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## BRAZ-TESOL Webinar : Rapport Me Up!

By Cecilia Nobre / July 2017

### But what's rapport, after all?

“The problem is, whereas rapport is clearly important, it is also notoriously difficult to define or quantify”

(Jim Scrivener, 2005)

Lynne McTaggart stated that rapport is like tuning in to the right station with a radio.



According to Jeremy Harmer, there are 4 capacities that make up rapport:

- Recognising students ( names, too!)
- Listening to students
- Respecting students
- Being even-handed

*So, in your opinion, is rapport an essential component of good teaching? Does rapport outshine other factors - such as subject knowledge, for instance?*

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Can rapport be developed? Is it a trainable skill?

... Or you either have it or don't have it. It can't be taught.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

**Rapport is a fundamental personality trait at which some people are naturally good, while others are not.**

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

**Empathy, respect, vulnerability and authenticity are not always intuitive.**

*P.S. Respect cuts both ways - teachers and students.*

### Situation 1

#### **How can we build rapport?**

Maria is in her late 20s and she has private classes twice a week at 9 pm. She is lively, motivated, and is learning English for several purposes: she wants to seize her trips and be more confident in using the language at work. However, due to work, she often misses classes and sometimes she'd like to make up for them.

### Situation 2

Marcelo is in his mid-teens and studies English in a language school with 15 other friends. He's intelligent, but doesn't like to engage in activities because some of his peers bully him. His parents have recently gotten divorced.

*If we create a positive learning environment, by extension, we will establish rapport. For me, students' perception is at the art of building rapport.*

## Fundamental Attribution Error ... in ELT

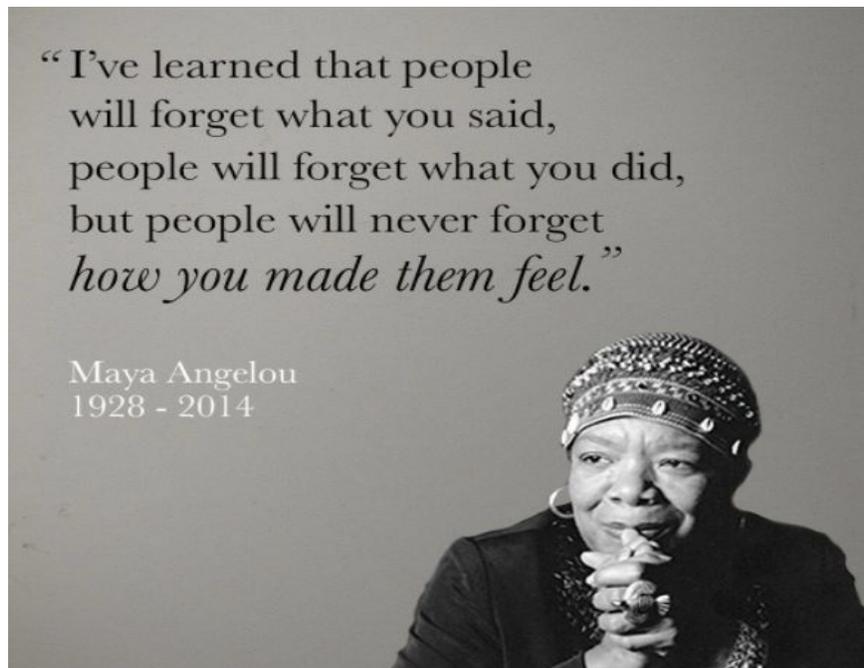
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR\\_q96-YRzk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR_q96-YRzk)

This is a natural tendency to see the behaviour of others as being determined by their character – while excusing our own behavior based on circumstances.

### What can we do to create rapport with our students?

- 1- Plan activities that get students to talk about what interests them. Be non-judgemental.
- 2- Learn your students' names as soon as possible.
3. Set classroom rules by being clear and consistent about expectations.
- 4- Show that you care non-verbally as well ( body language works wonders).
- 5- Respect your students and understand their diverse and different backgrounds. Don't jump to conclusions based on your frame of reference - grow empathy.
- 6- Really listen to your students. I mean it.
7. Praise your students ( not only in front of the class). Give clear, positive feedback.
- 8 - Be ready to get out of your comfort zone. Show your imperfections, be your genuine self.

Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto said "if a teacher does actually have an **interest** in and **respect** for students, these actions will show that they do, which develops rapport. If the teacher doesn't start with those traits, these actions might buy them enough time to genuinely learn to like their students and respect them. Nothing creates **likeability** like being likeable. And nothing makes us more likeable than showing that we like others.



### Final remarks -

### Questions for teachers to reflect on

- When was the last time you showed your students you're vulnerable? What happened?
- Is the way you greet students welcoming and pleasant?
- What's the most intimate or the funniest thing your student has ever shared with you?
- Have you ever shared anything of your private life with your student that you later regretted? What was it? Why did you regret?
- Would you want to be a student in your own classroom? Why or why not? What would you like your teacher to change?

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