directed toward assisting clients to move toward a more open range of possibilities and alternatives. A curriculum for educating counsellors should embody these same goals.

The direction to take, the need for reflection-based, transformative curricula which recognize that all knowledge is constructed and therefore is contextual, emotional, intersubjective, passionate, rational, evolving, relational, ethical and values-based can be found in the writings of Botkin, Elmandjra, and Malitza (1984); Belenky et al. (1986); Noddings (1984, 1988); and Schon (1987).

So far as future counselling practice is concerned, there is likely to be decreased preoccupation with the intrapsychic life of clients and an increase in the use of constructivist ideas about self-construction, meaning, and the psychology of narratives; and an increasing use of counselling practices derived from these ideas. This is not to say that inner life is of no consequence in PI society, but it is to say that such concepts as reflexivity, constructed selves and relational meaning will become more prominent in counsellor education and practice.

As we move toward the next century, human agency is on the increase (Touraine, 1988). However, more and more agency will be socially determined—or perhaps it is better to say co-determined through interaction. More and more there will be the tendency to construe the self as a "constructed project" which will be interpreted from the perspective of trait and behaviour.

Constructivist Training Approach

The constructivist model of training career counsellors under development at the University of Victoria has already been discussed in other papers (Peavy, 1992a; Peavy, 1992b). Four main aspects of this approach to training career counsellors will be discussed here.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is construed to be a core ingredient of both professional counsellor education and of client "therapeutic" or learning experience. Skill training tends to be a decontextualizing process, and reflexivity redresses this imbalance in that it promotes contextualization (understanding what one is doing, and why one is doing it), and promotes the discernment of assumptions and tacit knowledge.

The Knowledge. Counselling is a social practice constituted through interactions as one person attempts to "help" another cope with normal "world-living." As a social practice, counselling invokes six aspects of interaction: relationship, language, metaphor, story, power, and explication. These are the "core" elements of counselling around which counsellor training is organized. These six elements are the conceptual

reference points in constructivist-oriented counsellor preparation and counselling practice.

Counselling is "counselling" and not some other social practice by virtue of its helping relationship aspect. Language is the principal means which counsellor and client employ for making sense together; counselling is a type of "conversation." Metaphor is a vital principle of language and a key to understanding our world, others, and ourselves. Story is the device which all people use to make their lives, or aspects of their lives, coherent. Power is taken to exist in actions. Power is not a thing, an entity which is possessed, but rather exists only in actions. Power is exercised and shapes people's lives. One of the principal objectives of constructivist counselling is to create conditions and to conduct counselling so that clients are empowered. Explication is the process by means of which meaning is made. In one sense, counselling is a process of explication — giving detailed accounts, unfolding and clarifying meaning, making sense of, developing what is implied, and interpreting.

Together, relationship, language, metaphor, story, power and explication constitute the context out of which counselling "competencies" arise. Competency is more than behavioural performance. Performance is also the outward display of an internal system of meanings, values, assumptions, understandings, and dispositions. Competency includes both the outward performances and the inward dispositions, knowledge, intentions and values from which the performance arises; competency refers to ways of knowing being, and doing.

Centrality of activity and practice. It does not seem to be the formal and technical knowledge which distinguishes expert from novice counsellor as much as the tacit knowledge which expert counsellors have derived from their more extensive praxis (Martin, Slemon, Hiebert, Hallberg & Cummings, 1989). It seems to be the experience maps or construal systems derived from praxis which shapes counselling practice and informs the actions of counsellors in relation to clients more than their knowledge of counselling and personality theories (Cohen, Sargent & Sechrest, 1986).

Self as narrative. Human life is linguistic life and both counsellors and clients hold memberships in communities of language practice. These communities of language contain the meanings and assumptions including both overt, cognitive and emotional gestures and an undergirding of covert assumptions and unselfconscious meanings which individuals use to guide actions and get things done. In short, the self and role are constructed and deconstructed through symbolic interaction with others while practical actions in everyday life are guided by "semantic maps."

Examples of practical learning activities of this "new generation" counsellor training approach are:

1. practice in self and life planning by means of autobiographical writing, story-telling and narrative explication;

2. discussion and analysis of recorded role-play and actual counselling conversations with an emphasis on critical reflection and the uncovering of assumptions and tacit knowledge and the development of interactional competence;

3. practice in establishing and maintaining networks—both support networks as in human contact and informational networks as in labour market data;

4. practice of the "healing" interview through ethnographic discourse (Banister, 1991), especially questioning and meaning explication; and

5. practice in authentic conversation in which the dialogical principles enunciated by Buber (1965); Gadamer (1974); and Habermas (1984) are implemented. In this (a) whatever the speaker (counsellor or client) says is invested with importance and feeling, (b) the speaker (counsellor or client) believes what he or she is saying (in contrast with impression management), (c) the speaker (counsellor) experiences a sense of affinity with listeners (clients), (d) listening is given equal status with speaking in counselling conversations, and (e) both participants (counsellor and client) are open to being changed by what is said.

Study and discussion of theoretical knowledge. The overall objective of the training approach is to promote a counselling self which is complex, polyphonic, reflective, characterized by a good quality of interactional competency and which is able to integrate both subjective and objective knowledge in a competent, constructed self.

Instructions for the constructivist counsellor. Initally a revised definition of (career) counselling must be proposed. Counselling is defined as a general methodolgy for life-planning. The intended outcome of counselling is the empowerment of clients to get on with their lives and participate in society according to directions and purposes which are satisfying to them and constructive for society.

Counselling is "career" counselling when the main foucs of counselling is on aspects of worklife such as career choosing, training, job-acquisition, conflict at work, retirement concerns, etc.

Assuming that there is increasing interpenetration of family, work, health and leisure in the lives of PI society members, distinctions between different kinds of counselling are becoming more artificial. Such distinctions are more a function of bureaucratic turf than of a realistic knowledge of client need and counselling process.

The constructivist counsellor is committed to entering directly into the life-world (meaning and life activities) of clients as much as possible. Objective aids such as psychometric tests, formalized interviews, and technical vocabulary use are regarded sceptically, as they are viewed as methods of "distancing" rather than methods of "being present to." This allows for the assertion of a number of "operating" principles guiding the counsellor's work with clients: (a) work from the life world of the client as experienced and reported by the client; (b) use conversation to mediate counsellor/client experience; within conversation the counsellor engages in "receptive inquiry" which is a blend of empathy, questioning, and various linguistic devices such as "summarizing," "turn-taking," and "metaphorizing"; (c) use networking to help clients access information and participate in social and community support; (d) use narrative means to redefine self and role—means such as story eliciting and story analysis, personal documents such as journals, letters, notations, and forms of autobiographical writing and thinking (White & Epston, 1990); (e) use role-play and imaginative rehearsal for practice in role and self redefinition; and use personal project analysis (Palys & Little, 1980), life activity analysis (Peavy, 1990c) and personal construct analysis (Fransella & Dalton, 1990) to assist clients to connect meaning and action in their worklife dilemmas.

As a final thought, participation in constructivist training and practice can help counsellors and clients move toward inventing solutions and futures, toward a heightened sense of responsibility towards self and others, and promote counselling which is creative and fruitful. Certainly, there will be revisions needed in counselling theory and practice in order to assist people who are experiencing social and personal change much as W. B. Yeats (1924, p. 187) described in the *Second Coming*:

Turning and turning the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

References

Banister, B. M. (1991). *You're always in a dream: An ethnographic study of women's experiences of marriage to alcoholic husbands.* University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N. & Tarule, J. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing, the development of self, voice and mind.* New York: Basic Books.

Bevis, E. O. & Watson, J. (eds.) (1989). *Toward a caring curriculum: A new pedagogy for nursing.* New York: National League for Nursing.

Buber, M. (1965). *The knowledge of Man, Selected Essays,* (Trans. M. Friedman & R. M. Smith). NY: Harper & Row.

Botkin, J. W., Elmandjra, M. & Malitza, M. (1984). *No limits to learning.* New York: Pergamon Press.

Cohen, L., Sargent, M. & Sechrest, L. (1986). Use of psychotherapy research by professioanl psychologists. *American Psychologist, 41,* 198-206.

Denzin, N. (1991). *Postmodernism and the poverty of social theory.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fransella, F. & Dalton, P. (1990). *Personal construct counselling in action.* London: Sage.

Gadamer, H. G. (1989) 2nd Edition Revised. *Truth and Method.* The Crossroad Publishing Corp: New York.

Galassi, J. P. & Galassi, M. D. (1984). Promoting transfer and maintenance of counselling outcomes: How do we do it and how do we study it? In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (eds.), *Handbook of counseling psychology* (pp. 397-434). New York: Wiley Interscience.

Geertz, C. (1986). Making experiences, authoring selves. In E. Bruner and V. Turner (eds.). *The anthropology of experience.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gergen, K. G. (1991). *The saturated self.* New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Greenberg, L. S. & Goldman, R. L. (1988). Training in experiental therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 56,* 692-702.

Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning.* New York: Teacher's College Press, Columbia University.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action.* Boston: Beacon.

Hage, J. & Powers, C. (1992) *Post-industrial lives: Roles and relationships in the 21st century.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hill, C. E. & Corbett, M. M. (1993). A perspective on the history of process and outcome research in counselling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 40,* 3-24.

Howard, G. S. (1991). Culture tales: A narrative approach to thinking, cross-cultural psychology, and psychotherapy. *American Psychologist, 45*(3), 187-97.

Jaspers, K. (1931). *Man in the modern age* (trans. Eden and Cedar Paul). Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.

Kvale, S. (1990). Postmodern psychology: A contradiction in adjecto? *The humanistic psychologist, 18*(1), 50.

Lewis, Helen (1971). *Shame and guilt in neurosis.* New York: International Universities Press.

Mahon, B. R. & Altman, H. A. (1977). Skill training, Cautions and Recommendations. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 17,* 42-50.

Mahoney, M. J. (1991). *Human change processes.* New York: Basic Books.

Martin, J. (1990). Confusions in psychological skill training. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 68,* 402-07.

Martin, J., Slemon, A., Hiebert, B., Hallberg, E. & Cummings, A. (1989). Conceptualization of novice and experienced counsellors. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 36,* 395-400.

Mead, G. H. (1964). *Mind, self and society* (C. Morris, ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published in 1934.)

Mezirow, J. (1990). *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral development.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

————. (ed.). (1988, February). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. *American Journal of Education.*

Palys, T. S. & Little, B. R. (1980). A project-based analysis of community dynamics and satisfactions. Presented at EDRA II: Annual Meeting of Environments Design Research Association, Charleston, S.C.

Peavy, R. V. (1992a). A constructivist model of training for career counsellors. *Journal of Career Development*, Vol. *18*(3), Spring, 1992.

———. (1992b). *Redesigning counsellor education*. Unpublished document. Career Counsellor Training Project: University of Victoria.

———. (1992c). *Personal construct perspectives on career counselling*. Unpublished paper. Career Counsellor Training Project: University of Victoria.

Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.

Schon, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Touraine, A. (1988). *Return of the actor*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Watson, J. (1989). Transformative thinking and a caring curriculum. In E. O. Bevis & J. Watson (eds.), *Toward a caring curriculum: A new pedagogy for nursing* (pp. 51-60). New York: National League for Nursing.

White, M. & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: Norton.

Yeats, W. B. (1924). *The second coming*. In Finneran, ed., The poems of W. B. Yeats: New edition. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

About the Author

Vance Peavy, Ph.D., is currently professor in the Department of Psychological Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria.

Address correspondence to: Vance Peavy, Department of Psychological Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, Box 3010, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3N4.