In recent years, researchers have pointed out that individuals understand their lives to a great extent through narratives and narration. In the field of adult education, this idea has been taken up in the concept of biographical learning, suggesting the crucial role of autobiographical reflection and autobiographical storytelling in adults’ learning. This thesis discusses the concept of biographical learning in relation to a research project on job loss in mid-life, as it is experienced and handled by white-collar workers in a Swedish context.

While much of the previous research on job loss and unemployment has focused on causes and effects, coping strategies and job search behaviour, this study suggests that an enforced work transition can be thought of as a biographical learning process. It also suggests that a greater diversity in the learning concept can be attained by reconsidering the concept in the framework of a pragmatist’s view of action. Besides narration, it is argued that reflexivity, creativity and social ties are important in understanding the variety in individuals’ ways of handling enforced work transitions.
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