

## Building Rapport and Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

- What is it?
  - Getting to know your learners and working to make the learning experience personal
  - Building respectful relationships between the instructor and the students, and amongst the students themselves
  - Promoting and cultivating a “growth mindset” in your students
- Why do it?
  - It creates a supportive climate.
  - It makes classroom management easier.
  - It increases student motivation when you express the belief that they are capable of succeeding in the course (efficacy expectancy), and when they enjoy coming to class.
  - It makes the semester more pleasant, fun, and meaningful for all involved.
  - It can increase student attention to course material
- Ways to do it?
  - SMILE!
  - Learn your students’ names.
  - Relax and allow for spontaneity.
  - Be conversational and informal—arrive with some time before and after class to interact with and get to know your students; take time to build personal relationships and follow up on life events; learn about your student’s hobbies and interests
  - Begin class with a saying or a joke.
  - Use stories and personal experience/anecdotes to relate the subject matter
  - Relate course concepts to everyday life; make the learning relevant→ discover student talents and interests and make it personal
  - Break up your presentations and interject humor.
  - Talk to the class on a personal level and encourage dialogue between the instructor and the students
  - Make eye contact
  - Try to always be positive, and to frame comments in positive language; recognize the positive behaviors and production by your students; offer praise
  - Let the students make some of the decisions. This can increase the sense of ownership for the students.
  - Use clear communication in their language in terms of humor, tech, etc...
  - Create the sense that the class is a team—students can help each other out in the learning process.
  - Pay attention to the way you come across in written communication. Try to use a constructive tone.
  - Impressions are formed even through writing on the syllabus. Be aware of this and make sure your syllabus communicates the positive tone that you want to set.
  - Speaking negatively about students, even to other colleagues can create a toxic mentality. Refrain from doing so.
  - Reinforce the fact that you know that your students can succeed by giving them plenty of opportunities for practice and offer suggestions for improvement.