Chapter 13 - Understanding and Interpretation: A Hermeneutic Approach to Advising

Reader Learning Outcomes

Readers will:

- See the importance of understanding how the student makes meaning.
  o Come to understand students on their own terms, discover what is significant to them; understand how they construct meaning.
- Appreciate that narrative is the basis for meaning and identity creation.
  o Recognize that narrative, interpretation, and understanding characterize how human beings are in the world. They are the things that define us.
  o Because of the primacy of narrative, come to understand the centrality of hermeneutics to understanding and making meaning of the narratives of the advising interaction.
  o Come to understand the necessarily indirect, mediated nature of language.
- Understand the necessity of approaching each advising interaction with epistemic humility.
  o Because interpretation requires a spirit of humility or reverence toward the student, advisors should be sensitized to (open to) the possibility of alternate interpretations and be ready to shift.
  o Advisors themselves approach the advising interaction from within their own contextualized existence; they are not free from bias.
  o Come to understand that bias and prejudgments are necessary to the interpretive process; advisors should learn what they can about their own biases and prejudgments.
  o Come to understand the mollifying effect that skilled interpretation, practiced with epistemic humility, has on the inherent power imbalance present in any advising interaction.
- Cultivate a mistrust of method in favor of cultivating a stance, an orientation toward the advising interaction that values careful interpretation.