

Rapport

"If I let myself really understand another person, I might be changed by that understanding. And we all fear change. So it is not an easy thing to permit oneself to understand another individual." - Carl Rogers

Overview Cross cultural research indicates that rapport - the positive relationship between teacher and student - impacts learning. Four "classic" empirical strategies for building rapport - empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, teacher congruence, and fostering critical thinking - have been demonstrated to help instructors build rapport with learners.

Relationships as Catalyst for Learning

"The emotional bond between students and teacher - for better or worse - accounts for whether students learn. The brilliantly well-organized teacher whom fourth graders see as mean will not be very effective. But the funny teacher, or the gentle storytelling teacher, whose lessons are poorly organized won't be much good either. **Effective teachers** have both qualities. They are able to **connect personally with students**, and they organize the material in a way that makes it interesting and easy to understand."

Willingham, D. (2009). *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions about How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Establishing Rapport



Personal Connection

To feel seen and understood without judgement creates a sense of connection and authentic engagement between persons.



Rapport

Empathetic understanding can create a sense of rapport between student and educator.



Learning

Relational rapport has been demonstrated to increase learning.



Practice Tip

Expressing a sincere, non-judgmental interest in the inner world of another person is a long-standing and pedagogically effective learner-centered practice.

The Emotional Power of Acceptance

"All persons have a powerful and near universal need to be heard, seen, accepted, and appreciated as they are, including their flaws and limitations [...] **The desire to hear another person** as he or she shares something of personal relevance **is at the heart of all [...] caring relationships."**

Cain, D. J. (2012). *Person-Centered Psychotherapies. Handbook of Educational Psychology* (pp. 245-263). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Empathic Understanding

Expressing empathic understanding - and being perceived by the learner as empathic in the pedagogical relationship - is a key learner-centered element for building classroom rapport. Learners who feel genuinely understood by their instructor may build a greater sense of rapport than students who feel that their teacher does not take a sincere interest in them as persons. For learner-centered approaches to classroom rapport, coming to understand how learners view themselves - and manifesting that understanding to learners - is a powerful tool for building meaningful relationships in the classroom.

Congruence

Congruence, a third element of learner-centered teacher-student relationship rapport, involves an instructor being authentic and genuine in relationships with learners. While this may require being vulnerable and sharing elements of one's true self with learners, it does not mean that one should be overly personal with one's students. Rather, congruence highlights that learners respond to teachers that seem sincere and authentic, and that sharing elements of one's self when pedagogically appropriate can often help build rapport with learners.

The Classic Approach to Classroom Rapport

Unconditional Positive Regard

A pedagogical relationship based on accepting individuals as they are is considered a learner-centered practice for building classroom rapport. The term "unconditional positive regard" stems from the Humanistic psychology tradition, and signifies the relationship condition where individuals feel safe expressing themselves to another person without fear of judgment and criticism. This contrasts with placing "conditions of worth" on a person and valuing them to the extent that they conform with our desires for their behavior.

Critical Thinking

A fourth element of building rapport involves fostering critical thinking and self-direction in learners.

Learners are more likely to build trust and connections with teachers who encourage self-directed thinking about questions that have personal significance to learners than with teachers they view as controlling their thinking and behavior. Supporting learners' autonomy while helping them think critically is thus considered an effective learner-centered element for building classroom rapport.

Cornelius-White, J. "Learner-Centered Teacher-Student Relationships Are Effective: A Meta-analysis." *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 1 (2007): 113-43.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1 Empathic Understanding

Within the information literacy instruction context, how can we express a sincere interest in the inner worlds of our students?

2 Unconditional Positive Regard

How can we express that we value our students as unique individuals, and that who they are as persons is a valuable asset to bring to the process of research?

3 Congruence

Is there a way we can be real and genuine in our relationships with learners? Can we express our vulnerabilities related to learning, what has worked for us and what hasn't, and share elements of our true self in pedagogically appropriate ways?

4 Information Literacy

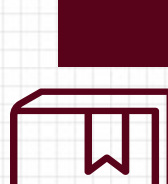
How can we encourage self-directed learning, and encourage students to use the process of research as an occasion to think well about questions that matter to them? How can we use our information expertise to help our students find credible research that connects with their interests?

Klipfel, K., & Cook, D. (2017). *Learner-centered Pedagogy: Principles and Practice*. Chicago: American Library Association.

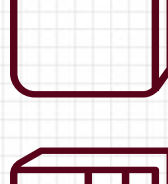
"[W]hen the inquirer is met as a unique individual, rather than as a mere consumer of bibliographical materials and techniques, his question may involve **unexpected discoveries,**" including the **"interests, goals, problems, backgrounds, and abilities of each individual student"**

Maxfield, D. K. "Counselor Librarianship at UIC." *College & Research Libraries* 15, no. 2 (1954): 161-79.

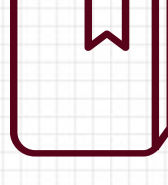
REFERENCES & FURTHER READING



Benson, T. A., Cohen, A. L., & Buskist, W. (2005). Rapport: Its relation to student attitudes and behaviors toward teachers and classes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 32, 236-238.



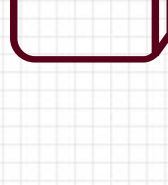
Beutel, D. "Teachers' Understandings of Their Relationships with Students: Pedagogic Connectedness." *International Journal of Learning* 16, no. 3 (2009): 507-18.



Cain, D. J. *Person-Centered Therapies*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.



Cornelius-White, J. "Learner-Centered Teacher-Student Relationships Are Effective: A Meta-analysis." *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 1 (2007): 113-43.



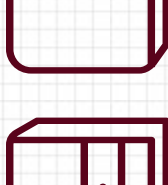
Fine, S. "Librarians and the Art of Helping." *The Reference Librarian* 28, no. 59 (1997): 77-91.



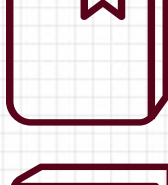
Frisby, B. N., & Myers, S. A. (2008). The relationships among perceived instructor rapport, student participation, and student learning outcomes. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, 33, 27-34.



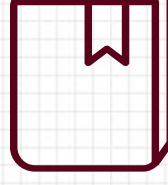
Frisby, B. N., & Martin, M. M. (2010). Instructor-student and student-student rapport in the classroom. *Communication Education*, 59(2), 146-164.



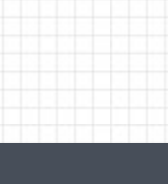
Frisby, B. N., & Gaffney, A. L. (2015). Understanding the role of instructor rapport in the college classroom. *Communication Research Reports*, 32, 340-346.



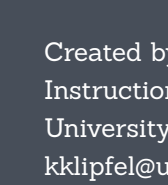
Frisby, B., Slone, A., & Bengu, E. (2017). Rapport, motivation, participation, and perceptions of learning in U.S. and Turkish student classrooms: A replication and cultural comparison. *Communication Education*, 66(2), 183-195.



Gehlbach, H., Brinkworth, M. E., King, A. M., Hsu, L. M., McIntyre, J., & Rogers, T. (2016). Creating birds of similar feathers: Leveraging similarity to improve teacher-student relationships and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 108(3), 342.



Heim, C. "Tutorial Facilitation in the Humanities Based on the Tenets of Carl Rogers." *Higher Education* 63, no. 3 (2012): 289-98.

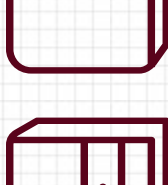


Horvath, A. O., and L. Luborsky. "The Role of the Therapeutic Alliance in Psychotherapy." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 61, no. 4 (1993): 561-73.

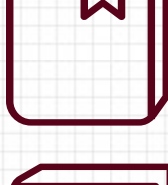
REFERENCES & FURTHER READING



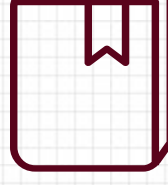
Klipfel, K.M. (2015). Authenticity and Learning: Implications for Reference Librarianship and Information Literacy Instruction. *College & Research Libraries*, 76(1), 19-30.



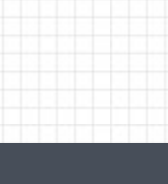
Klipfel, K., & Cook, D. (2017). *Learner-centered Pedagogy: Principles and Practice*. Chicago: American Library Association.



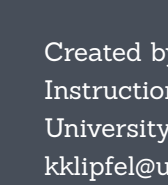
Maxfield, D. K. "Counselor Librarianship at UIC." *College & Research Libraries* 15, no. 2 (1954): 161-79.



Makri-Botsari, E. (2015). Adolescents' unconditional acceptance by parents and teachers and educational outcomes: A structural model of gender differences. *Journal of Adolescence*, 43, 50, 15, no. 2 (1954): 161-79.



Perkins, D., Schenk, T. A., Stephan, L., Vrungos, S., & Wynants, S. (1995). Effects of rapport, intellectual excitement, and learning on students' perceived ratings of college instructors. *Psychological Reports*, 76, 627-635.



Prieto, A. G. (2017). Humanistic perspectives in virtual reference. *Library Review*, 66(8/9), 695-710.

Roth, G., Assor, A., Niemiec, C.P., Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (2009). The Emotional and Academic Consequences of Parental Conditional Regard: Leveraging Similarity to Improve Teacher-Student Relationship, Conditional Negative Regard, and Autonomy Support as Parenting Practices. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(4), 1119-1142.

Roth, G., Kanat-Maymon, Y., & Assor, A. (2016). The Role of Unconditional Parental Regard in Autonomy-Supportive Parenting. *Journal of Personality*, 84(6), 716-725.

Ross, C. S. "The Reference Interview: Why It Needs to Be Used in Every (Well, Almost Every) Reference Transaction." *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2003): 38-43.

Stock, M. (2009). The three R's: Rapport, relationship, and reference. *The Reference Librarian*, 51(1), 45-52.

Wilson, J. H., Ryan, R. G., & Pugh, J. L. (2010). Professor-student rapport scale predicts student outcomes. *Teaching of Psychology*, 37(4), 246-251.

Willingham, D. (2009). *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions about How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.