

The Role of Rapport in Motivating Students to Learn

Defining rapport:

- “A friendly harmonious relationship...” *Webster Dictionary*
- “The affective glue that binds education relationships together” (p. 163). Stephen Brookfield (1990)
- Harmonious Connection with Students (Buskist & Saville, 2001).
- Rapport = the Perception You Care (Buskist, 2017, unpublished).
- Rapport is foundational, but not a substitute for other effective teaching strategies.

Why rapport matters?

- “The very first stages of both learning and remembering what was learned are affective.” Fleming, 2003 IDEA #39
- Teaching occurs within social contexts. Misconceptions: seeing the mind as something to be filled by knowledge, put there by a professor (Tiberius, 1993)
- It is part of the good teaching practice (Chickering and Gamson, 1987).
- There are several qualities of effective teachers related to rapport (ex. approachability, accessibility, personality, empathy; Faranda and Clarke (2004); modesty, humor, showing care and respect of other’s point of view (Murray, 1985).

Role of Rapport in Classroom

- Rapport sets the stage for learning outcomes, and it can encourage participation.
- Feeling safe in the classroom can help students take more of the risks needed to engage in higher levels of learning and thinking (Brookfield, 1990).
- High levels of student-teacher rapport create positive learning environments.
- Students interact with each other more.
- Students express opinions without fear.
- Students ask questions with ease.
- More learning, fun learning, motivation to learn
- Increases retention and student success.
- Easier classroom management – prevents incivility

Strategies to establish rapport in classroom

Establish rapport before class starts

- Welcome statement in canvas (maybe a video, especially for online).
- Welcome email
- Ask students to do a virtual introduction (discussion board) before first day of class

Establish rapport on First day of class

- Build community (ex. use icebreakers).
- Bring food or candy, if possible.
- Use a seating chart, group activity during which you review names
- Learn to call your students by name.
- Learn something about your students’ interests.
- Explain your course policies.

Maintain rapport throughout the semester

- Plan well for your class (good course design)- emphasize active learning- engaging activities (TPS, Group work- less lectures)
- Create interesting lectures and class presentations
- Create and use personally relevant class examples.
- Promote class discussion.
- Give prompt and frequent feedback (7 principles).

- Be Accessible/Approachable out of class
 - email
 - phone calls
 - Invite to and use office hours
 - message students who
 - library office hours on second floor
 - arrive to class early and stay late—chat with your students
- Make eye contact with each student.
- Use appropriate humor
- Reward student comments/questions with verbal praise (positive reinforcement)
- Use classroom assessment techniques to check students' learning during class
- Collect mid-semester feedback; make a few changes (shows you care).
- Be enthusiastic about teaching your subject matter.
- Be humble.
- Be respectful
- Be Flexible
- Be Fair in Grading Policies
- Be Encouraging/ Express Interest in Students' Progress
- Be pleasant in class/try to show your best personality

- Make eye contact with each student.
- Use appropriate humor
- Reward student comments/questions w/ verbal praise (positive reinforcement)
- Use classroom assessment techniques to check students' learning during class
- Use Mid-semester- Collect feedback- make a few changes (shows you care)

- When all else fails, smile a lot, students will think you like them and your job.

Resources

Brookfield, S. D. (1990). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom*. John Wiley & Sons.

Buskist, W., & Saville, B. K. (2001). Creating positive emotional contexts for enhancing teaching and learning. *APS Observer*, 12-13.

Chickering, W. & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39 (7), 3-7.

Faranda, W., & Clarke, I. (2004). Student observations of outstanding teaching: Implications for marketing educators. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 26, 271-281.

Fleming, N. (2003). Establishing rapport: Personal interaction and learning, *IDEA Paper No. 39*. Retrieved May 7, 2018, from https://ctfd.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/IDEA_Paper_Rapport.pdf

Murray, H.G. (1985). Classroom teaching behaviors related to college teaching effectiveness. In J.G. Donald & A.M. Sullivan (Eds.), *Using research to improve teaching*, (pp. 21-34). San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Tiberius, R. (1993). The why of teacher/student relationships. *Essays on Teaching Excellence – Professional & Organizational Development Network*, 5(8). Retrieved May 7, 2018, from <https://podnetwork.org/content/uploads/V5-N8-Tiberius.pdf>