

Relational Feedback as a Tool for Learning, Connection, and Well-Being

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VILLANOVA INSTITUTE FOR
TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Introduce yourself.
2. In ~3 minutes, share a story about a meaningful experience you've had with feedback.
 - a. When, who, where, what, why?
 - b. *Listen generously*
3. Another person shares a story....
4. What insights about feedback emerge from your stories?





Grading $\neq$ feedback

“Our principal task is educating all students, not ranking them.”

(Blum, 2020, p. 5)



1. Feedback literacy 2. Yeah, but... 3. Relational feedback practices

Feedback literacy

(Carless & Boud, 2018)



“Feedback is a dynamic and co-constructive interaction in the context of a safe and mutually respectful relationship for the purpose of challenging a learner’s (and educator’s) ways of thinking, acting and/or being in the service of supporting growth.”

(Ajjawi and Regehr 2019, p. 653)



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Feedback literacy means students:

1. Value feedback;
2. Understand their active role in feedback processes;
3. Make judgments about quality of their own work;
4. Manage their affective responses to feedback.

(Zhou, Dawson, Tai, & Bearman, 2021)

We need to help students develop their feedback literacy.
We need to frame feedback as a relational process.



- 
1. How “feedback literate” are your students? ...*are you?*
 2. What do (or could) you do to build feedback literacy?

1. Value feedback
2. Understand their active role in feedback processes
3. Make judgments about quality of their own work
4. Manage their affective responses to feedback



1. Feedback literacy. 2. **Yeah, but...** 3. Relational feedback practices











“Technology is neither good nor bad; nor is it neutral.”

“The same technology can have quite different results when introduced into different contexts or under different circumstances.”

(Kranzberg, 1986, pp. 545, 546)



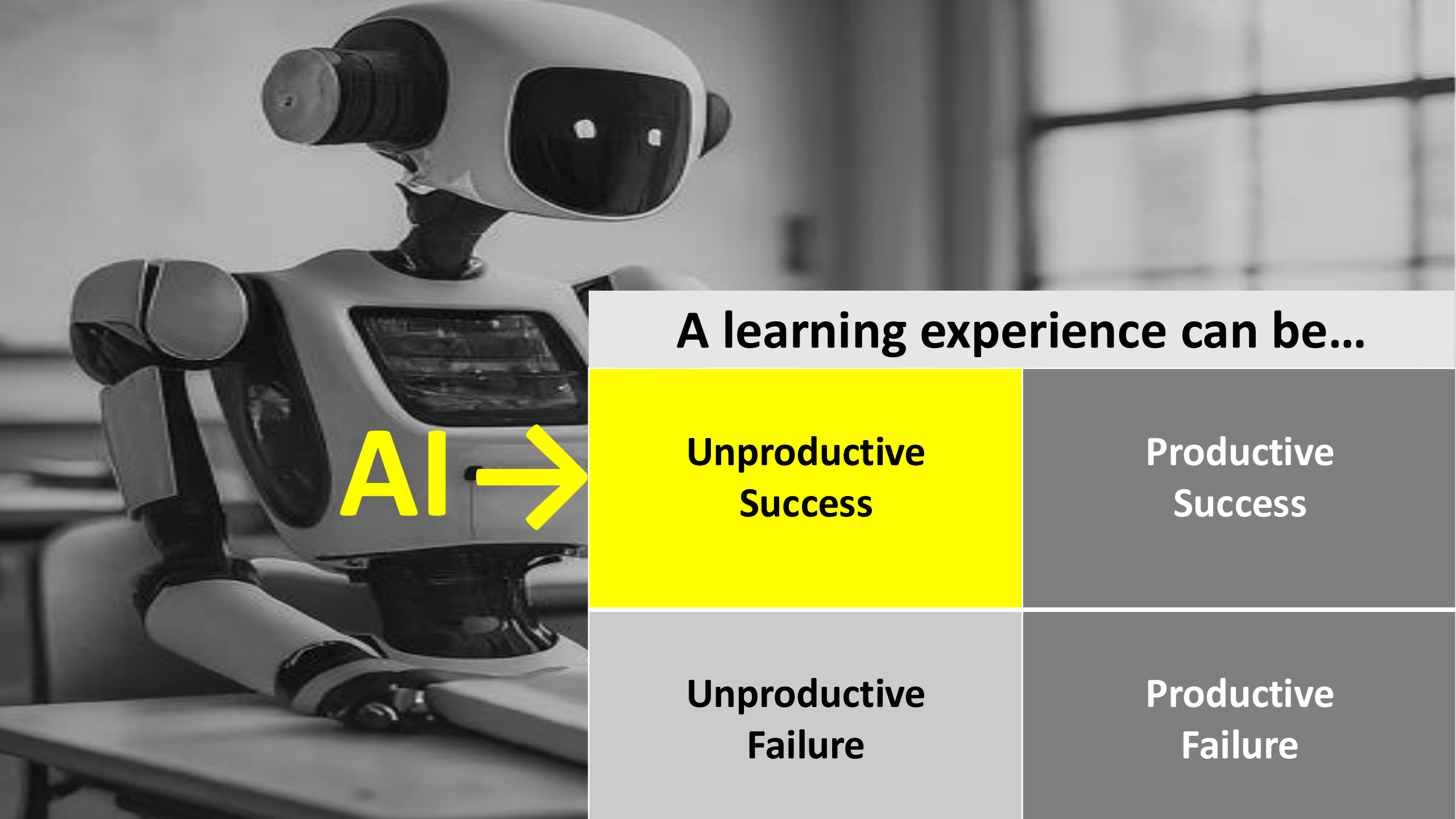
A learning experience can be...

**Unproductive
Success**

**Productive
Success**

**Unproductive
Failure**

**Productive
Failure**



A learning experience can be...

**Unproductive
Success**

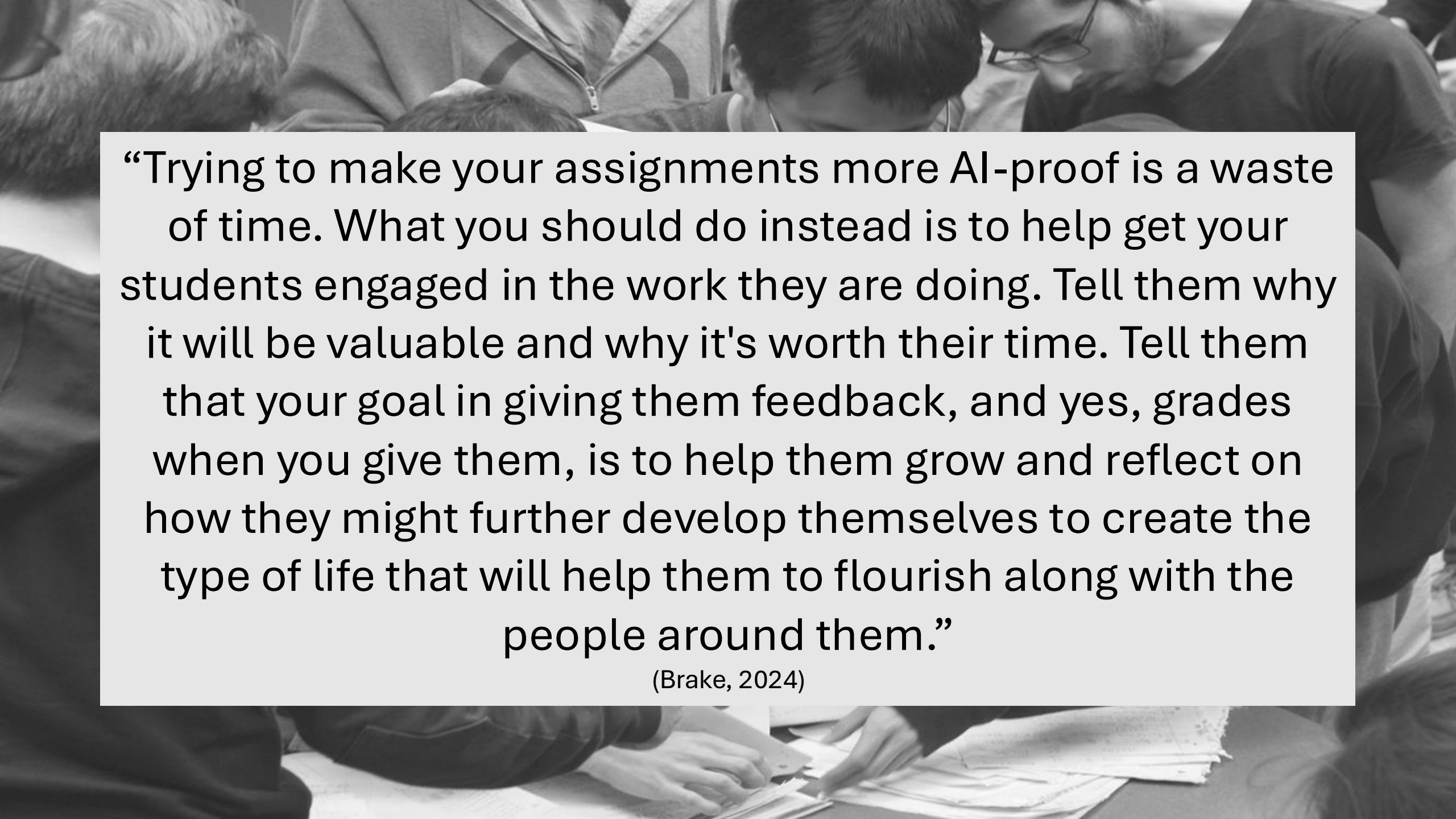
**Productive
Success**

**Unproductive
Failure**

**Productive
Failure**



What are barriers to relational feedback in your teaching context?
What ideas (and questions) do you have about addressing those barriers?

A black and white photograph of several students in a classroom setting. They are gathered around a table, looking down at papers or books, appearing to be engaged in a collaborative activity. The image is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the text overlay.

“Trying to make your assignments more AI-proof is a waste of time. What you should do instead is to help get your students engaged in the work they are doing. Tell them why it will be valuable and why it's worth their time. Tell them that your goal in giving them feedback, and yes, grades when you give them, is to help them grow and reflect on how they might further develop themselves to create the type of life that will help them to flourish along with the people around them.”

(Brake, 2024)



1. Feedback literacy 2. Yeah, but... 3. **Relational feedback practices**

our
feedback

peer
feedback



Validate students with relational feedback that conveys:

1. High academic standards and 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)

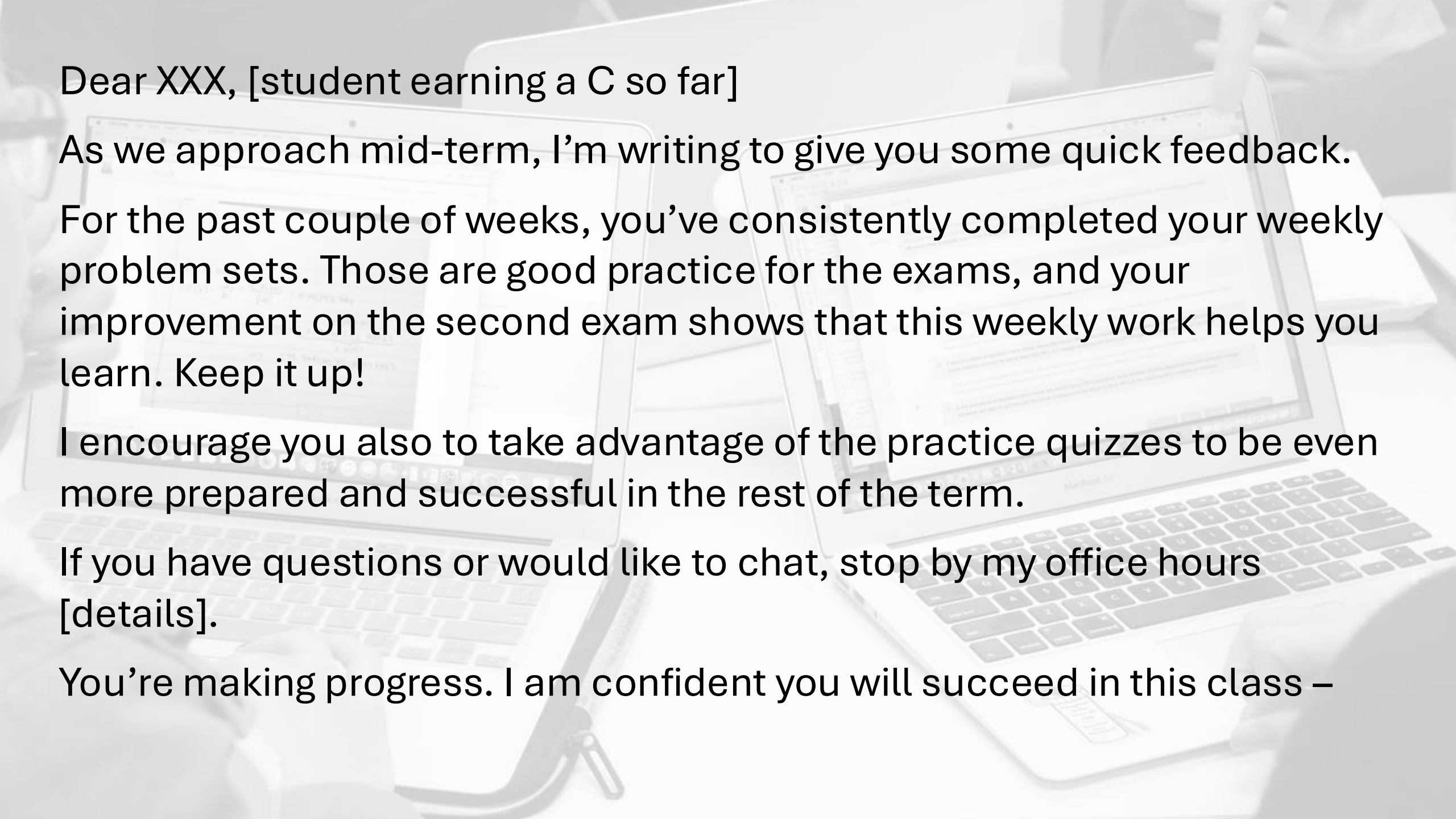


Make validating feedback a routine part of your course

“By conveying beliefs in students’ abilities to succeed in the course and in college more generally, 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, 2020; see also Brown et al, 2022)



The background of the image shows two laptops on a desk. The laptop on the left is open and displays a document with text and a diagram. The laptop on the right is also open and displays a document with text. A pen is lying on the desk between the two laptops. The image is in grayscale and has a slightly blurred, artistic feel.

Dear XXX, [student earning a C so far]

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

For the past couple of weeks, you've consistently completed your weekly problem sets. Those are good practice for the exams, and your improvement on the second exam shows that this weekly work helps you learn. Keep it up!

I encourage you also to take advantage of the practice quizzes to be even more prepared and successful in the rest of the term.

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

You're making progress. I am confident you will succeed in this class –

GRADING RUBRIC FOR SHORT ESSAY (20 points)

	Poor	Under-developed	Good	Excellent
Thesis	No thesis (0)	Unclear or not relevant (1-2)	Clear and relevant (3-4)	Clear, relevant, and insightful (5)
Analysis and writing	Not coherent, many writing errors (0)	Rarely supports thesis; frequent writing errors, or unclear (1-2)	Clearly organized and written, and mostly logical (3-4)	Clear, consistent writing and analysis (5)
Evidence	Lacking, irrelevant, or wrong (0)	Some, but not correct or not linked to thesis (1-2)	Appropriate and correct, but not the most relevant (3-4)	Consistently cites the most relevant, correctly (5)
Context and significance	Not addressed (0)	Inappropriate or incorrect (1-2)	Appropriate but narrow (3-4)	Appropriate, broad, advances thesis (5)



(Bernstein & Greenhoot, 2014)

Peer example 1: Small group essay evaluation



Peer example 2: Collaborative testing

“Analyses revealed that with the exception of upper performers, students performed better overall on the collaborative tests.

Additionally, regardless of their academic abilities, students performed better on the higher order thinking questions under collaborative conditions.

This improvement was equal across different academic abilities, suggesting that collaborative testing promotes higher order thinking even when taking into account previous academic abilities.”

(Mahoney & Harris-Reeves, 2019, p. 25)

Peer example #3: Informal online study groups

Online “study lounge” paired with student-set goals for average exam scores

(Manda Williamson, University of Nebraska, in Felten & Lambert, 2020)



How can you make **your feedback** more validating and relational?
What's one thing you will do to support relational **peer feedback**?

- 
1. Value feedback
 2. Understand their active role in feedback processes
 3. Make judgments about quality of their own work
 4. Manage their affective responses to feedback

“Learning and talking together, we break the notion that our experience of gaining knowledge is private, individualistic, and competitive. By choosing and fostering dialogue, we engage mutually in a learning partnership.”

(hooks, 2009, p. 43)



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