Using my career story to foster reflective capacity, hope, and narrative change

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Abstract

My Career Story (MCS) comprises a self-guided autobiographical workbook designed to assist individuals across life's diverse spectrum to narrate and shape their career stories. We describe the development and use of the MCS and its relevance for all people contemplating career transitions. Results of a study using the MCS with 20 emerging adults in Northern Italy supported the validity of its use. Specifically, results indicated that individuals shift to more positive, clear, action-oriented language in the stories they tell at the end of the MCS workbook, after constructing their life portraits, as compared with the stories they tell at the opening of the workbook. Also, scores on measures of reflective capacity and hope increased following the MCS intervention. Results of the study further support use of the MCS in career intervention contexts.

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Using My Career Story to Foster Reflective Capacity, Hope, and Narrative Change

Individuals make themselves and their worlds through the stories they tell (Hartung, 2013; Savickas, 2019, 2020). To best achieve life-career success, individuals must construct a story about themselves that expresses very clearly who they are, where they most like to be in the work world, and how they want to use work in a way that best allows them to be fully themselves. In so doing, they can turn what they might often experience as a negative story into a positive story. They can thereby foster their own self-empowerment, purposefulness, and positive direction that can turn a felt disadvantage into an advantage. This may prove true for all people including persons living in and experiencing marginalized and under-resourced situations.

In the present study, we examined the utility and effectiveness of the My Career Story (MCS) autobiographical workbook (Savickas & Hartung, 2012, 2021) for assisting emerging adults to increase their reflective capacity, turn their career uncertainty into certainty, and increase their sense of hope for navigating their life-careers through turbulent and difficult circumstances. Specifically, we investigated whether scores on measures of reflective capacity and hope would increase after administration and use of the MCS. We also examined whether the MCS promotes positive narrative change such that stories told at the conclusion of the workbook contain more solution-focused, goal-directed, and action-oriented language than do stories told at the beginning of the workbook.

Career Construction Counseling

The MCS derives from principles and practices of career construction counseling (Savickas, 2019). Career construction and other approaches within the life-designing paradigm have promulgated a host of groundbreaking narrative-based intervention schemes throughout the international career psychology and practice community (e.g., see Hartung, 2013; Maree, 2007, 2019; McMahon, 2017). Counselors and other career service providers who use career construction counseling methods recognize that individuals make themselves through story. In telling their life stories, individuals shape their identities in the form of self-defining autobiographical narratives. These narratives hold and carry them through times of uncertainty and instability, especially characteristic of life today. Career construction emphasizes narratability to tell a coherent story, adaptability to cope with changes in self and situation, and intentionality to design a meaningful life (Savickas, 2019, 2020).

In today's world marked by uncertainty and instability, individuals must construct certainty and stability within themselves. Doing so requires identity and career adaptability. Identity involves individuals being able to say with clarity and conviction who they are, who they are becoming, and what matters to them (Hartung & Taber, 2015). Adaptability involves having the inner resources to manage change (Hartung & Cadaret, 2017). Narrating answers to fundamental identity questions of "Who am I?," Who am I becoming?," and "What is important to me?" with regard to work roles forms one central goal of career construction counseling. Through their identities individuals tell the world who they are. Developing adaptability resources to plan, decide about, explore, and confidently pursue careers forms another central career construction counseling goal. Through adaptability people shape who they become.

Career construction counseling methods (Savickas, 2019) help individuals narrate their vocational identities, build their career adaptability resources, and increase their intentionality about making career decisions. Intentionality denotes a process of engaging meaningfully and purposefully in activities embedded within psychosocial roles. Counselors and other career service providers who use career construction counseling methods recognize that everyone has a story, wants to tell that story, and wants others to hear their story. To pursue lives of personal meaning and fulfillment, and that others view as important, individuals must know and shape their own stories.

Career construction counseling (Savickas, 2019) entails an interpersonal process of helping people author career stories that connect their self-concepts to work roles, fit work into life, and make meaning through narratives about self and work. Using the narrative paradigm, career construction counseling entails three parts: (a) career construction interview (CCI), (b) life portraiture, and (c) action. The CCI comprises six questions. The first question elicits the client's goals for counseling. The subsequent five questions elicit small stories that counselors use with clients to construct clients' career identity narratives, or life portraits. The five questions ask about childhood role models (*self*); favorite T.V. shows, web sites, or magazines (preferred work *stage*); favorite stories from a book or movie (*script* for how to move forward); favorite sayings or mottos (*self-advice*); and early childhood memories (early *stories* that provide perspective on a current career problem).

In sum, the six CCI questions tell a story about the client's goals for counseling, who they are or are becoming, their preferred work stage, their script for how to move forward in their careers, their own best advice for doing so, and how they view their current career dilemma (for more detailed descriptions and use of the CCI see Hartung, 2015 and Savickas, 2019). Clients' responses to these questions convey self-defining stories as the counselor listens closely, asks clarifying questions, and makes reflective statements to build meaning. While conducting the interview, the counselor writes down the client's responses for use in creating a life portrait and as a record for the client to reflect upon. After completing the interview, counselor and client collaborate to identify themes and patterns from the collection of micro-narratives that emerged from the responses and proceed to shape them into a life portrait.

Using the CCI and career construction counseling methods, career counselors assist clients to achieve life-designing goals of *narratability* – to know and tell one's life-career story coherently, *adaptability* – to cope with changes in self and situation, *intentionality* – to design a meaningful life, and *activity* – to put one's life-career story into action (Savickas et al., 2009). Using such methods may prove especially useful as the world community experiences the unprecedented havoc, upheaval, and tragedy wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Counselors and other career service providers now move in these times and circumstances to strengthen their international unity and shared mission of serving others, especially those most vulnerable and in greatest need. Responding in kind, counselors around the world serve and support all who face enormous challenges exacerbated by the pandemic and associated with job loss, social isolation, illness, marginalization, and various other forms of displacement and dislocation that have unhinged countless numbers of people from their former and once familiar routines of daily life.

An Autobiographical Workbook for Life-Career Success

Based in career construction counseling, *My Career Story* (MCS; Savickas & Hartung, 2012, 2021) comprises a self-guided autobiographical workbook designed to assist individuals across life's diverse spectrum to self-narrate their career stories. The MCS applies career construction counseling principles to helping people make choices about their current life-career transitions and future career directions. Research suggests that workbooks like the MCS offer an effective means of career intervention to improve career planning and choice (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000; Brown et al., 2003). Available free of charge and in several languages at www.vocopher.com the MCS follows a rationale based in career construction theory and practice (Savickas, 2019, 2020) and offers use in diverse settings (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020).

The MCS contains a series of questions that prompt users to tell their life stories, reveal their life themes, and enact their stories in work and career (Savickas & Hartung, 2012, 2021). The life theme is then related to a career problem currently faced, such as deciding about educational and occupational options and making career plans. Reflecting on the answers to the questions aims to promote achievement of core life-design goals of narratability, intentionality, and career adaptability (Savickas et al., 2009).

The MCS contains three parts. Part 1 begins with a prompt for the user to tell a story about their current career problem, and then to respond to the first four questions of the career construction interview. These questions deal with identifying admired people from childhood; favorite television shows, websites, or magazines; a current favorite story from a book or movie; and a favorite saying or motto. In Part 2, users consider their answers from the four questions of Part 1 to construct a summary life portrait. The life portrait indicates the user's (a) *self* in terms of who they are or are becoming, (b) preferred work *setting* that can be represented by a RIASEC vocational personality type (Holland, 1997), (c) *script* for how they can move their career story forward and link their self to their preferred setting, (d) *success* formula in the form of a mission statement drawn from their self, setting, and script, and (e) *self-advice* in the form of their own best guidance for how they can apply their success formula.

Critical to the effectiveness of the MCS for making career decisions and choices, Part 2 concludes with a prompt for the user to re-write the narrative they constructed in Part 1 about their current career problem. Narratives written in Part 2 are expected to differ significantly from narratives written in Part 1. The expected difference is that Part 2 narratives contain more positive, clear, goal-directed, and action-oriented language that do Part 1 narratives. Part 3 then prompts the user to make a realistic plan for putting their story into action. Prior research supports the efficacy of the MCS workbook for fostering core life-design and career construction counseling goals (Cadaret, & Hartung, 2020; Hartung & Santilli, 2018; Santilli, Nota, & Hartung, 2019).

Reflective Capacity and Hope

Practitioners use the MCS workbook to encourage client reflective capacity and reflexivity as part of life-designing career interventions (Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas 2015). Reflective capacity denotes the ability to thoughtfully consider self in relation to past personal lived experiences (Leary & Tangney, 2003). Reflexivity involves clients contemplating their past experiences, present circumstances, and hopefulness and future action toward goal setting and goal achievement (Savickas, 2011, 2015). Clients' reflections on self, stories, and scripts produce concrete knowledge and stimulate self-examination pertinent to their current career tasks, transitions, or troubles (Savickas, 2020). Through career construction counseling methods like the MCS, counselors promote clients' hope and prompt goal setting that leads clients to new actions for shaping their careers.

Reflection denotes self-awareness that flows into intention (Rennie, 2004) and leads to making decisions with self-awareness and acting with personal meaning. This sense-making activity enables individuals to change self and behavior (Savickas, 2016). Increasing clients' reflective capacity, these interventions, in turn, create hope by building clients' future orientation and creating routes that lead from the present to goal achievement. Reflection further involves individuals having the capacity to examine their thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, circumstances, and emerging self-concepts embedded within their unique life contexts (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2010). Regular engagement in self-reflection provides a solid foundation for and increases the probability that new information will be considered in subsequent career planning (Santilli et al., 2021).

Reflexivity develops hope by fostering integration and continuity among the past, present, and future. Hope, in turn, prompts envisioning a meaningful goal and believing that positive outcomes are likely to occur by implementing specific plans. Hope denotes "the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). University students with higher levels of hope have been found less likely to procrastinate on tasks such as writing papers, studying for tests, and completing reading assignments when compared to students with lower levels of hope (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Findings such as this underscore the importance of having a sense of hope and it helps people believe that they will be able to take specific steps to achieve future goals. Hopefulness proves essential for career self-management by increasing

future orientation and assembling successful pathways to set and achieve realistic career goals (Savickas, 1990).

Purpose of the Study

Based on the foregoing discussion, we tested two hypotheses. First, the MCS aims to yield narrative change such that semantic differences occur between career stories written at the end of the workbook compared to stories written at the beginning of the workbook. Therefore, we hypothesized that the career narratives written at the end of the MCS workbook contain significantly more positive, goal-directed, and action-oriented language than do narratives told at the beginning of the workbook. Specifically, we expected that correlations between the content of career stories written at the beginning and at the end of the workbook would be relatively low, with reflections gradually focusing on future intentions to undertake career-advancing activities and more positive thoughts about the future at the end of MCS. We hypothesized that narratives written in Part 2 of the workbook include language and content reflecting increased hopefulness towards the future and characterized by an understanding of that future and by what individuals can do to manage it. Such narrative change serves as an indicator of significant positive change in clients' reflections and thoughts on their career paths. Second, we hypothesized that scores on measures of reflective capacity and hope increase significantly after the MCS intervention.

Method

Participants

A total of 20 students (12 women and 8 men) studying at a university and residing in Northeastern Italy participated in the study. All students were identified as at risk of leaving university early without completing their degrees and expressed interest in designing their career futures. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 25 years (*M* = 22.06; *DS* = 1.23). Six participants were enrolled in a university master class and held a bachelor's degree. Fourteen participants were enrolled in bachelor's degree classes and had a high-school diploma.

All participants were involved in a career counseling activity within the Larios Laboratory, a university laboratory for vocational guidance and career counseling in Italy. This activity helps students to clarify their career goals and expectations, understand their own identities, make informed decisions, take responsibility for their own actions, and manage their careers and transitions. The career counseling offered comprised a confidential form of providing support to individuals who faced difficult situations and crises or to prevent crises. It involved five individual counseling sessions between counselor and client, based on the principle of personal development and increasing clients' motivation to actively engage in defining the problem or transition they face, solving their personal problems, and assuming responsibility for their own decision making mindful of the unique personal and contextual factors that might affect their choices.

Measures

Reflective capacity. We used the Groningen Reflection Ability Scale (GRAS; Aukes et al., 2007) to measure participants' capacity for reflection. The GRAS was developed as a practical measure of the ability of medical students and physicians to personally reflect. Individuals respond to the 23-item GRAS using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree. The GRAS yields a total scale and three subscale scores that include *self-reflection* (e.g., "I take a close look at my own habits of thinking"), *empathic reflection* (e.g., "I am aware of the possible emotional impact of information on others"), and *reflective communication* (e.g., "I am open to discussion about my opinions"). The minimum score is 23 and the maximum score is 115 with higher scores associated with greater reflective ability. Previous

reliability was reported with a Cronbach's alpha that range between 0.83 and 0.74 in two separate samples of medical students respectively for the three scales (Aukes et al., 2007). Content and concurrent validity have been previously reported (Aukes, Geertsma, Cohen-Schotanus, Zwierstra, & Slaets, 2008). Specifically, the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was 0.73, differences related to gender were not statistically significant and, the difference between demographic variables and reflection ability scores were not statistically significant. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's Alpha for the present study was .83, .85, .87, respectively, for the three scales.

Hope. We used the 12-item Adult Trait Hope Scale (ATHS; Snyder et al., 1991) to measure the trait aspect of hope in individuals. Sample items include "I can think of many ways to get out of a jam" and "I energetically pursue my goals." A 5-point Likert scale (0 = Definitely false, 4 = Definitely true) was used. The scale also contains four additional items that assess two sub-components of hope; agency (e.g., 'I've been pretty successful in life') and pathways (e.g., "I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me"). Participants are asked to rate how true each statement is for them on a 4-point scale (1 = "Definitely false", 4 = "Definitely true"). Summing all 12 items generates a total hope score that characterizes both agency and pathway items. Elevated scores indicate higher hope.

The structure of the ATHS has been investigated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses (Ferrari, Nota, & Soresi, 2010). Results indicated that the scale retains good psychometric properties in an Italian context. Wilkins and colleagues (2014) reported a Cronbach's α of .77 and they also found that hope was strongly associated with an increase in adaptability dimensions suggesting that students who endorse both a greater sense of perceived capacity to derive pathways to desired goals and possess the ability to utilize such pathways may be more inclined to perceive themselves as adaptable in their careers. The Cronbach's α for the ATHS in the current sample was .77.

Procedure

All participants were involved in a career counseling intervention through the Larios Laboratory of the University of Padova, Italy. After asking prospective participants if they wished to join the study, they were informed about the details of the intervention and what their participation would involve. Those agreeing to participate gave their written consent. All participants volunteered to take part in the study. Participants completed the MCS workbook independently prior to starting career counseling and then returned it to the counselor who offered follow-up counseling sessions to discuss their completed workbooks and support them to describe the goal in detail, identify personal and contextual supports and barriers to its achievement, identify steps to accomplish it programmatically, and monitor individuals' actions. Prior to administering the MCS, participants responded to the GRAS and Hope Scale. All participants then again responded to these two measures after completing the MCS intervention.

Data Analysis

To evaluate the effectiveness of the MCS workbook intervention we analyzed the data using both statistical significance tests and Latent Semantic Analysis. The effects of the MCS workbook intervention on reflection and hope were evaluated using a nonparametric method (Wilcoxon signed-rank tests). According to Cohen's ES (1988), the effect size was calculated for changes over time, applying the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test (r) using the formula z/√N, where z is the test statistic, and N equals twice the number of individuals included in the respective analyses. According to Cohen's (1988) criteria, an effect size around 0.1 = low effect, 0.3 = medium effect, and 0.5 = significant effect.

We used Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA; Deerwester et al., 1990) to estimate the semantic differences in participants' reflections described in their current career problem stories told at the opening of the workbook and those described in their career transition stories told at the end of MCS. LSA comprises an automated computational technique for representing the meaning (content) of a text as a

vector in a relatively high-dimensional semantic space. The rationale and method for LSA have been described in Deerwester and colleagues (1990) and Landauer and Dumais (1996), and are summarized in Landauer, Foltz and Laham (1998). For our study purposes we followed the holistic method applied by others (e.g., Dam & Kaufmann, 2008; Hartung & Santilli, 2018; Landauer et al., 1998). The holistic method analyzes differences between participants' descriptions of their current career problem at the beginning and the end of MCS. Lower correlations (i.e., r values < .05) between participants' reflections at the beginning and the end of the MCS indicate significant change in reflections and thoughts.

Results

We first examined the data for significant changes in pre- and post-test scores on the measures of reflective capacity and hope. As seen in Table 1, the Wilcoxon test showed significant changes between pre-test and post-test scores on the reflective capacity measure (z = 2.407, *p* = .014; r = .89). Specifically, the dimensions of self-reflection (z = 4.008, *p* = .008; r = .89) and empathic reflection (z = 2.569, *p* = .001; r = .57) showed significant change in pre- and post- test scores. Results also indicated increases in Hope Scale scores produced after the participants completed the MCS intervention (z = 3.698, *p* = .030; r = .82).

Next, we conducted an LSA pairwise comparison (Landauer & Dumais, 1996) of the semantic differences in the stories told at the opening of the workbook by participants and the stories they told after constructing their life portraits. The LSA average correlation value for the similarity between participants' career narratives told at the beginning and the career narratives they told at the end of MCS was .32. The descriptions of the current career transition and problem expressed by the participants at the end of MCS emphasized more positive, clear, action-oriented language than did the stories of career transition that they told at the beginning of the MCS workbook.

Three examples of participants' career stories told before and after they composed their life portraits within the MCS highlight the semantic changes in their narratives. One participant wrote the following narrative at the beginning of the MCS about the current career problem that they faced:

> The transition that I must face relates to entry into the world of work. Transition is not easy and is determined by considering the deep economic crisis and the changing world of work. Considering the many difficulties that I must deal with make it hard for me to actually perform work for me that is dignified and satisfying. I think this interview will be useful for me to clarify my life project, identify alternative ways to pursue my career goal, and focus on possible career options that I have now.

At the end of MCS after constructing their life portrait, the same participant told the following story:

> The transition that I have to face is about the entry into the world of work. Transition is not easy. Considering the many difficulties that I must deal with to have a decent and satisfactory work, I'll never forget that I have the control over my professional life, and that with commitment, hard work and dedication, I could achieve my personal goals (will and power). I will never have to lose the curiosity and the desire to discover that has always characterized me since I was a baby; in other words, look for the vibrant workplace, willing to find novelty where there is the opportunity to grow.

A second participant wrote the following story about their current career problem at the beginning of the MCS:

> I am finishing my university education. I am in a transition and changing period; this is the moment to leave the security of the university world to enter the real world, the "adult" world, where you must produce and respect the times. Now, there are no excuses to procrastinate. It is the moment to begin and face the risk of confronting myself with reality. I have a clear idea about my career

future. I am moving, bring CV in the office in which I'd like to work. This workbook could help me explore in depth at this moment, as well as set goals and think about ways to achieve them.

At the end of MCS after constructing their life portrait, this same participant told the following story:

The suggestion that I give to myself is 'Who is sleeping don't take the fish'. In this moment of change and transition is important that I do not give up, act and looking for a career opportunity. Considering my interest, I could explore other professions that I didn't consider at the beginning and gather information more as is possible. I want to help people in a difficult situation, be useful, better express my abilities and what I have learned during these years of hard work. I will address this transition with greater awareness of who I am and what I want to be.

A third participant, at the beginning of MCS, wrote these words about the transition they currently faced:

Actually, my biggest educational commitment is the conclusion of a bachelor's degree. I am working on my thesis. My actual transition involves two things. One is to decide whether to continue on after bachelor's degree to do a master's degree. The other is to decide whether to continue working in a cooperative where I worked part-time as a freelancer.

The same participant described their transition moment at the end of MCS as follows:

In the last five years, I have done many important things for the construction of my career life. I'd like to now increase my self-confidence and hope for a good professional life and career. Also, from the economic point of view, the completion of this workbook is helping me in this direction. Regarding the possibility of attending university for a master's degree, completing this workbook is giving me the feeling that I will be able to evaluate and decide what to do.

Discussion

We examined the effectiveness of the MCS for increasing scores on measures of reflection and hope, as well as change in MCS narratives in a group of university students engaged in a career counseling intervention. We sought to assess the effectiveness of using the MCS workbook for promoting narrative change. Specifically, we aimed to determine whether individuals tell more positive, goal-directed, and action-oriented career stories at the end of the workbook after constructing their life portraits than they do at the beginning of the workbook before life-portrait construction. We hypothesized that narratives written at the end of the workbook would be more positive, hopeful, and action oriented than are narratives written at the beginning of the workbook. The end-of-workbook narratives should be more hopeful about the future, understanding of that future, and clear about what individuals can do to manage the future. Such narrative change was expected as an indicator of significant shift in reflections and thoughts. We also hypothesized that scores on measures of reflective capacity and hope would increase significantly after the MCS intervention.

Results of the statistical significance test showed that participants experienced an overall increase in their scores on measures of reflective capacity and hope. The increased reflective capacity (self-reflection and empathic reflection) scores could be due to providing participants an opportunity to connect their past and present career micro-stories told in the MCS and projecting those stories toward their future life-career projects. Specifically, participants may have experienced the possibility of positively projecting their professional futures, considering their life-career designs beyond the present, and having a more active role in identifying and dealing with challenges and threats to their own future design of their life. Moreover, the MCS counseling intervention may have allowed the young adults in the present study to answer questions and face challenges about their educational and career futures. Doing so may have required them to explore something that they recognized as being a new focus of their attention. By analyzing the challenges that they might face, the MCS allowed participants to identify their

future goals and their own strivings to achieve. This may have generated a sense of hope that helped them to successfully carry out needed and useful actions to pursue their career and life-design goals (Hirshi et al., 2015). According to Snyder (2002), individuals with higher levels of hope, as compared to their peers with lower hope levels, set goals that are higher quality and are better able to generate routes to achieve their goals. Hope theory posits that these goal setting behaviors act as the mechanisms through which hope and goal attainment are related (Snyder, 2002).

The autobiographical work involved in using the MCS appeared to offer participants an opportunity to reflect on potential future career scenarios. It also afforded them the chance to reflect on and reconsider their past lived experiences, consider new ways forward, and identify ways to deal with barriers and challenges to constructing their careers. This may explain participants' increased levels of hope and a more positive, clear, action-oriented language presented in the stories told in Part 2 of the MCS than the stories of career transition that they told at the beginning of the workbook (Hite & McDonald, 2020). Finally, our results suggest that prompting clients to reflect on their own life-design stimulates new and richer reflections, thoughts, intentionality, and possibly future action with regard to identifying, setting, and achieving career goals.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

 Our findings have both theoretical and practical value. In terms of theoretical implications, our findings advance the literature on the use of the MCS workbook in career counseling interventions. First, our study contributes to the research related to the analysis of efficacy and validity of the MCS workbook as practical method for individuals and groups to use in constructing their life careers (Cadaret & Hartung, 2020; Hartung & Santillli, 2018). Second, our study highlights the use of narrative career intervention methods to better account for and attend to the complexity of work in people's lives (Hartung, 2013; Maree, 2007, 2019; McMahon, 2017). This can help people reflect on the construction of their career futures and and this may help them to identify career-related goals.

In terms of practical implications, our study provides evidence that use of the MCS workbook as part of a career intervention involving self-reflection activities could be an effective strategy to assist young adults with managing career-related difficulties during their university training program (Cardoso et al., 2019). Our work suggests that it is possible to realize a career intervention with young adults that helps them move toward the future, deal with threats to their career planning, and identify the career futures they want to design. The MCS intervention appears useful for helping individuals at risk of leaving school to clarify their career goals, and adopt a hopeful attitude in designing their future life-careers.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our sample size was small and included a convenience sample of mostly women participants. Also, the participants were limited to one small geographical region of Italy and presented differences in educational levels. These sample issues, of course, limit generalizability of the results. Future research should involve more men, participants from other regions and nations to verify the generalizability of the analyses reported in this study. Differences on the bases of educational level should be tested in future studies. We also did not include a control group, and in this sense, future research may verify the impact of the intervention on the participants compared to those who did not participate in it. We must also note that the effectiveness of the career intervention should not be limited to the examination of changes that occur only at the end of the career intervention. This implies that future research should also include 6- or 12-months follow-up to verify whether participants pursued their goals.

Santilli, S.& Hartung, P. J., (2022). Using my career story to foster reflective capacity, hope, and narrative change. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. *17*(5), 1441-1452. https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v17iSI.1.6673

Conclusion

Adapting career construction counseling principles and practices (Savickas, 2019), My Career Story comprises an autobiographical workbook designed to foster core life-design goals. More importantly, career interventions like the MCS that use narrative methods offer opportunity for individuals to tell their life-career stories in ways that are very rich, individualized, and empowering. Such approaches especially give voice to individuals experiencing marginalized, vulnerable, and socially unjust circumstances (Blustein, 2019; Cadaret & Hartung, 2020). Our present study results further support the efficacy of the MCS for fostering self-reflection, hope, and narrative growth toward individuals being able to pursue life-careers of personal meaning and that matter to others.

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Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre- and Post-Test Scores on Measures of Reflective Capacity and Hope

Measure	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Reflection Propensity	79.05	6.96	83.90	5.71
Self-Reflection	35.85	3.99	39.50	3.66
Empathic Reflection	19.10	1.29	20.15	2.20
Reflective Communication	24.10	3.38	24.25	1.06
Hope	22.35	3.19	24.65	4.410