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Examining Relationship-Rich Education in Practice

Jonathan Aragon, Research Faculty

Larkin Hood, Associate Research Professor & Associate Director

Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence

What is relationship-rich education?

“Human connection is the basis upon which learning takes place. Relationships are essential because there is no learning without relationships.”

Randy Bass, Georgetown University

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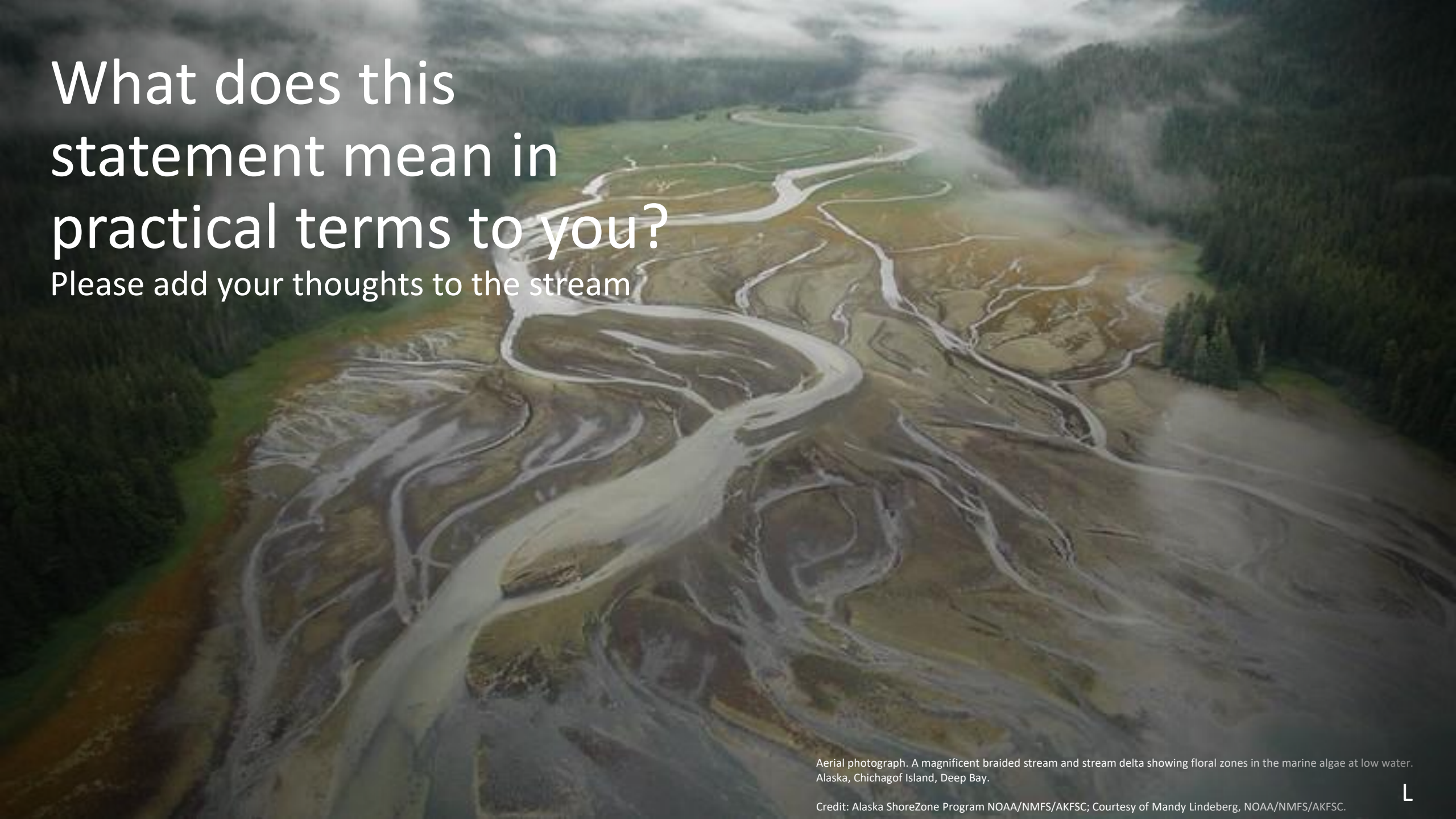
What does this statement mean in practical terms to you?

Please add your thoughts to the stream



Aerial photograph. A magnificent braided stream and stream delta showing floral zones in the marine algae at low water. Alaska, Chichagof Island, Deep Bay.

Credit: Alaska ShoreZone Program NOAA/NMFS/AKFSC; Courtesy of Mandy Lindeberg, NOAA/NMFS/AKFSC.

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What does this statement mean in practical terms?

- Tech-free learning?
- Emphasis on human-to-human relationships?
- Interpersonal learning?
- Emphasis on relational connections rather than transactional interactions?
- Experiential learning?

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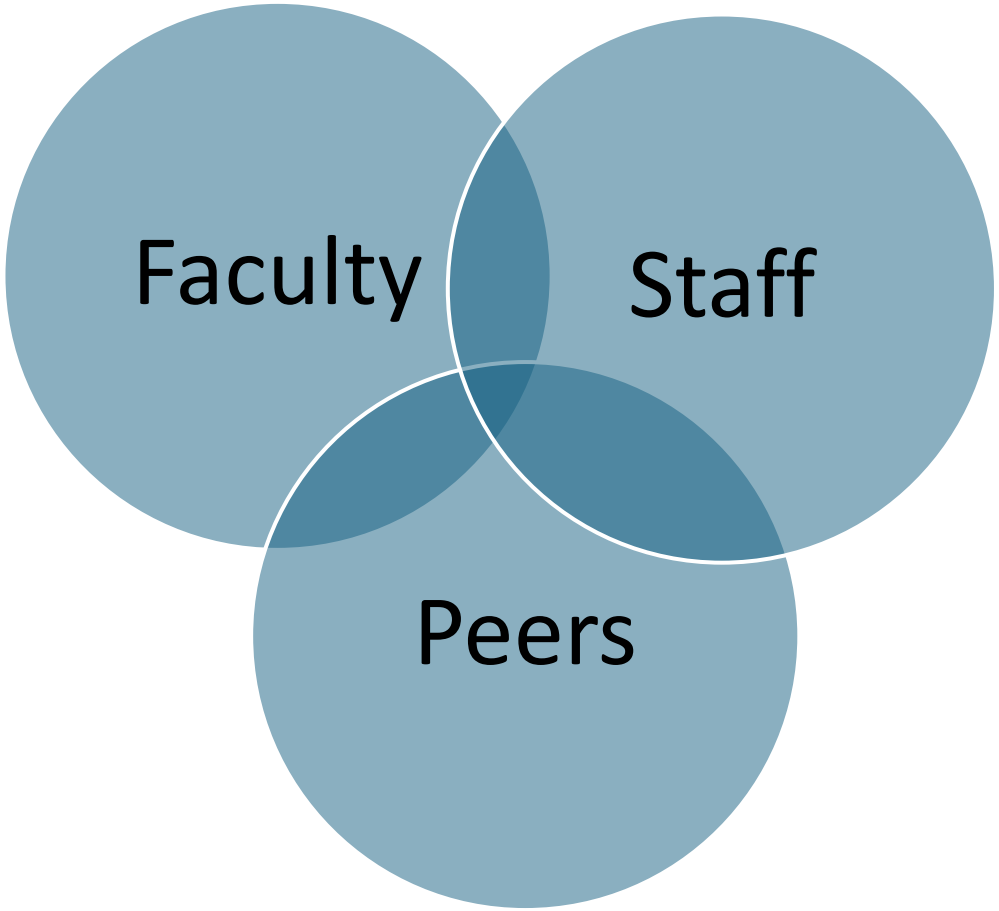
Meaning making is key to learning

- “How is what I am doing in class and in college relevant to my future?”
- “Am I becoming what I was given—inherited—or really creating my own life?”
- “Who am I becoming for others?”
- “How am I moving from being a life to having a life?”
- “What is on my ‘experiences’ transcript?”
- “What am I learning socially in college that I can carry into my career?”

We can help our students think through the big questions in their lives



Networks matter for student learning

- An overlapping network of mentors enables students to
  - access more opportunities
  - be more productive
  - develop balance in their lives
- Networks help students persist in their learning
- A “mentor in the moment” can have a significant impact
  - Sense of belonging
  - Develop as a leader
  - Sense of well-being
  - Learn unwritten “codes” of university culture

What can instructors do at this point in the semester?

- Reflect on the unspoken question “Do you know who *I* am in relation to who *you* are?”
- Examine patterns in student work
- Themes in written feedback (MSEEQs, other informal, anonymous surveys)
- Nonverbal cues from students (e.g., noise, absences, etc. that we, class observers, or students notice)
- Feedback from learning assistants/teaching assistants/student advisors

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How can we “recalibrate” with our students for the remainder of the semester?

Think of your course as a conversation that unfolds across a semester

- Where are you and your students in the conversation?
- Where are you talking past one another?
- Where are you and your students in agreement?

Extend What Exists

- Based on what you heard, what is one small thing you would like to do at this point in the semester?
- Who in *your* network can help you enact this thing?
- Who can you be a resource for?
- How will you start?

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SITE is part of your network

Jonathan Aragon, jza5912@psu.edu
Larkin Hood, lnh2@psu.edu

site@psu.edu

instagram.com/site_psu

Main page
facebook.com/SITE.PSU

linkedin.com/company/schreyer-institute-for-teaching-excellence

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