

BUILDING RAPPORT WITH YOUR STUDENTS

When you build rapport with your students, you are doing one of the most beneficial and impactful things you can do to improve their overall experience in the classroom. If students trust you, and feel a connection with you, learning outcomes will improve. Establishing a connection with students should be a critical component of your overall teaching strategy. Here's a list of some of the best ways to build an authentic connection with your students.



Smile.

Don't be afraid to show some warmth towards your students. Try to use more open body language, too.



Say my name.

Students will respond when you call them by name. Make your students a person with an identity and a life—not just a number.



What's your story?

Share appropriate stories from your life that relates the content you are teaching in a personal way. Share your enthusiasm. Inject your energy. Don't be afraid to be geeky.



Use the first day.

Establish on the first day that your class is important to you. Don't just review the syllabus. Instead, use the entire class time, even if it's just to get to know your students.



Office hours.

First, use them. Second, consider holding office hours in different places, so your students have different location options. Third, consider holding virtual office hours online.



Students have lives.

Students, like everyone else, have rich, complicated lives. Are they working a job? Are they sick? If you ever have concerns about their performance, reach out. Don't wait.

Encourage students to get to know each other.

Build time in each class meeting for genuine student interaction to occur. Supplement this with online interactions. You should participate too.



Check in.

Don't wait until the end of the semester (OMETs) to find out how students feel about the class. Check in with a survey at the end of the first month. Just ask.

Be present.

Faculty who are present for their students will usually be rewarded with students who are also present. Show your commitment and ask for their commitment on this journey.



Personalize your communication.

When you give feedback (on tests, writing assignments, via e-mail, etc.), take the time to clearly convey your message. Make it personal in a good way.

REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

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