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GROWTH FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

Framework

Relational Cultural Theory & Embodied Knowing / Felt Experience

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT):

- Human development theory
- Individuals' growth emerges from relationships in which both people contribute in fostering connection.
- RCT acknowledges the relational influence that shapes individuals' development.
- Human beings thrive in relationships where people mutually contribute to healthy connection. Interacting through growth-fostering dynamics acts as a bedrock for nourishing individual development.

Embodied Knowing/Felt Experience:

- More than surface-level use of senses
- Deeper Connection to the power of relationality and experiences
- Re-membering to both the outer and inner world
 - past emotions & ancestral wisdom
 - increased imagination and presence
 - open to change and connection

If we want to center the student's learning, then we need to center the teaching-learning relationship.

HOW DOES A PROFESSOR SEE THEIR EXPERIENCE?

What is the first word or image that comes to mind when you read *What does it feel like to connect with students?*



PICTURING THE FELT EXPERIENCE

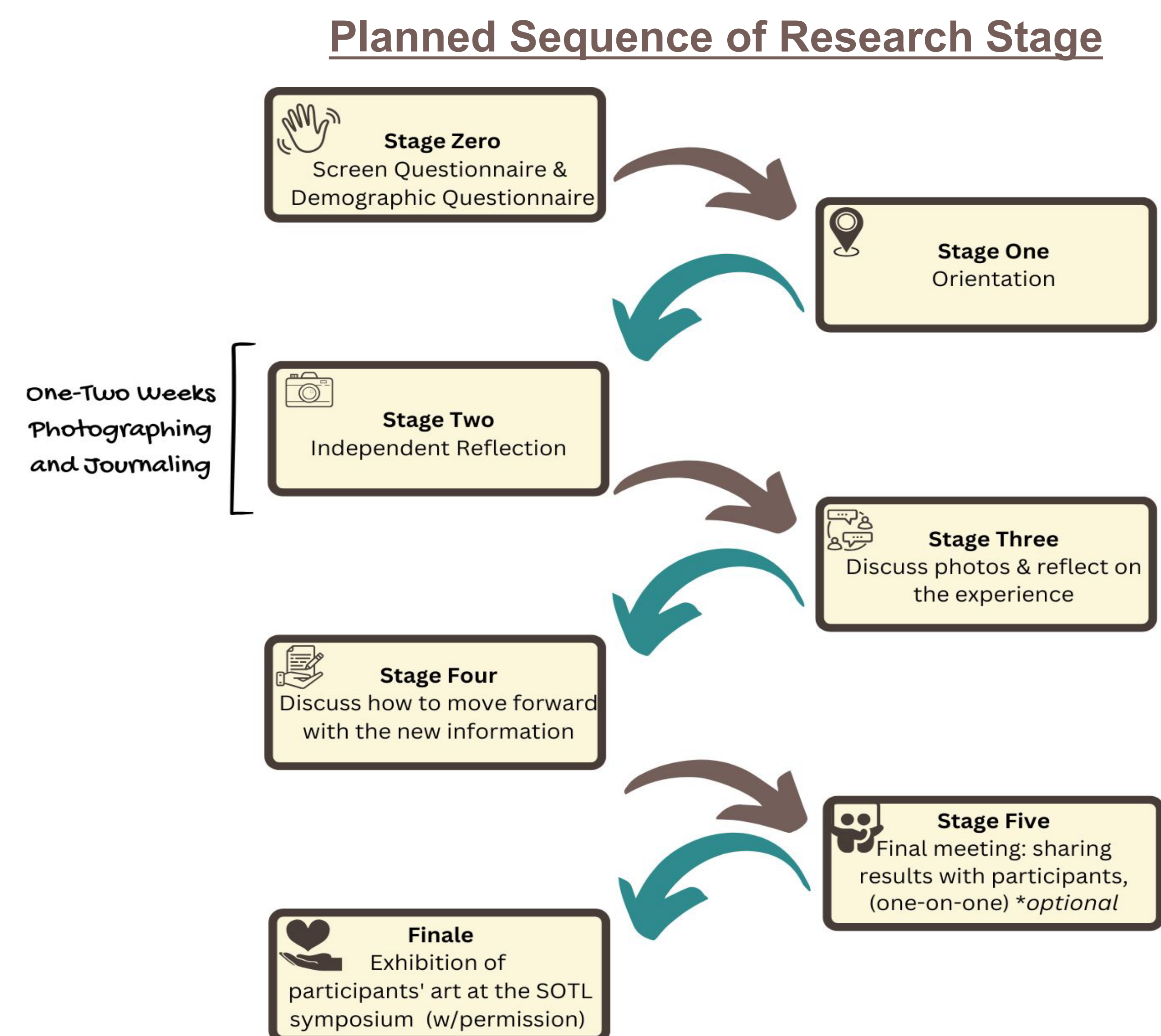
Methodology: Photovoice

What & How: Participatory Action Research & Arts Based Research Method – participants produce images independently, they then use images to guide group dialogue (facilitated by researcher)

Why: Photography unveils and bridges experiencing the emotions felt by participants; actively using images to engage, broaden, and influence community change

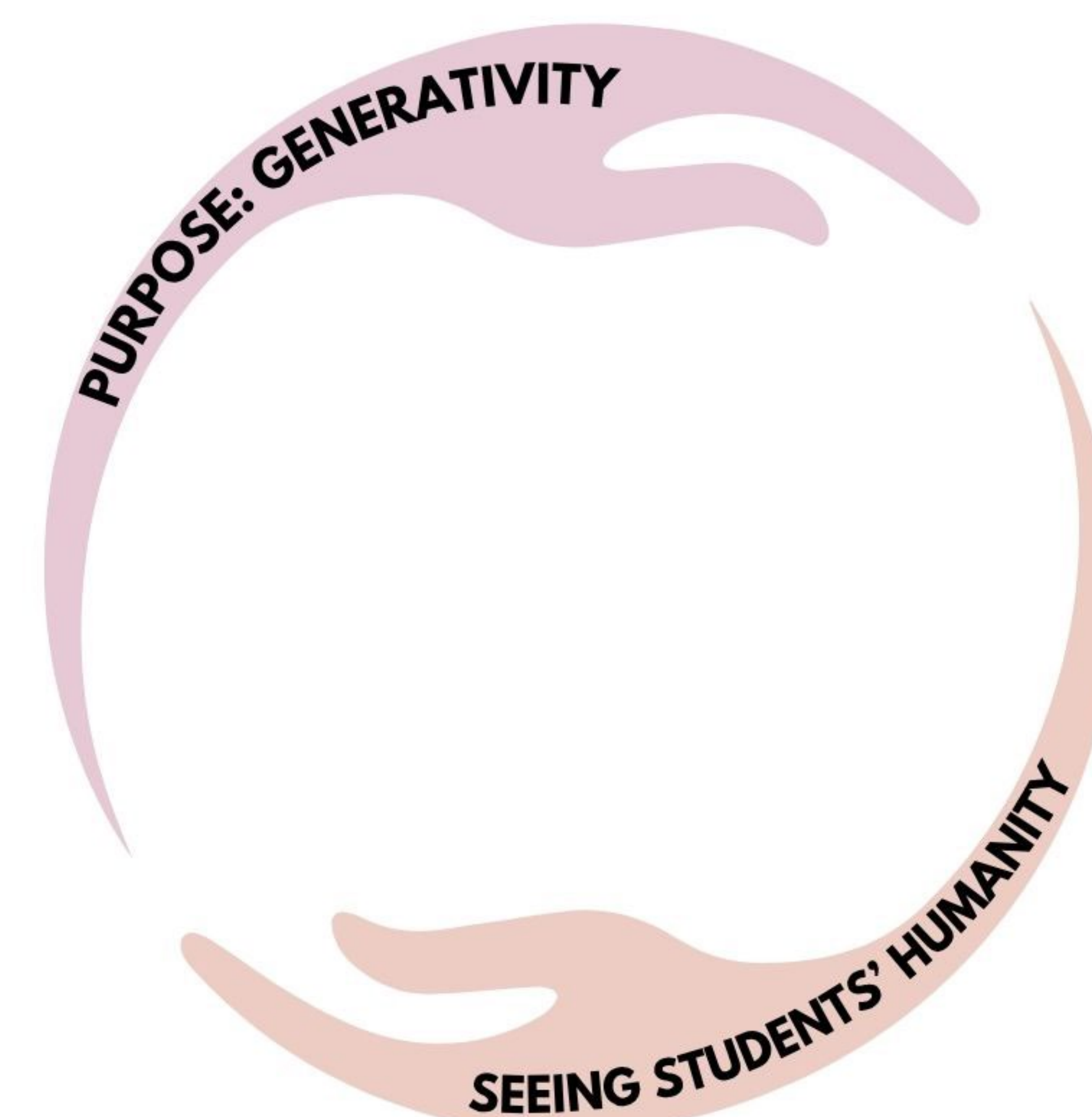
Participants: Professors and Undergraduates already engaged in Communities of Practices | Why: Communities of Practice: Working with an established group, allows for the discussion to become more intimate quicker revealing the embodied experience of what it feels like to be in a positive teaching-learning relationship

Power: Professors and Undergraduates will not interact, allowing for more candid and open conversation to emerge



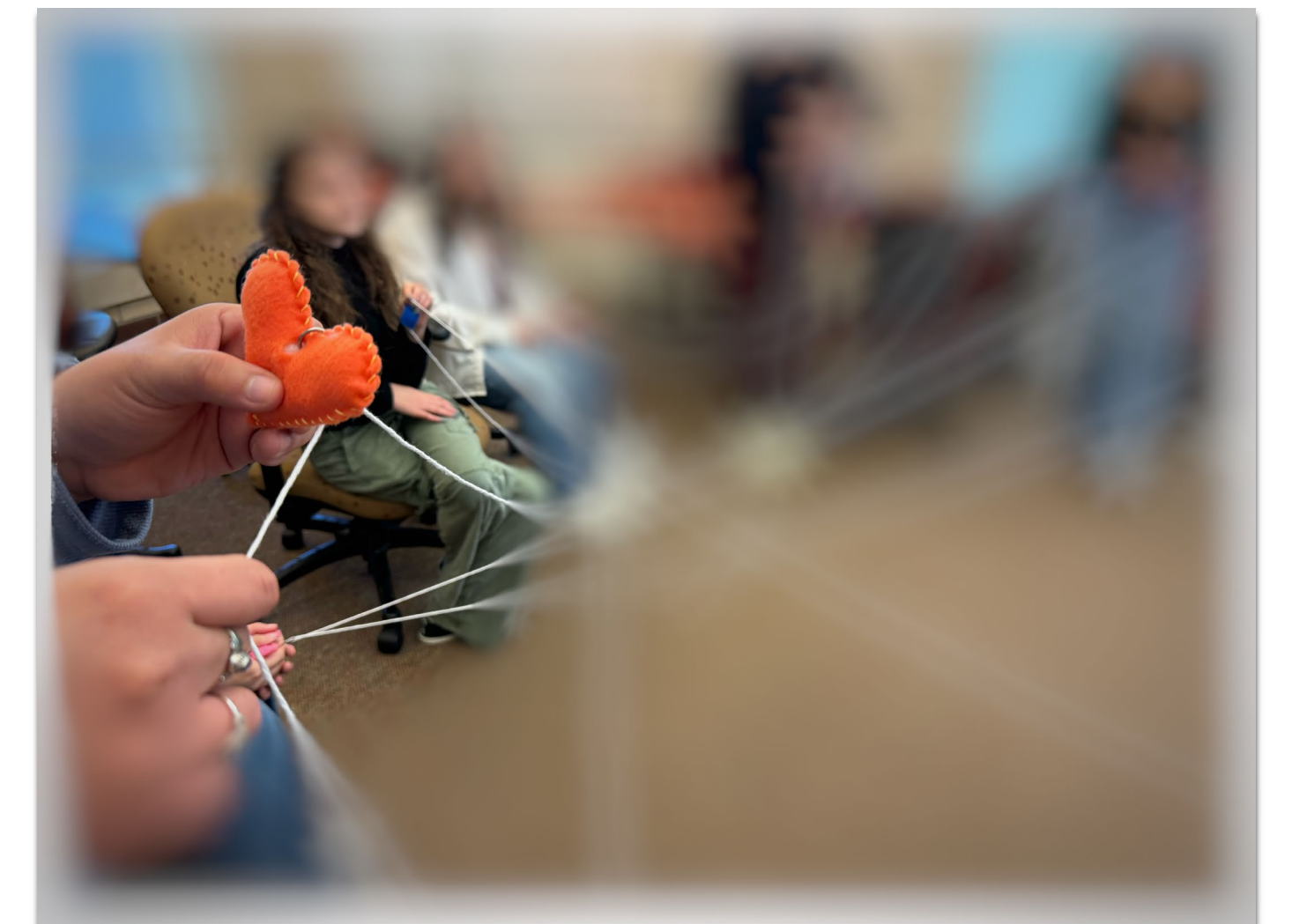
TEACHING THROUGH PURPOSE & SEEING STUDENT & PROFESSOR HUMANITY

The current research expands my dissertation work exploring only the professor felt experience. Two main themes emerged: Teaching through purpose becomes a generative influence in how students engaged beyond the teachings and in their daily and future lives and Seeing the Students' Humanity. These two themes cradled the emotions and behaviors of how professors continued to teach with intentionality. The growth-fostering relationships between the professors and their students sparked a sense of zest, clarity, desire for more connection, and explored the question, *"Why do we teach?"*



NEXT STEPS

- The current research adds to a dearth yet growing body of research focused on the felt sense of the teaching-learning environment.
- Currently, I am building a proposal for IRB
- Meanwhile, I am creating orientation materials and researching Communities of Practices among professors and undergraduates.



Students in Week 10 Reflective Exercise – How are we connected? (2024)

CURIOSITY BREWS: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While I am nearing the research phase, curiosity brews for what may come:

- Expanding participant pool
- Photo gallery art walk in public campus spaces
- Faculty Development: Relational Teaching and Boundaries
- Student Development: Responsibility in nourishing Growth-Fostering Teacher-Student Relationships

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