

A blurred background image showing two students, a young woman on the left and a young man on the right, sitting at a desk and studying together. The woman is looking down at a book or paper, and the man is looking at the same material, holding a pen. The image is faded to allow the text to be the primary focus.

Learning and Relationships

Practical Strategies

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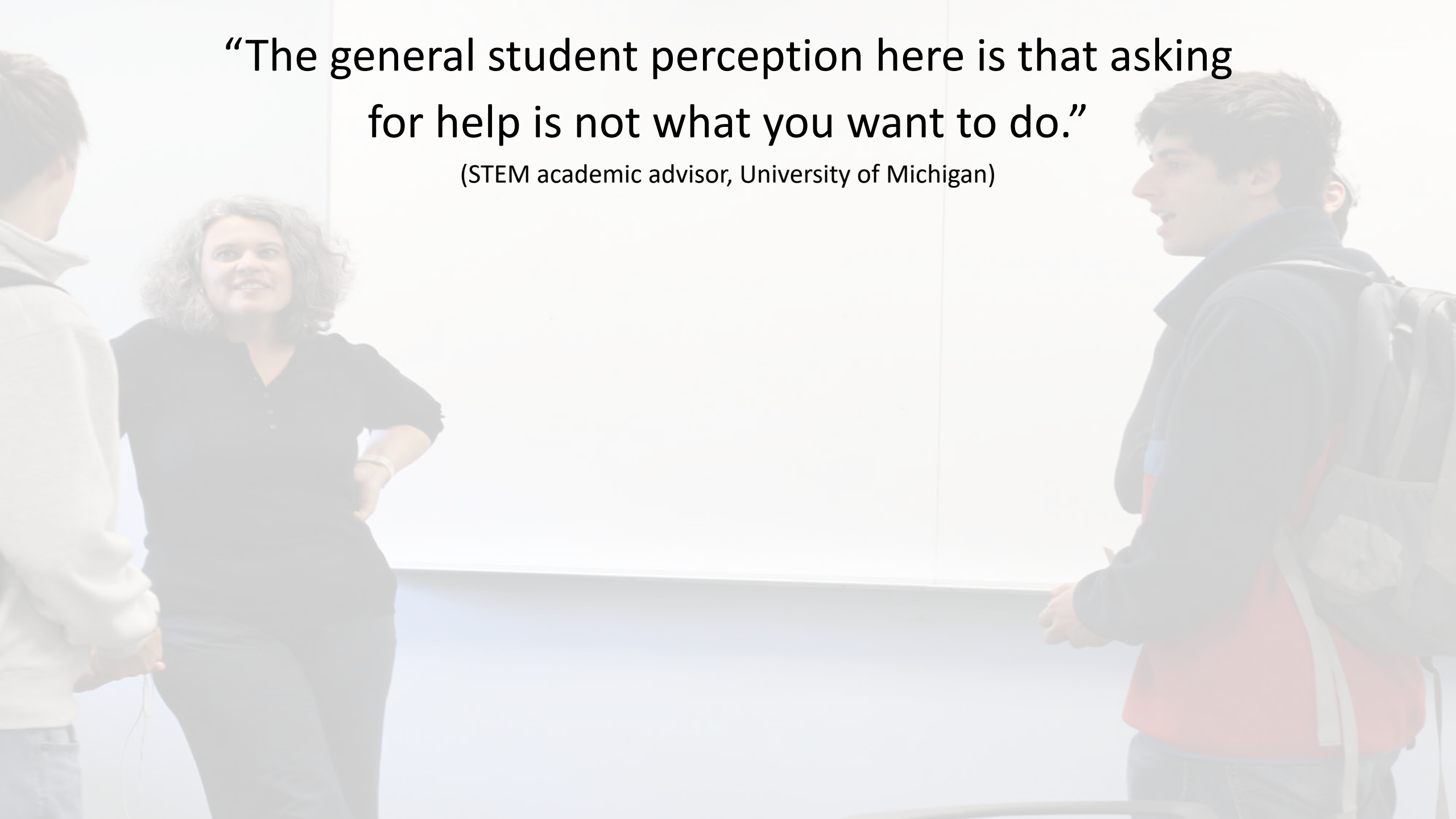
A faded background image showing three people in a hallway. On the left, a person in a light-colored sweater is partially visible. In the center, a woman with curly hair, wearing a dark top, is smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, a young man with a backpack, wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt, is looking towards the center. The hallway has a white wall and a blue baseboard.

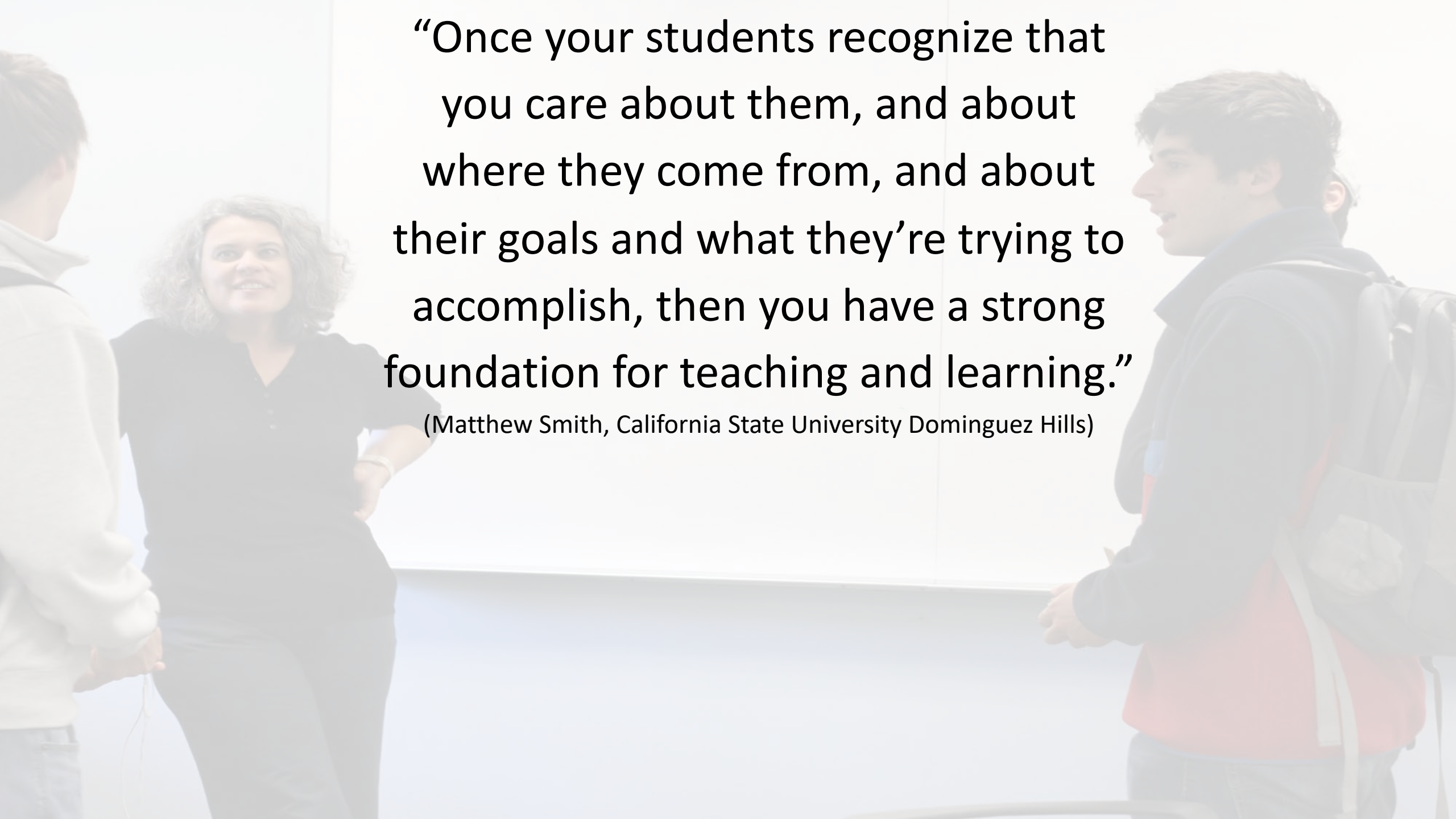
Faculty – student relationships

Student – student relationships

“The general student perception here is that asking
for help is not what you want to do.”

(STEM academic advisor, University of Michigan)





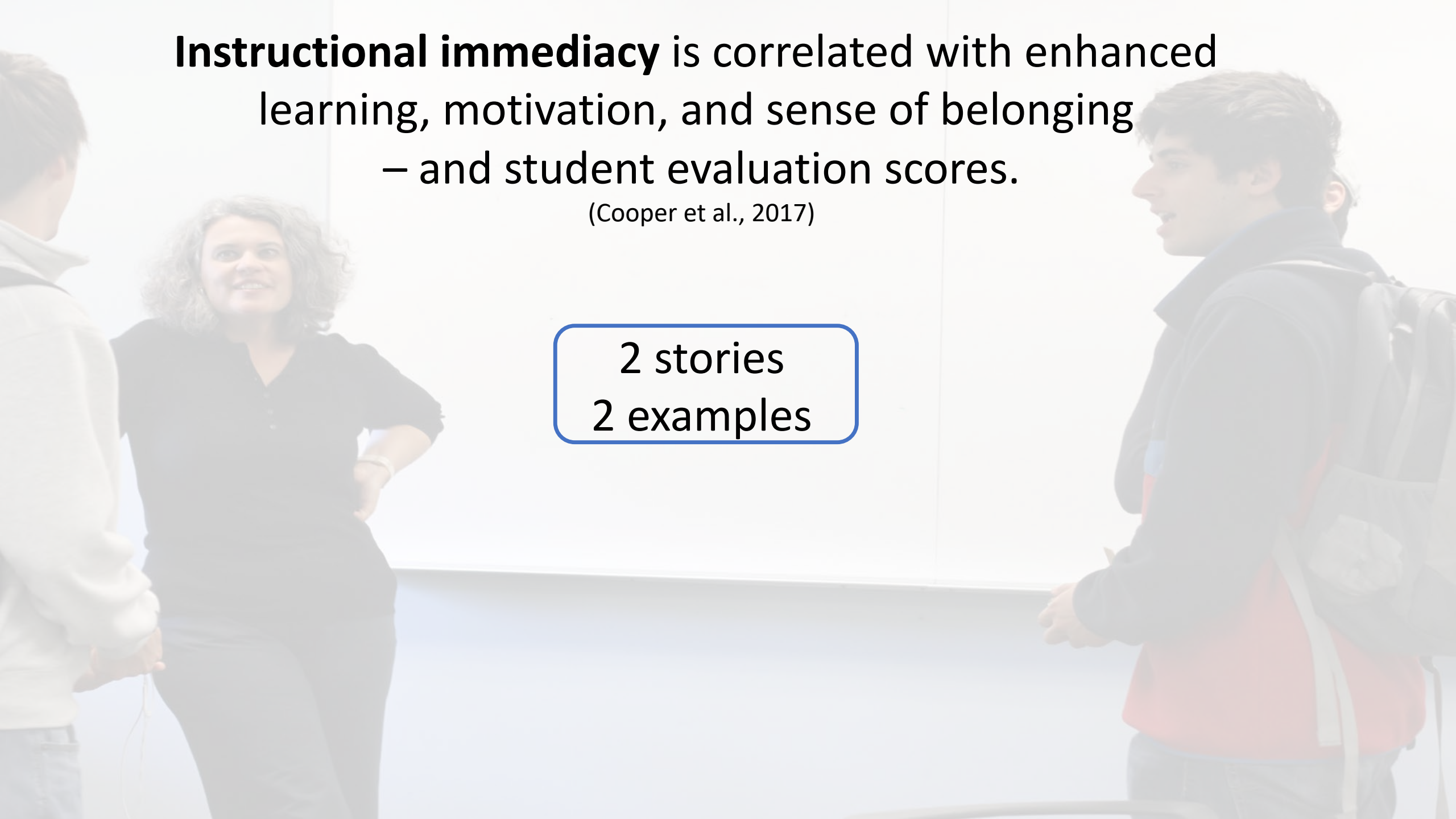
“Once your students recognize that you care about them, and about where they come from, and about their goals and what they’re trying to accomplish, then you have a strong foundation for teaching and learning.”

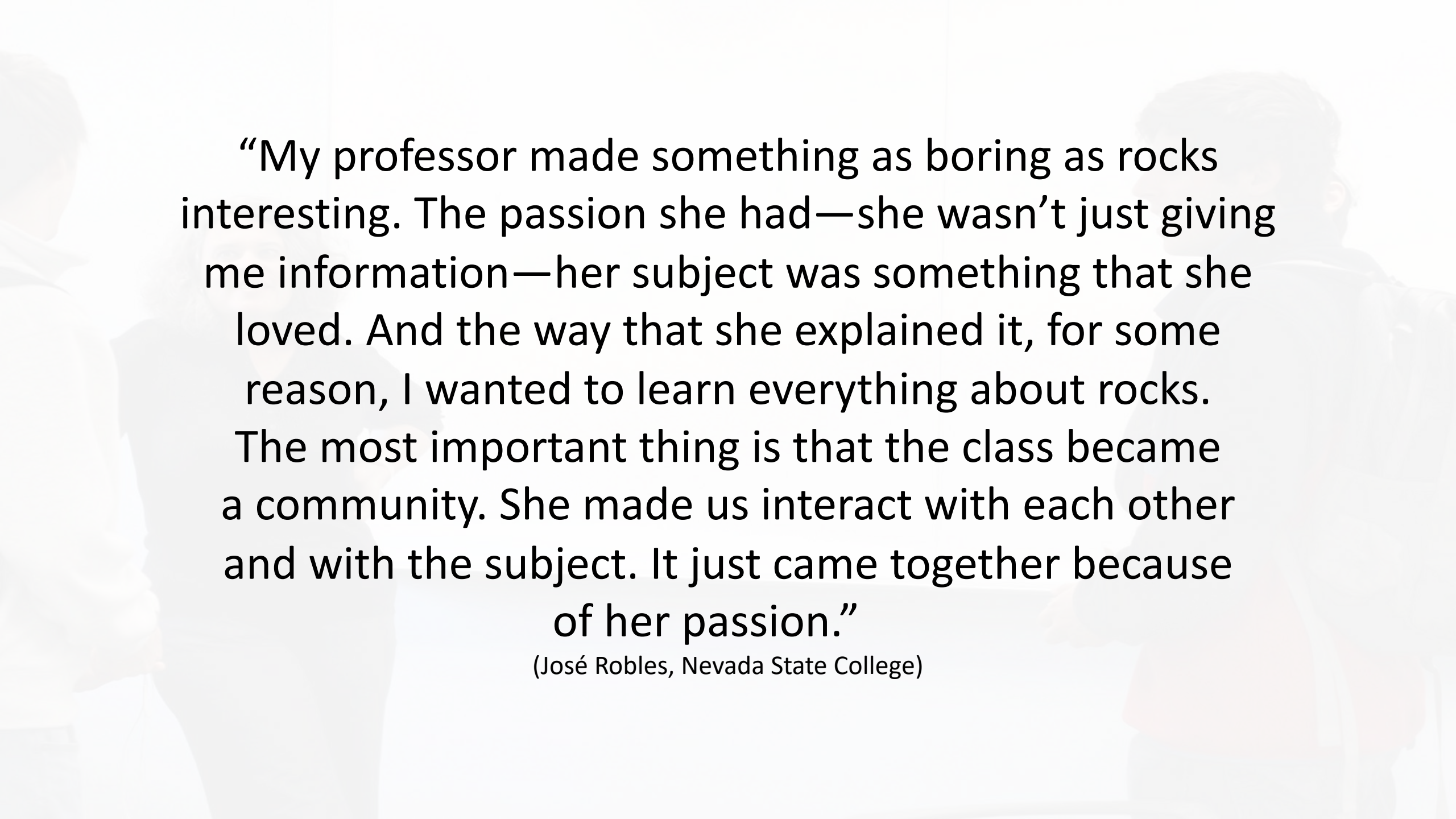
(Matthew Smith, California State University Dominguez Hills)

Instructional immediacy is correlated with enhanced learning, motivation, and sense of belonging – and student evaluation scores.

(Cooper et al., 2017)

2 stories
2 examples



A faint, grayscale background image showing the silhouettes of two people. On the left, a person is seen from the side, looking towards the right. On the right, another person is seen from the front, looking towards the left. They appear to be in a conversation or listening to each other. The image is very light and serves as a subtle backdrop for the text.

“My professor made something as boring as rocks interesting. The passion she had—she wasn’t just giving me information—her subject was something that she loved. And the way that she explained it, for some reason, I wanted to learn everything about rocks. The most important thing is that the class became a community. She made us interact with each other and with the subject. It just came together because of her passion.”

(José Robles, Nevada State College)

“At the start of class one day about half-way through the semester, my first year writing prof said to class:

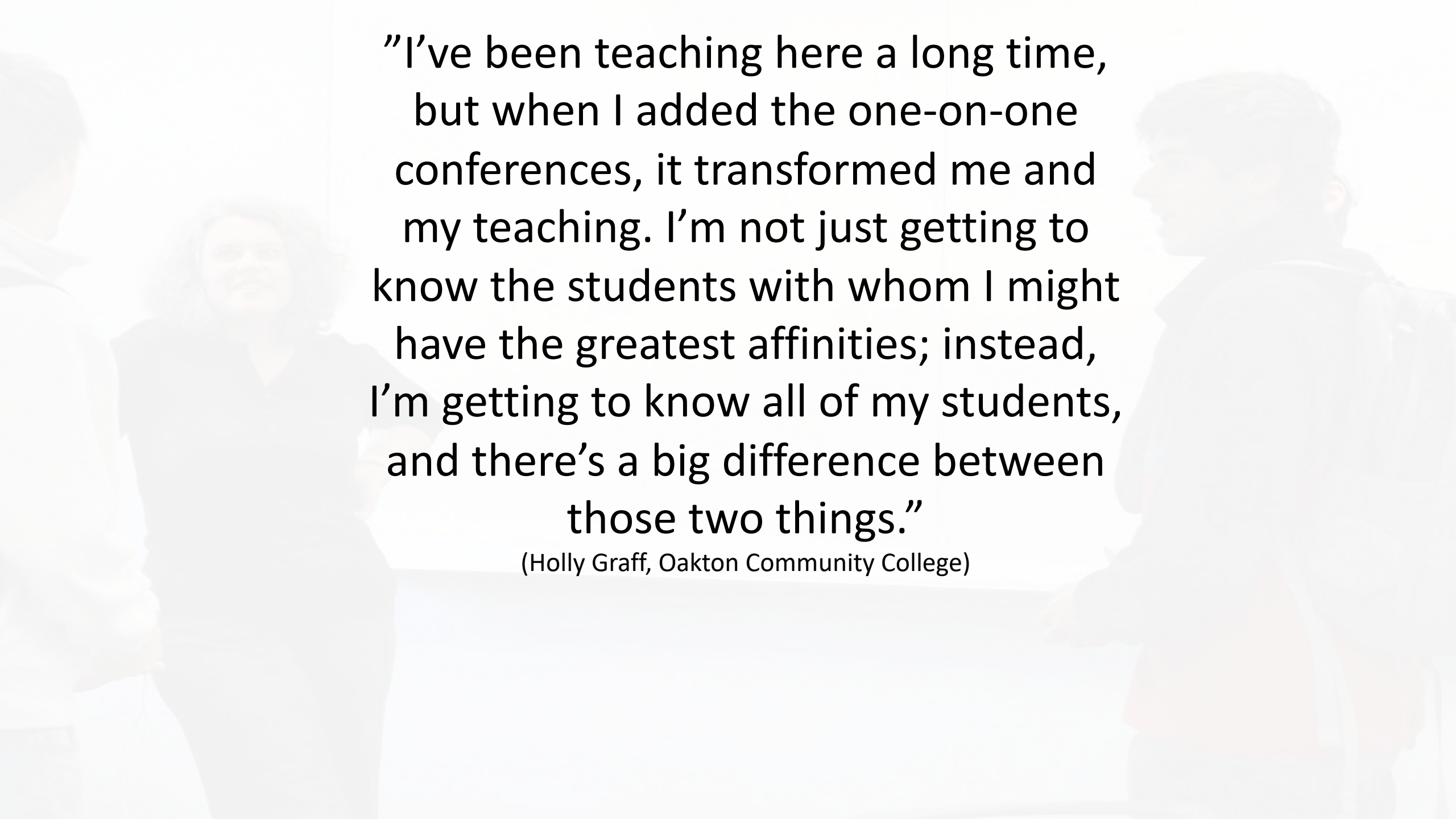
‘Near the end of the semester, one of my best students is going to stop coming to class because they feel overwhelmed with all the pressure and they are really scared that they are going to do poorly. I want to assure that student to keep coming to class, even if you missed an assignment or feel like you didn’t do well on an essay, because it’s going to be okay.

Come see me, don’t just disappear.’”

(Taylor Schlesinger, LaGuardia Community College)

Persistence Project, Oakton Community College

1. Learn student names;
2. Articulate high academic standards paired with supports for when student struggle;
3. Return an assignment with formative, success-oriented feedback;
4. Meet one-on-one for ~10 minutes.

A faded, grayscale background image showing three people in a conversational setting. On the left, a woman with dark curly hair is looking towards the center. In the middle, a person is partially visible, mostly obscured by the text. On the right, a man with short hair is looking towards the center. They appear to be in a professional or educational environment.

“I’ve been teaching here a long time,
but when I added the one-on-one
conferences, it transformed me and
my teaching. I’m not just getting to
know the students with whom I might
have the greatest affinities; instead,
I’m getting to know all of my students,
and there’s a big difference between
those two things.”

(Holly Graff, Oakton Community College)

Light-Touch Formative Feedback

“By conveying beliefs in students’ abilities to succeed in the course and in college more generally, college instructors have an important way to directly and indirectly contribute to college success: directly through the intended transfer of content knowledge and/or skills and indirectly through boosting students’ sense of self-efficacy.”

(Carrell, Kurlaender, & Bhatt, 2019, p. 17)



Dear XXX, [students earning B]

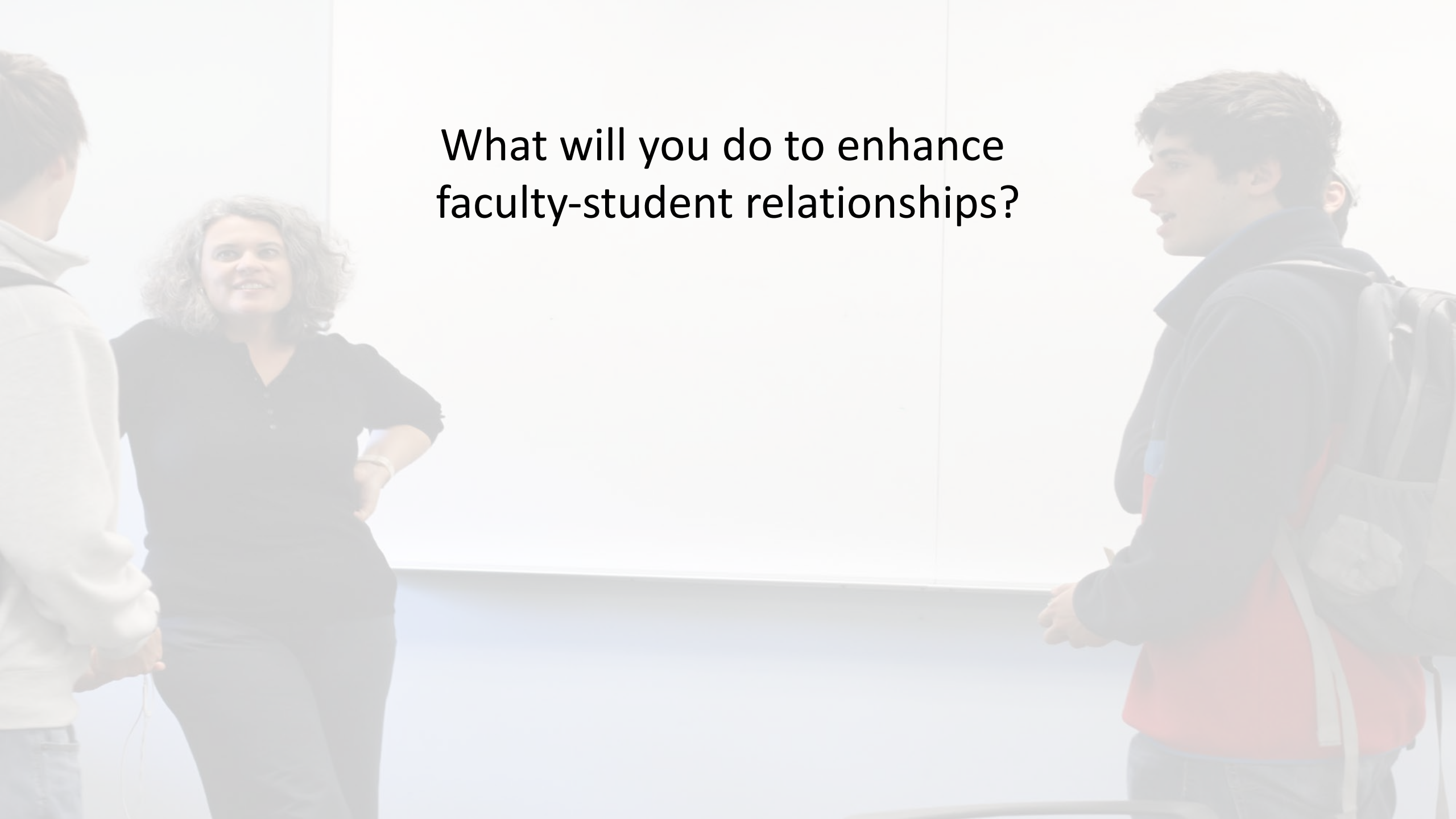
As we approach mid-term, I'm writing to give you some quick feedback.

You've done particularly well so far on [e.g., midterm, quizzes, homework].
Keep up the good work on that!


I encourage you also to take advantage of [e.g., online formative quizzing] to be even more prepared and successful in the second half of the term.

If you have questions or would like to chat, stop by my office hours [details].

See you in class Monday –



What will you do to enhance
faculty-student relationships?

A blurred background image showing two students, a young woman on the left and a young man on the right, sitting at a desk and studying. The woman is wearing a grey Champion sweatshirt and the man is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored shirt. They are both looking down at papers on the desk. The image is faded to serve as a background for the text.

Faculty – student relationships

Student – student relationships

“I was super shy when I first came to campus and I did not want to join in anything. I would go to class, sit down, and look as unwelcoming as possible. I didn’t want anyone to sit next to me.”


(Alexa Oleson, University of Iowa)

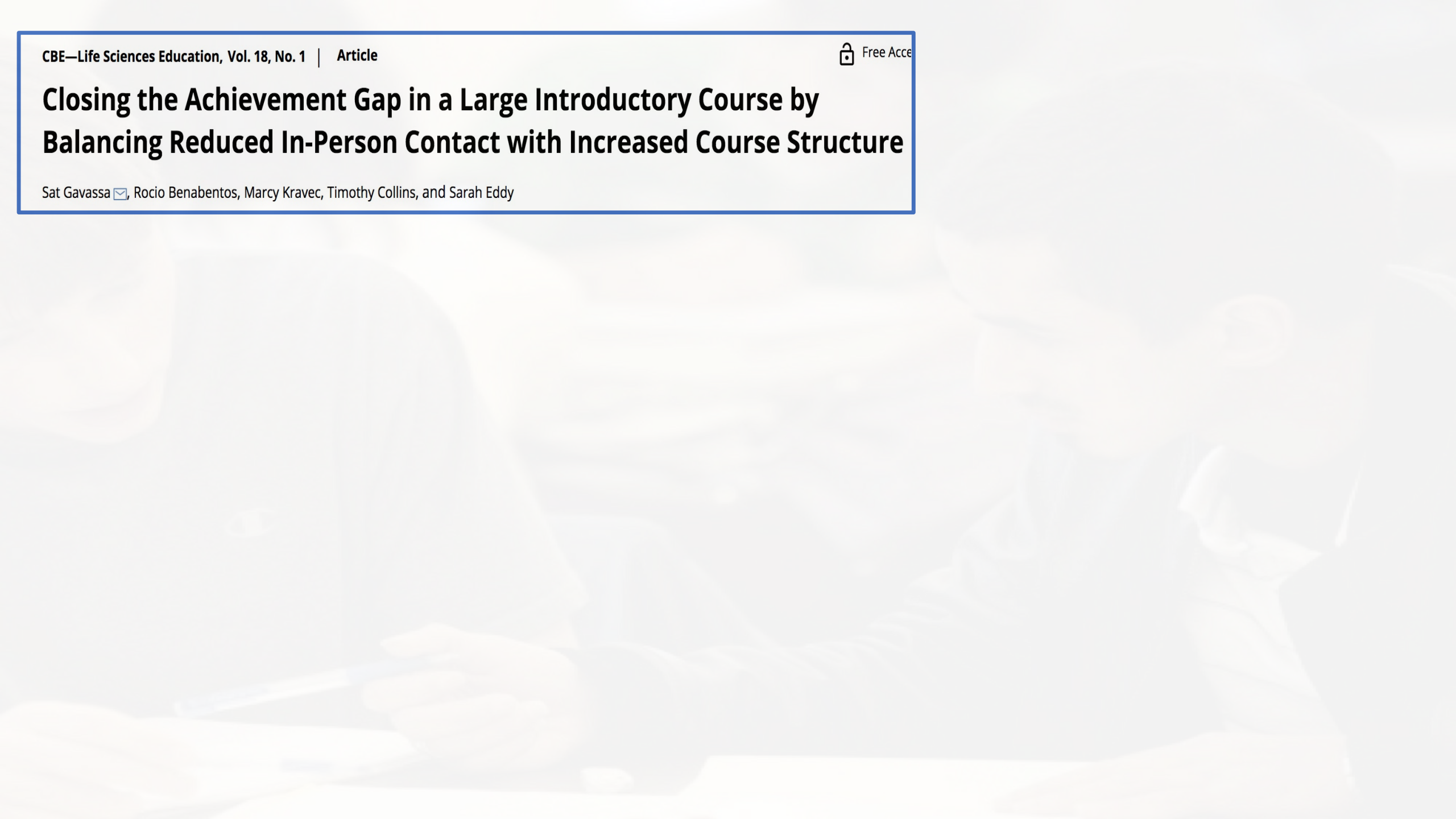
“These horizontal peer-to-peer relationships are the ones that keep students - especially students who are marginalized - from letting each other fail.”

(David Scobey, Bringing Theory to Practice)

3 practices

Closing the Achievement Gap in a Large Introductory Course by Balancing Reduced In-Person Contact with Increased Course Structure

Sat Gavassa , Rocio Benabentos, Marcy Kravec, Timothy Collins, and Sarah Eddy




Closing the Achievement Gap in a Large Introductory Course by Balancing R

Sat Gavassa✉, Rocio Ber

TABLE 1. Comparison of course formats showing that the hybrid format had the highest number of active-learning assignments, with activities due online similar to the online format, plus additional in-class activities, while the face-to-face format had the highest contact time per week, with students mostly passive in class, listening to the instructor lecture and occasionally answering iClicker questions

	Online	Hybrid	Face-to-face
In-person contact time: minutes per week	0	75	150
Course structure	Moderate	High	Moderate
Preclass LearnSmart assignments	Optional	Required	Optional
In-class iClicker questions per class period	NA	≤15%	≤15%
Peer discussions per class	Online discussion boards	≥60%	≤10%
Graded review assessments	Online quiz	Online quiz and in-class IF-AT	Online quiz
Time lecturing in class	NA	≤10%	≥80%
Time online for video lectures	75 minutes	75 minutes	NA

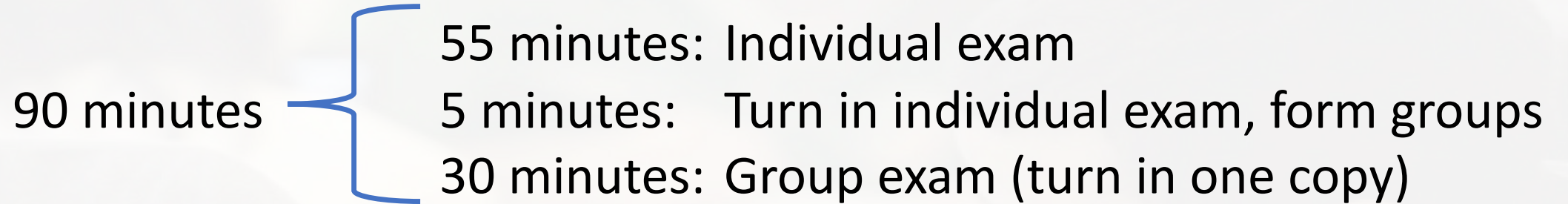
Closing the Achievement Gap in a Large Introductory Course by Balancing Reduced In-Person Contact with Increased Course Structure

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“Even though the face-to-face format had the highest contact time, it also resulted in the lowest performance.”

“Although the hybrid and online courses had identical online resources, the hybrid had additional in-class active-learning exercises done in teams and with support from undergraduate learning assistants and the instructor....Studies have found that group learning is particularly beneficial for underrepresented students.”

Two-stage exams



Individual exam: 80-90% of total exam grade

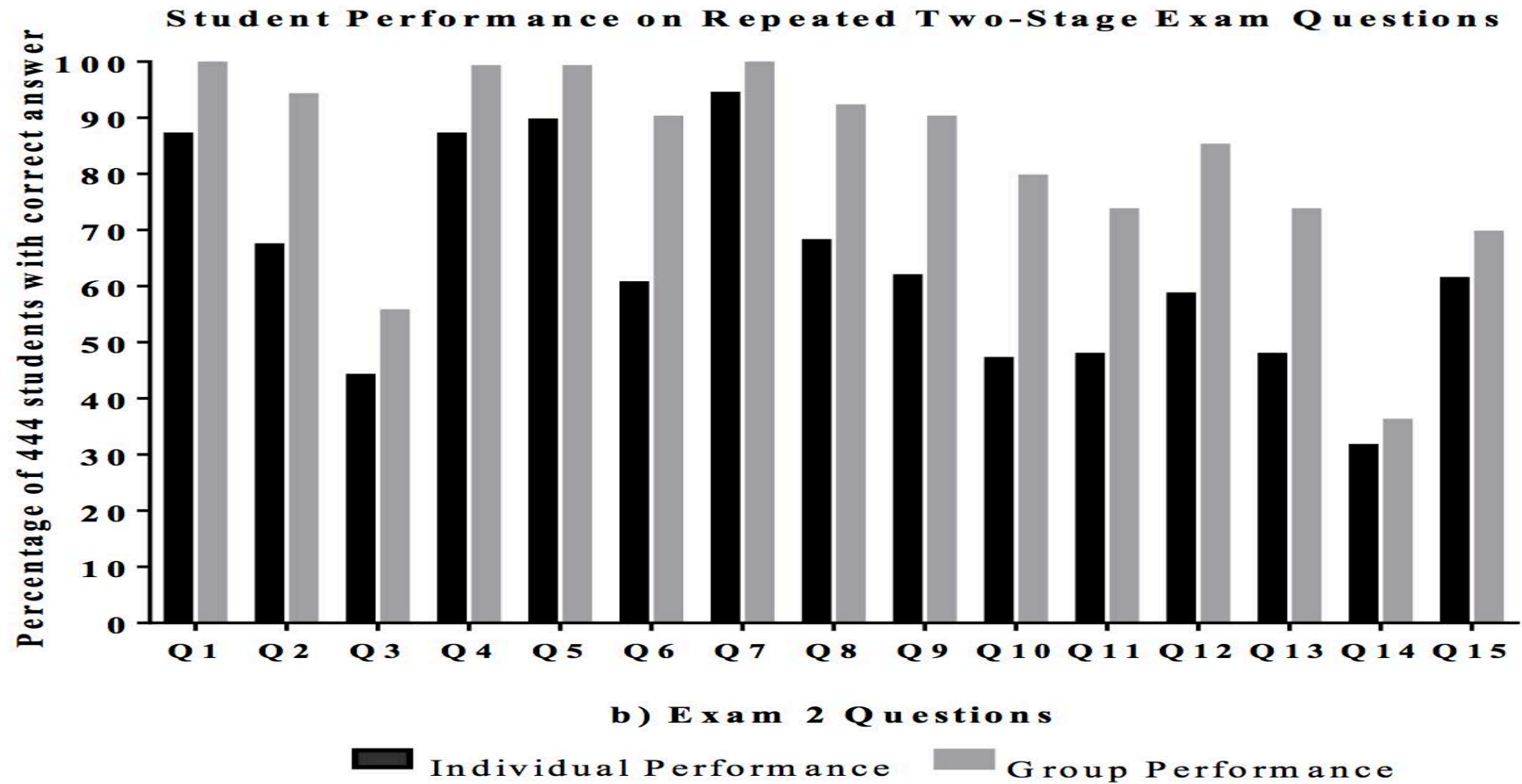
Group exam: 10-20% of total exam grade

Group exam includes some questions from the individual exam and some extensions of those questions.

(Wieman, Rieger, & Heiner, 2014)

Question	
<p>You and your little sister are out in the snow on a sled that has a mass of 11 kg. Your sister, who weighs 29 kg, is sitting on the sled and you want to push her along. You start applying a horizontal force and initially the sled doesn't move but you slowly increase your force until, suddenly, the sled does move. You maintain the same force that you were applying when the sled started moving for the next 5.0 s after which you let go.</p> <p>(Assume that the kinetic friction coefficient is $\mu_k = 0.02$ and the static friction coefficient is $\mu_s = 0.08$ in this case.)</p>	
Individual Part	Group Part
<p>a) How far do you have to run if you apply the force for 5.0 s?</p> <p>b) What is your sister's speed at $t = 5.0$ s?</p> <p>c) After letting go, how far do your sister and her sled move until she is stationary again?</p> <p>(In case you could not solve part b, assume that her speed is $v = 2.5$ m/s at $t = 5.0$ s.)</p>	<p>(Converting calculation to reasoning and representation with graphs.)</p> <p>a) Draw a qualitative diagram that roughly shows the net force acting on the sled as a function of time. (Qualitative means that it explains the overall behavior without using exact numbers.)</p> <p>b) Draw a second qualitative graph of the acceleration of the sled as a function of time.</p> <p>c) Draw a third qualitative graph of the velocity of the sled as a function of time.</p>

(Wieman, Rieger, & Heiner, 2014)



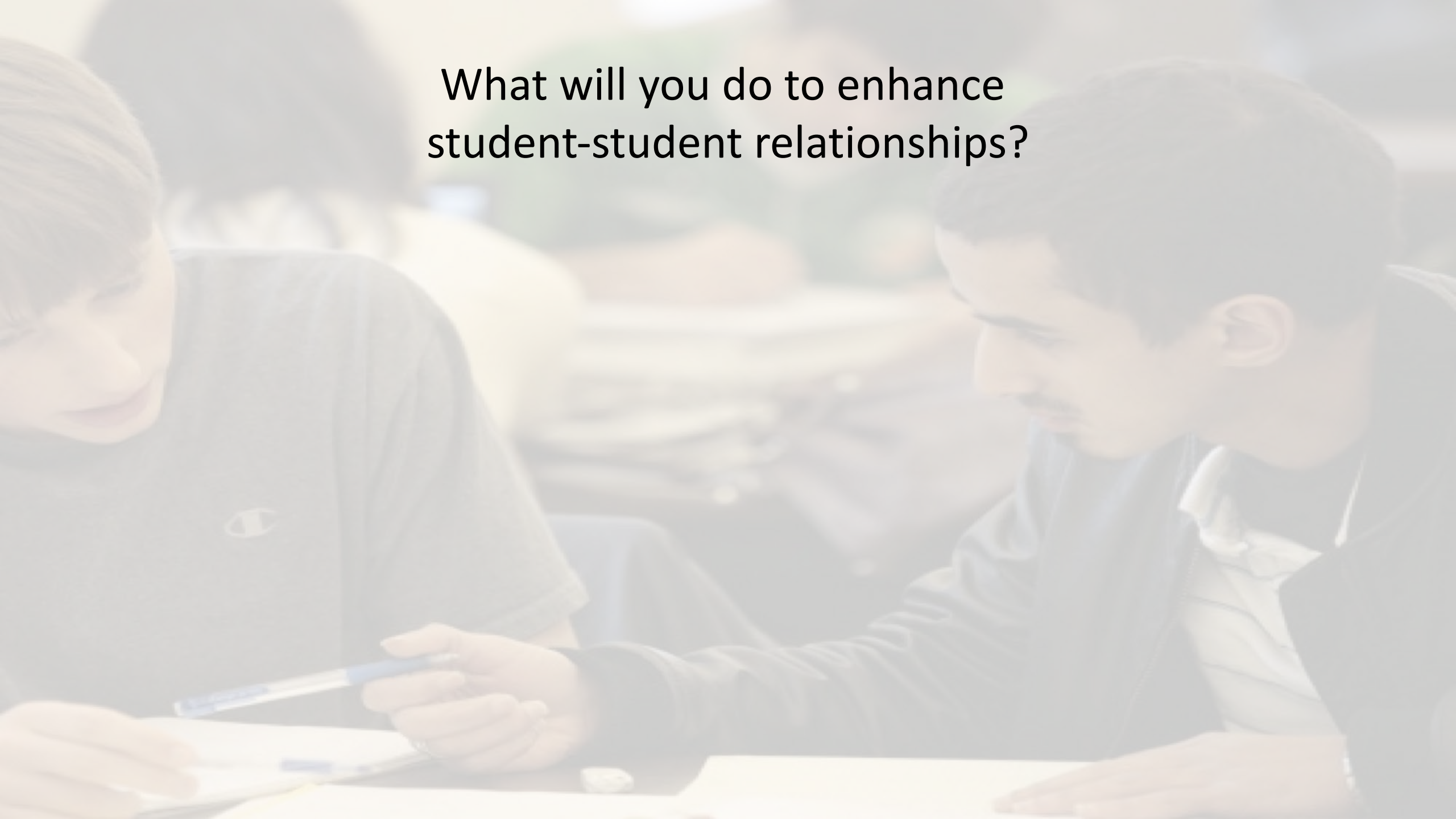
(Fournier, Couret, Ramsay, & Caulkins, 2017)

Structuring groups to support all students

1. Assign students to groups and help them establish relationships within groups by
 - (a) keeping the same group for the term, and
 - (b) purposely including time and activities to encourage group bonding.
2. Structure group interactions to prevent any individual from dominating by
 - (a) having well-defined roles that rotate among group members, and
 - (b) assigning complex and open-ended challenges.

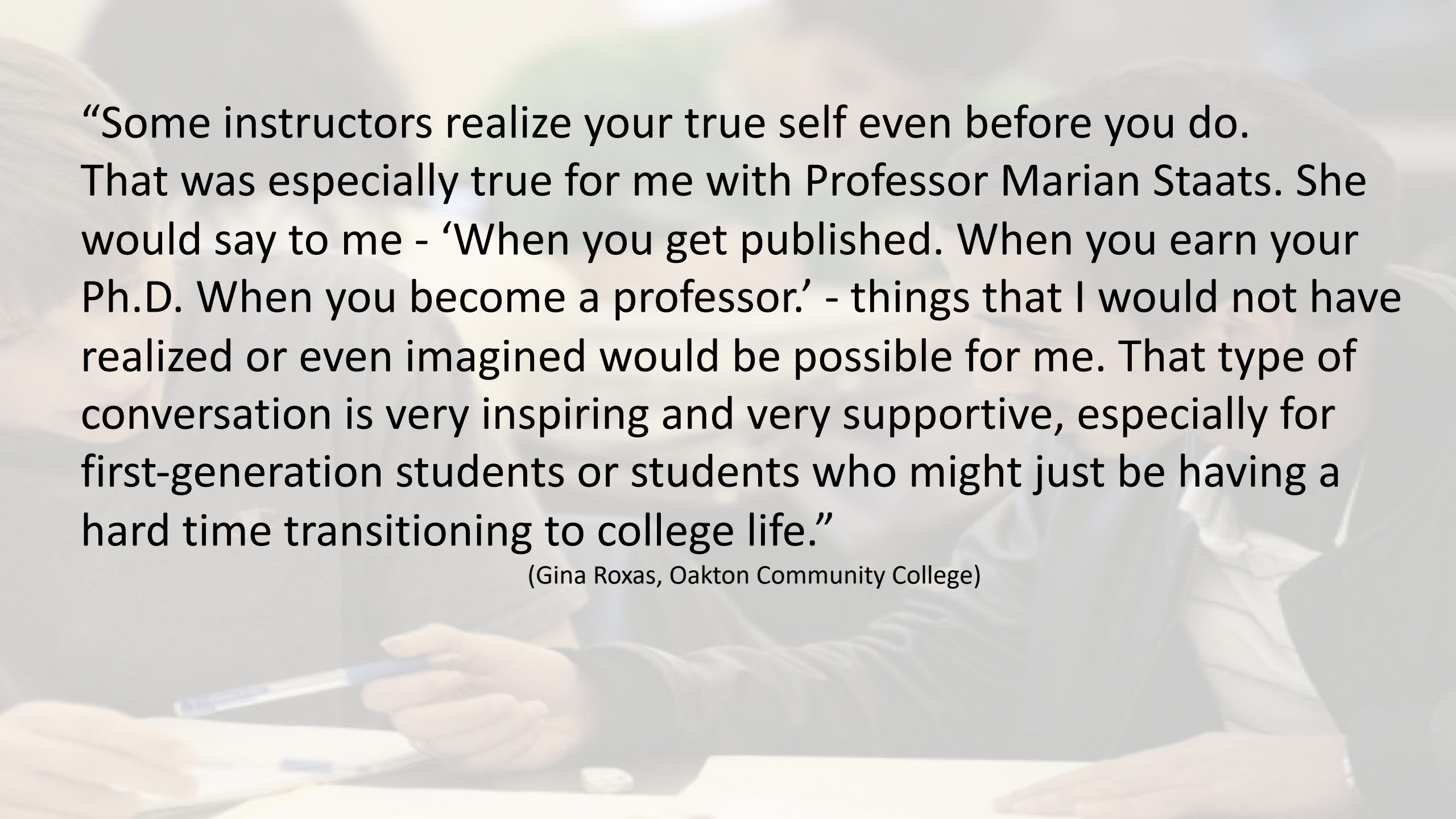
(Eddy et al., 2015)

What will you do to enhance
student-student relationships?



Relationship-rich experiences are a primary means
to **enhance learning and equity** in higher education.





“Some instructors realize your true self even before you do. That was especially true for me with Professor Marian Staats. She would say to me - ‘When you get published. When you earn your Ph.D. When you become a professor.’ - things that I would not have realized or even imagined would be possible for me. That type of conversation is very inspiring and very supportive, especially for first-generation students or students who might just be having a hard time transitioning to college life.”

(Gina Roxas, Oakton Community College)

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