A Biography-Driven Method of Advising International Educators

In conversation with Chloe Wurst and Dr. Socorro Herrera

NACADA International 2021
This session will achieve the following:

- Explore an alternative framework within the advising and advisee relationship.
- Identify the ways our biopsychosocial realities drive our actions, thoughts, and processes.
- Reflect on the role narrative, identity, and culture play within our advising contexts.
- Map the intersectionality of biography and advising within our advising spaces.
SUMMIT Program – Khbrat Cohort II

- **Partnership**: The Saudi Ministry of Education and Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA)

- **Participants**: 40 Content and English language teachers/administrators from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- **Program Design**: 9-month specialized professional development program designed to
  - Bolster English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
  - Enhance their capacities for effective instruction through pedagogical professional development
  - Build cross-cultural awareness through immersion in U.S. public schools

- **Instructional method**: Biography-Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016)
Academic advising engages students beyond their own worldviews, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit the institution.” (NACADA, 2006)

Advising signifies a process where an advisor and advisee enter a dynamic space, respectful of student’s concerns (O’Banion, 1972/1994)

Advising is an essential element in the educational process (Rakhi et al., 2020)

Advisors play a significant role in the support system for students (Ahmed, 2015)

Advising quality = Advisor availability, educational/career support, and the frequency of advisor meetings (Al-Ansari et., 2015; Awadh, 2019)
Significance of Narrative in Advising

Narrative, Identity, and Culture

- Stories provide the basis for how we identify ourselves and how those identities are performed
- Advisors should be able to study cultural scripts, especially those less familiar
- Advisors are responsible for knowing larger cultural narratives and seeing how a student’s ever-evolving story fits in with that narrative

“Our life stories are our identity. If our stories are worth hearing, if someone listens, then we feel validated; our lived lives take on more meaning and moment for having been told to and received by an audience.”

Peter Hagen, The Power of Story: Narrative Theory in Academic Advising
Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI)

- Method of instruction rooted in the assets of learners, integrating research on how the brain learns

- Strategies illustrate a practical way for applying culturally responsiveness in teaching practices

- Integrates student knowledge with school curriculum, creating opportunities for teaching and learning in the “third space”

- Core of BDI: culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students are at the center of educational efforts

Adapted from Herrera 2010/2016
Biography-Driven Instruction: A Focus on Student-Driven Thinking/Learning

Our Own

LANGUAGE
Comprehension L1 & L2
Communication L1 & L2
Expression L1 & L2

SOCIOCULTURAL
Life
Laughter
Love

COGNITIVE
Know
Think
Apply

ACADEMIC
Access
Engagement
Hope

BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL HISTORY

The Learner

The Family

Adapted from Herrera, 2010/2016
### Biopsychosocial Realities: Experiences that Matter

#### Biology
- Sex
- Race
- Age
- Physical Health
- Nutrition

#### Psychology
- Identity, Life Events, Survival
- Coping Skills, Memories, Survival Instincts
- Intersectionality, Expectations
- Cognition, Learning

#### Social
- Social Support, Family Dynamics
- Interpersonal Relationships, Peers
- Family Backgrounds
- Social Supports, Socio-economic Status
“We as educators [advisors] can create environments where we can become part of the fabric of our students’ lived experiences”

Herrera, 2016, p. 24
Advisor-Advisee Biographies: Creating the Third Space

**Expression**
Expressive behaviors and actions contribute to or hinder their comprehension of academic concepts.

**Comprehension**
Find ways to elicit students’ interpretation of text that incorporate their life experiences.

**Communication**
Sociocultural nuances are embedded in the content and structure of written/spoken language.

- **Linguistic**
  - Communication

- **Sociocultural**
  - Expression

- **Cognitive**
  - Comprehension

**Biopsychosocial History**

Expressive behaviors and actions contribute to or hinder their comprehension of academic concepts. Sociocultural nuances are embedded in the content and structure of written/spoken language. Find ways to elicit students’ interpretation of text that incorporate their life experiences.
Think
Observe and listen for cultural aspects of what students are thinking

Know
Students’ knowledge are reflective of words, understandings, and perspectives through interactions with family, community, and the world

Apply
Understand how a student’s biography influences their representation of new learning

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Know
Students’ knowledge are reflective of words, understandings, and perspectives through interactions with family, community, and the world

Apply
Understand how a student’s biography influences their representation of new learning

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Linguistic

Sociocultural

Cognitive

Academic

Biopsychosocial History
**Advisor-Advisee Biographies: Creating the Third Space**

**Engagement**
We control the conditions that lead to increased student motivation and engagement.

**Hope**
Care for the student as an individual and have hope for their future.

**Access**
Value and encourage use of native language by tapping into student’s cultural knowledge and assets.

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**Biopsychosocial History**

- **Linguistic**
- **Sociocultural**
- **Cognitive**
- **Academic**

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Value and encourage use of native language by tapping into student’s cultural knowledge and assets.
“Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.”

Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
Recommendations: Creating the Third Space

Critically reflect.... But how?

- Journal the interactions and lived experiences you have with your advisees
- Explore the feelings, emotions, and attitudes surrounding those experiences
  - How am I perceiving cultural differences?
  - Why am I uncomfortable in this situation?
  - What does this situation mean to me?
- Analyze learning experiences with the intent to get to know the student and their assets; eventually, their biography will unfold
Questions, Thoughts, Comments

We leave you with... a Vignette!

Guided Questions:

- What does this narrative reveal?
- What identity/culture elements stand out to you?
- What do you find curious about this situation?

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References


