



PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK
February 26-27, 2024
Western Kentucky University



Relationship-Rich Education

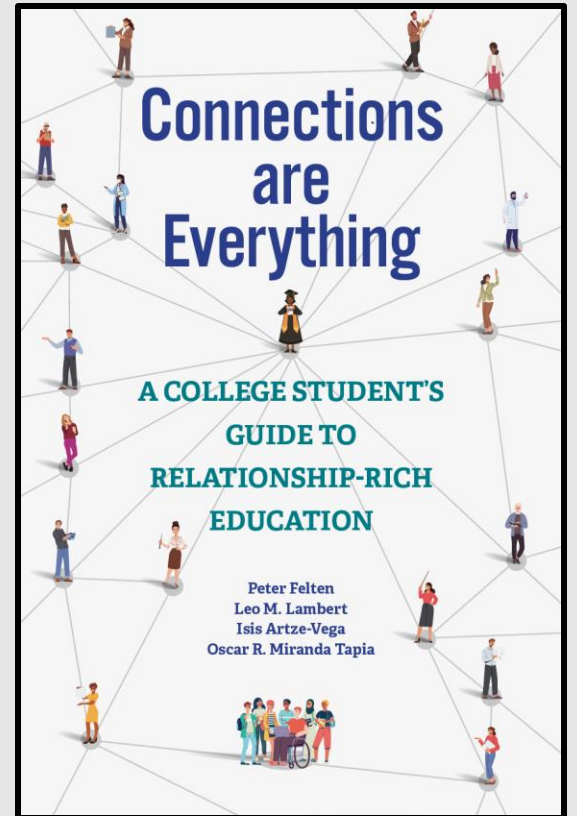
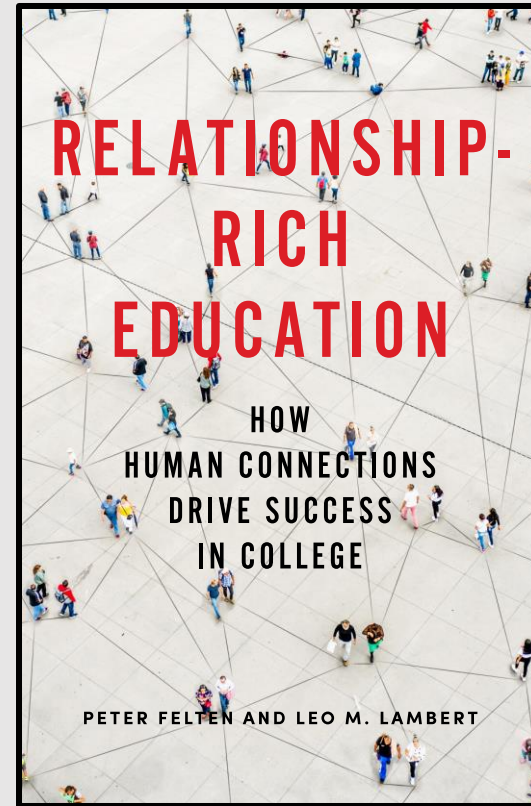
how human connections drive student success

Peter Felten, Center for Engaged Learning, Elon University



Student-faculty, student-staff, and student-student relationships are crucial for learning, well-being, belonging, and success.

(Mayhew et al., 2016; Baik et al., 2019; Waldinger & Schulz, 2023)





What do you do to build relationships with and among students?
What are barriers to those kinds of connections in your context?

“I feel like too many times students really struggle because they're too scared to ask for help. I know sometimes my pride gets in the way of acknowledging that I don't understand something. [Everyone at the college is] always willing to help me, but it can be intimidating to go to them.”

(Abraham Segundo, San Antonio College)





“Once students recognize that you care about them, about where they come from, 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)

“My professor made something as boring as rocks interesting. The passion she had...her subject was something that she loved. 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.”

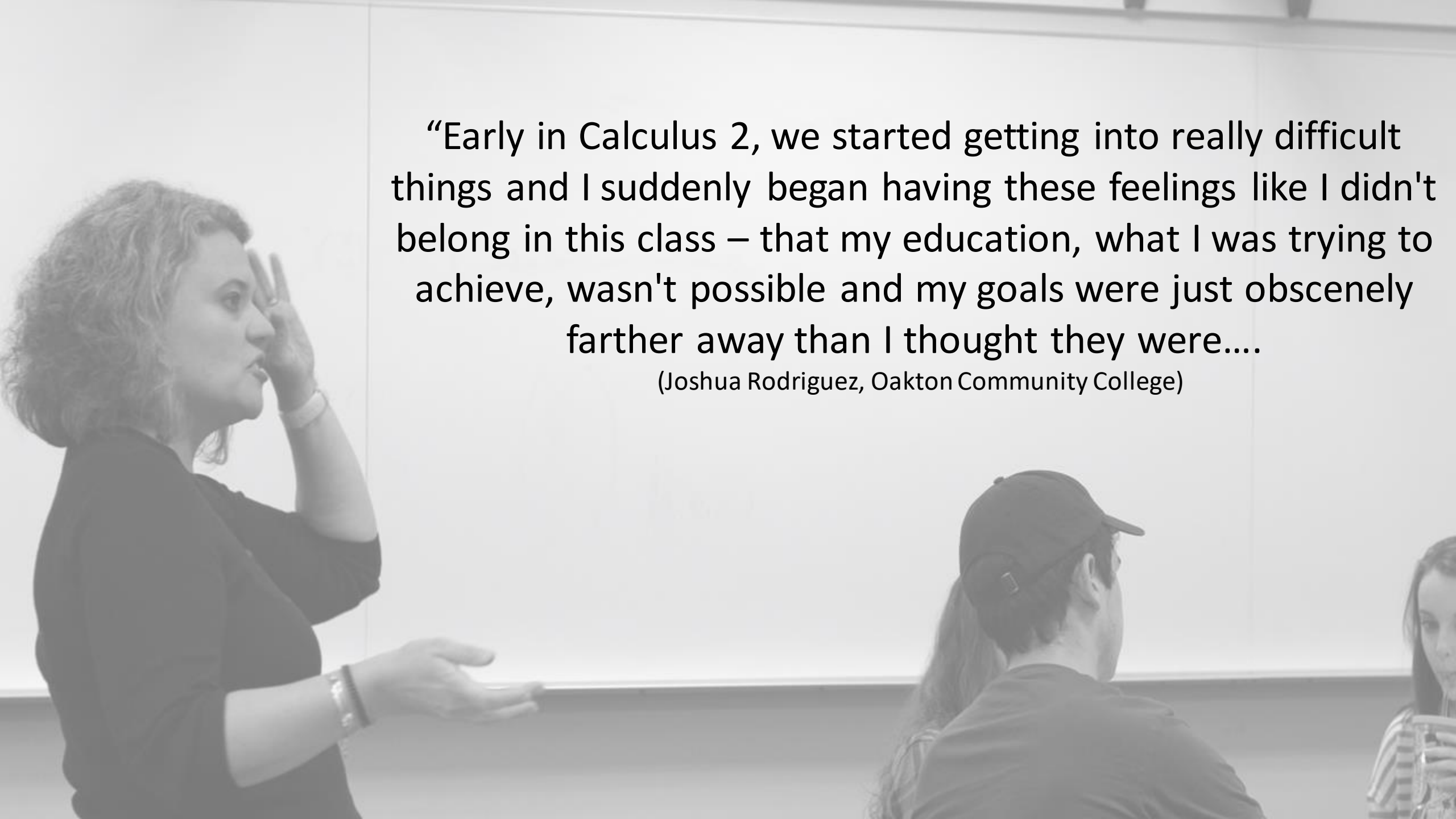
(José Robles, Nevada State College)





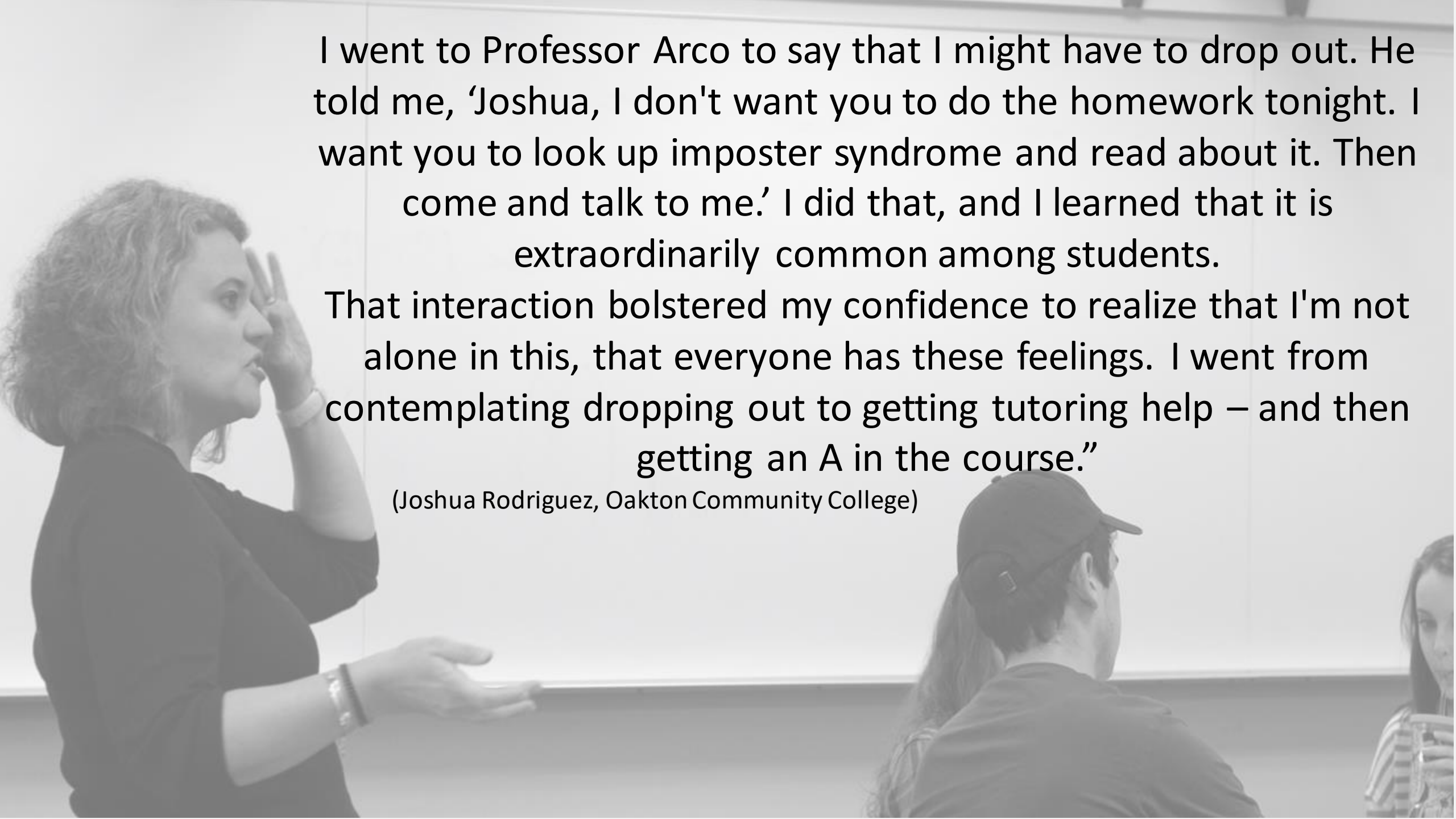
“People here see stuff in me that I don’t see in myself. When I doubt my ability to do something, my job supervisor Ellen Quish will say, ‘Peta, what are you talking about? You’re great at that,’ or ‘You should work on this.’ When I’m struggling, I remember that Ellen told me I’m awesome. So I’m awesome.”

(Peta-Gaye Dixon, LaGuardia Community College)



“Early in Calculus 2, we started getting into really difficult things and I suddenly began having these feelings like I didn't belong in this class – that my education, what I was trying to achieve, wasn't possible and my goals were just obscenely farther away than I thought they were....

(Joshua Rodriguez, Oakton Community College)



I went to Professor Arco to say that I might have to drop out. He told me, 'Joshua, I don't want you to do the homework tonight. I want you to look up imposter syndrome and read about it. Then come and talk to me.' I did that, and I learned that it is extraordinarily common among students.

That interaction bolstered my confidence to realize that I'm not alone in this, that everyone has these feelings. I went from contemplating dropping out to getting tutoring help – and then getting an A in the course.”

(Joshua Rodriguez, Oakton Community College)



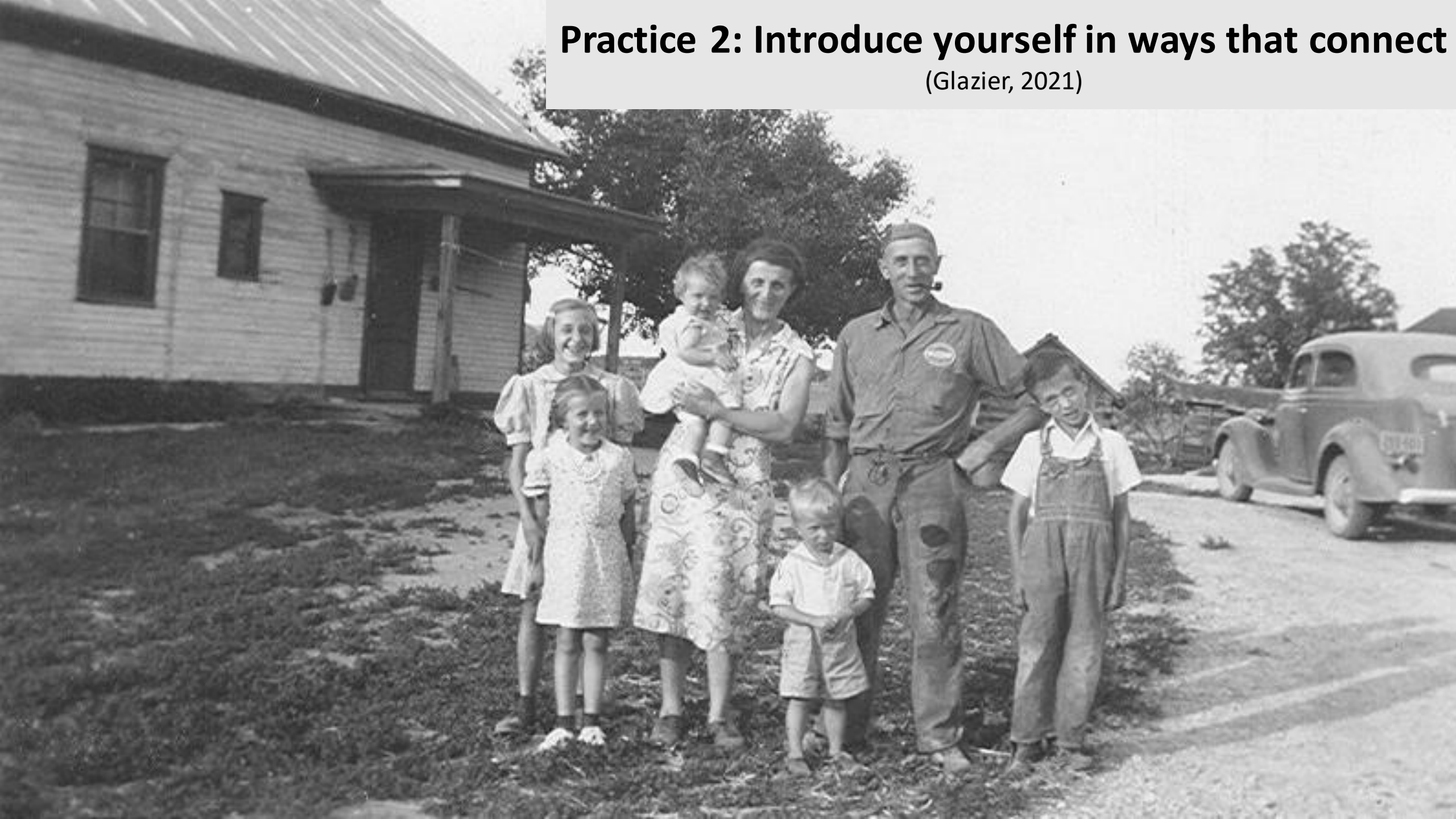
Practice 1: Use Names

When students perceive an instructor knows their names, they feeling more valued, motivated, and comfortable asking for help.

(Cooper et al., 2017)

Practice 2: Introduce yourself in ways that connect

(Glazier, 2021)





Practice 3: Give feedback that validates students

1. High academic standards/expectations;
2. Belief in the student's capacity to meet those standards, even if their work does not do so right now;
3. Specific guidance about how to improve;
4. Availability of resources to support the student's improvement.

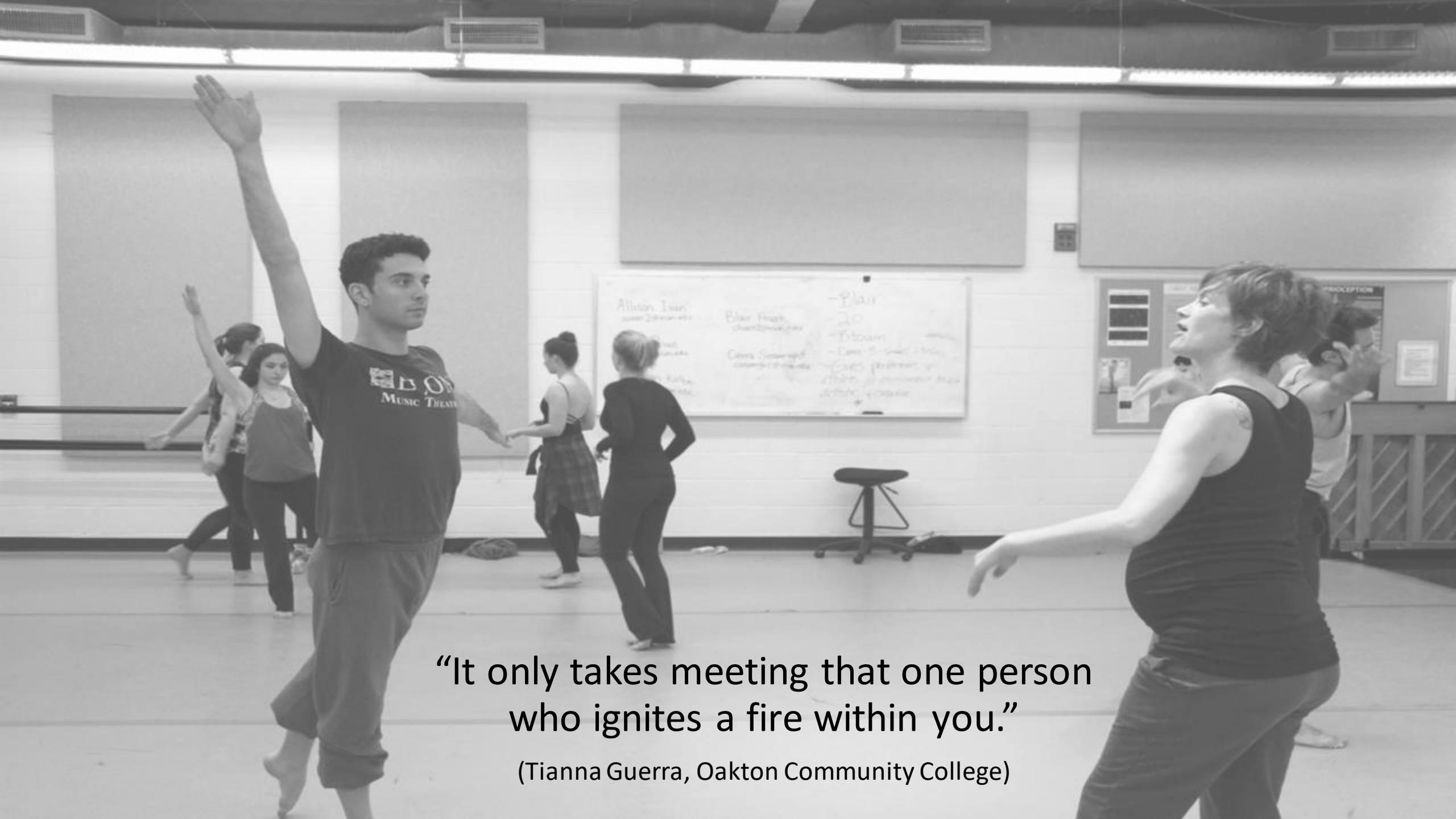
(Cole, 2008)

Keep doing what you already do to cultivate educational relationships.



What's something you will do to build relationships with/among your students?
What's something you will do with colleagues to build relationships with students?





“It only takes meeting that one person
who ignites a fire within you.”

(Tianna Guerra, Oakton Community College)

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