

Rapport in the Classroom

It is important to create a sense of community and belonging in a classroom, beginning on the very first day. This provides a welcoming environment for my students and for myself. I am not teaching a subject I am teaching people. As people, my students have a life outside of school. I reflect upon this every day when I teach and I also think back to when I was a student in middle school. I ask about their team sports, their interests, and how they feel. I treat them how I would like to be treated as an individual.

Some of the ideas I think about when I come to class include: demonstrating my excitement about my subject, what can my students look forward to in my class, and why I have chosen to teach. I believe my students can see that I am passionate about science and I bring in “real-world” examples from my experiences. I am always approachable and I provide timely, reasoned feedback. I also care about how I am doing as a teacher so I often ask my students to provide feedback on my lessons. On the first day I ask students to fill out an index card telling me about themselves. When we work in groups, I use a group contract to keep all of the group members accountable. In my classroom, I expect my students to pay full attention to me when I am teaching. Conversely, I believe that I should give my full attention to their questions and answers.

On a daily basis, I believe it is important to be genuine with my students and tell them how much I am really excited to see them. I always start by greeting them at the door and asking them how their day is going. I also write an inspirational quote on the board daily. I understand that any positive comment that I give to them might be the only positive comment that they receive all day. Even when I am redirecting behavior I try to do so in a positive way. Another way I build rapport is to smile. I love getting to know my students and sharing concepts that I love. They teach me something new every day and so I am learning right along with them. I really enjoy teaching! This makes it hard not to smile every day.

If I do not have rapport with my students they will not care about learning or about being in my classroom. I believe rapport motivates my students to come to class and to pay attention. I think that it also gives them a sense of ownership in their work. If we are unable to connect with our students, we simply cannot do a great job in teaching them.