



## Feeling of Oneness Historified

Deeksha Thakur<sup>1</sup>, A K Vij<sup>2</sup>, Charu Shri<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, School of Management, The NorthCap University, Gurgaon, India

<sup>2</sup>Adjunct Professor, Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, New Delhi India

<sup>3</sup>Former Associate Professor, School of Management, The NorthCap University, Gurgaon, India

<sup>1</sup>deekshatm@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>akvij@lbsim.ac.in, <sup>3</sup>charushri004@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This literature-review based paper brings forth **rapport-building**, of all the techniques of NLP. Rapport is an arm of Neuro Linguistic Programming and it is not a new construct; rather it is a well-known feeling of oneness and harmony. The paper encompasses history of the construct, definitions given by various researchers in different contexts, its variables in terms of antecedents and outcomes. The paper also emphasizes on the significance of rapport in faculty-student context in higher education. Good faculty-student relationships lead to good educational and environmental outcomes. It is 'not so easy' to master the skill of 'rapport' in practice. Therefore, recommendations from literature on building 'appropriate or optimum' rapport in faculty-student context have been given here.

**Key words:** NLP; Rapport; Higher Education; Empathy; Connection

In today's world, where both competition and co-ordination are the buzzwords for continuum of success in one's professional life; where global interdependence takes precedence over local independence, personal self-development and intercultural regard has become the key to success. It is agreeable that individual performance roles depend upon a professional's skill to focus and deliver (with an eye on detail), the fact of the matter is that even such roles can't be performed in total isolation. On the other hand, in roles that seek foundation in interpersonal skills, right brain supersedes the old left brain. Inherent art or the learnt skill to excel in interpersonal work relations paces up one's career progression. Great interpersonal skills form the basis for the managerial ideal. It is not as simple as it sounds. In a working environment of 360 degree formal/informal feedback, interpersonal skills become all the more important. One's relation with oneself paves the way for one's relation with others. Workplaces provide opportunities for 'self-improvement' and 'connecting with others' in the form of formal/informal trainings. So the new emphasis is on the individual. How one sees oneself, others, one's job, environment and the ecosystem. In different contexts like medicine, psychotherapy, corporate sector, sports, teaching, an individual has to work with oneself and with various other individuals. This is where

NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) has made a significant place in personal/professional life of learners. Using speech or using silence, making right use of the body language- is what NLP teaches. In the field of personal self-development, neuro linguistic programming (NLP) is something of an artificial intelligence approach to success. Interestingly, NLP practitioners identify thought, action and other patterns of excellent performers and then teach them to those who want to achieve the same level of accomplishment. According to McDermott & Jago (2002), with the intervention of NLP, one can literally learn to see things with a different angle, meet familiar people in a new way, give them ears in a new way for the first time and henceforth smell success. NLP techniques involve the study of language patterns, patterns of motivation, rapport-building, and how individuals code data (Thompson et al., 2002).

### II Rapport-Building

In professional world, it is necessary to communicate with people and understand each other. It is important to build and maintain rapport amongst colleagues in order to succeed. People, who do not get along, will always have a rift among each other and this might come into the way of getting the task done with otherwise possible positivity. 'Rapport' is no more a new word today. It is important to understand and explore the roots of this concept and the significance it has been allotted in various contexts.

What a wonderful concept, rapport!  
Emblazoned in clinical lore  
But it dwells in defiance  
Of the methods of science  
Until we examine its core. (Tickle Degnen and Rosenthal, 1990)

Rapport is an inevitable element in the building and maintenance of strong working relations and has been studied by both linguists and management researchers, including Campbell et al. (2003, 2006), Holden (2002), Holmes and Marra (2004), Granitz et al (2009), Robinson L et al (2015) etc. In last few decades, rapport has been extensively acclaimed to have impacted a number of professions. Various



professions depend majorly on interpersonal skills to achieve and maintain success. Rapport-building is an important part of interpersonal skills. It is dyadic in nature however in some professions it can be one-to-many. Corporate world, dentistry, counseling, selling, services, education, and investigation – all make use of rapport to influence the people involved. Wong(2002) termed the corporate cultures that are dysfunctional in terms of relationships as toxic corporate cultures. Patricia P.(2010) also concluded that finding and building on common, non-threatening ground was important in building solidarity and intercultural understanding.

Fathers of NLP, Bandler and Grinder, demonstrate rapport as an understanding of the other person's model of the world' (*Frogs into Princes*, page 80). According to **Wikipedia**, rapport is a close and harmonious relationship in which people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well. The word comes from the old French verb *rapporter* which means to carry something back; which means that what one person sends out the other sends back. According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, *rapport can be defined as a relation marked by harmony, conformity, accord or affinity*.

Rapport is a thread between two or more individuals in a working environment. Rapport simply connects. It gives a sense of oneness or belongingness. The construct of rapport has had an extensive history. Researchers have attempted to define rapport since the beginning of the twentieth century (Freud, 1914/1924; Park & Burgess, 1924). Park and Burgess (1924) stated that rapport implies the existence of a mutual responsiveness so that every group member gives immediate reaction which is spontaneous as well as sympathetic to the feelings and attitudes of every other member.

### III Various Definitions of Rapport

There has been a voluminous body of theoretical and conceptual research on rapport as a construct. Various **definitions or descriptions given by various researchers in different contexts** are as follows:

#### Faculty-student context

1. Sharing a common viewpoint(LaFrance and Broadbent, 1976)
2. Interaction characterized as harmonious, smooth, in tune with and on the same wavelength (Bermieri 1988)

3. Communication characterized by warmth, enthusiasm and interest (Heintzman et al. 1993)
4. Open communication and emotional and academic support(Pianta,1999)
5. Increased desire to learn and motivation (Buskist & Saville, 2001)
6. Characteristic of well-functioning human relationships(Reis & Sprecher, 2009)

#### College Roommates Context

1. Self-report of healthy, open communication between roommates(Carey et al, 1986)
2. Communication skills, such as empathy, respect, and genuineness, have been identified as important qualities of a positive relationship (Waldo & Fuhrman, 1981).
3. Relationship characterized by satisfactory communication and mutual understanding(Carey, Hamilton and Shanklin,1986)

#### Sales and Services Context

1. A harmonious, empathetic or sympathetic relation or connection to another self (Brooks, 1989)
2. Hitting it off and being comfortable with the relationship(Dell, 1991)
3. The perception that a relationship has the right chemistry and is enjoyable(LaBahn, 1996)
4. The perception of having established similarity with another person. Sales encounter is much like a dance during which a conversation takes place with the customer leading and the salesperson following. Ideally the two soon merge into a couple moving together in rapport. (Nickels, Everett, and Klein, 1983)
5. The ability to enter another's world and make him/her feel that the strong common bond has been formed( Shapiro,1989)
6. Immediacy(similar to rapport) is the directness and intensity of interaction between two parties(Ketrow,1991)
7. A sense of genuine interpersonal sensitivity and concern (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993)
8. Rapport refers to "a customer's perception of having an enjoyable interaction with a service provider employee, characterized by a personal connection between the two



interactants” (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000).

9. Rapport is a characteristic of a relationship if the parties engage in a high degree of attention, show a high degree of empathy and share a set of common expectations (Coan G, 2001). In marketing and selling context, rapport is hypothesized to be related to co-membership, similarity, interpersonal persuasion and customer satisfaction (Coan G,2001)

#### Miscellaneous

In **caregiver and a person with developmental disabilities**, quality of relationship between two people (McLaughlin and Carr 2005,p. 69)

In **linguistics**, social interactions with a particularly noticeable impact on a relationship with another person (Spencer-Oatey, 2002)

#### IV Dimensions/Antecedents of Rapport Mutual Attentiveness, Positivity and Co-ordination

Through a meta-analysis, **Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990)**, created a conceptualization of rapport and defined rapport as an interaction that requires *mutual attentiveness, positivity, and coordination* between the participants. Unlike prior researches that deduced from individualistic approach, their research has focused on the cognitions, feelings, attributions, expectations, and behaviors of individuals in comparison with one another (Altman, 1990). Their approach that rapport is dyadic in nature gave a new dimension to the world. According to Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990), a high degree of rapport brings cohesiveness, through mutual attention and involvement with one another. The second component of rapport is positivity. Individuals feeling to have rapport with one another feel mutual friendliness and caring (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) which confirms existence of ‘positivity’. The final component of the Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal model is coordination between individuals. This component represents balance or harmony, and stands more than mere positive valence. All the three components being central to rapport, their relative importance may vary depending upon the stage of interaction. Also, rapport develops and requires active maintenance.

#### Attention, Empathy and Shared Expectations

In marketing and sales context, attention, empathy and shared expectations (Coan G, 2001) are the

three dimensions of rapport. Eye contact, physical posture (forward lean or relaxed body posture), verbal following behavior (appropriate questions, summarizing and paraphrasing) are the components of attending behavior (Ivey and Authier,1978). Empathy (Coan G, 2001) is composed of positive regard, warmth and respect, concreteness, immediacy, genuineness and confrontation. Establishing common interests has been assumed to build strong rapport between a salesperson and its customers. Although similarity may aid credibility, the importance of co-membership is that communication is facilitated. Co-membership is the extent to which salesperson and the customer share a common background.

#### Enjoyable Interaction and Personal Connection

**Gremler and Gwinner (2000)** based on an interview-based study **in service context** gave two dimensions of rapport: enjoyable interaction, personal connection. The enjoyable interaction facet of rapport is considered to be an affect-laden, cognitive evaluation of one’s exchange with a contact employee. Rapport being a relationship-based construct, it influences interpersonal customer-employee interaction. Personal Connection is customer’s perception of a bond, strong affiliation (perhaps unspoken) based on some tie between customer and employee.

In the **context of retail employees and customers**, Gremler and Gwinner (2008) based on critical incident technique method, categorized rapport-building behavior into five dimensions: (a) uncommonly attentive behavior, (b) common grounding behavior, (c) courteous behavior, (d) connecting behavior, and (e) information-sharing behavior. Uncommonly attentive behavior refers to out-of-the-ordinary or above-and-beyond actions performed by the employee. The three subcategories of uncommonly attentive behavior are atypical actions, personal recognition, and intense personal interest. Common grounding behavior refers to discovering through serendipity something that an employee has in common with the customer. Sub-categories of this dimension are finding mutual interests and other similarities. Courteous behavior of an employee demonstrates a natural part of an employee’s disposition. Subcategories of this behavior are unexpected honesty, civility, and empathy. In connecting behavior, an employee explicitly connects with a customer using the three subcategories using humor, pleasant conversation, and friendly interaction.



### Approach, Personality and Homophily

Granitz et al. (2009) in a professor-student context identified three categories of rapport: approach, personality, and homophily. **Approachability** has physical and psychological associations and implications. Physically it relates to the availability of the Professor in class and out of class. Psychologically, it means that student can openly ask questions and seek guidance from the professor. It also relates to sharing home phone number and e-mail and talking to the students respectfully by choosing the right words.

**Personality factors** related to rapport include involvement of emotions, thoughts, attitudes, behaviors and other psychological processes. In order to build good rapport with the students, a professor should care, use humor, surprise and positive vocal style and empathy. **Homophily** relates to gravitation of similar individuals. **Status homophily** refers to similarity based on one's status such as race, ethnicity, sex, age, education, occupation, hobbies, and behavior patterns (Goudy & Potter, 1976; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). **Value homophily** refers to similarity in values, attitudes, beliefs and social style. Also, by spending more time together, people can build better rapport.

### V Outcomes of Rapport in Education

Chickering and Gamson (1987) concluded that teacher-student interactions lead to student motivation and engagement. Rodriguez et al. (1996) offered that, if teacher-student interactions are positive, then students should feel more at ease in the classroom and enjoy the learning environment. Murray (1997) integrated the literature on effective teaching and found that teacher-student interaction is the strongest and it builds a relationship showing utmost consistency and instructional outcomes that can be measured. Wilson et al.(2010) emphasized through their research that one mark of positive learning environment relating to affect is professor/student rapport built through teacher-student interactions. Researchers Velez (2008) and Campbell (1998) suggested that student learning not only require commitment on the part of the student, but that strong teacher-student interactions play a role. Literature reports that teacher-student interactions have had positive effects on students' attitudes, cognition, classroom behaviors and relationships. Teaching is about relationships (Haynes & Backell, 2010). Positive rapport results in good relationships, and as teachers, we should provide a comfortable classroom atmosphere which fosters learning among students (Haynes & Backell, 2010). Velez (2008) and Campbell (1998)

suggested that student learning not only requires commitment on the part of the student, but that strong teacher-student interactions play a role.

Teachers' expectations also impact students' performances. As educators, adults have the ability to encourage a student so that he/she can developmentally make choice (Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). A majority of authors (Grunewald and Ackerman, 1986 and Kelley et al, 1991, Desai, Damewood, and Jones, 2001) suggest that the most effective instructors are those who act very enthusiastically when communicating with their students and by doing so are considered very entertaining. The appropriate term suggested for marketing education is edutainment (Lincoln D, 2008).

Rapport is an important aspect of classroom instruction and interaction outside of the classroom at the University level of instruction (Ramsden 2003). A teacher has the ability to push students towards certain agendas and to override their previous decisions (Gurland & Grolick, 2003). Understanding the ways in which rapport forms and operates is important for maximizing the contribution of educators, both in delivering a curriculum and in activities such as mentoring, career counseling and providing a role-model (Robertson T et al, 2014).

One study involving nursing students researched the connected student-teacher relationship and concluded that some students, though not all, learn more effectively when the teacher was open to be known as a person, promoted a more **egalitarian environment**, and took a position as "coach, guide, helper and advocate" (Gillespie, 2002).

Hodgson (as quoted in Ramsden, 2003) mentioned that respect and consideration for students is cardinal for effective teaching. Ramsden (2003) supported that emotional bond of teacher and student is more important than the traditional advice on methods and techniques. Involvement, commitment and interest would eventually lead to better understanding of the content.

### VI Primary Research on Teacher-Student Rapport

Lowman (1994,1995) quantified what makes a good teacher by collecting descriptions of exemplary teaching using teaching award nominations from over 500 students and faculty members. The study collected data in the form of adjectives and phrases from the award recommendations and divided them into two categories: **intellectual excitement** and **interpersonal rapport**. Of these two, interpersonal



rapport measured how much an instructor cared about his students and the degree to which they are effectively motivated by the teacher. The most common descriptive indicators were helpful, caring, encouraging, challenging, available, fair, friendly, accessible, concerned, demanding, approachable and patient.

Long after few researches, building rapport has only recently received attention of the researchers in instructional set-up (e.g., Catt, Miller, & Schallenkamp, 2007; Frisby & Martin, 2010; Frisby & Myers, 2008). Frisby and Myers (2008) claim that instructor-student rapport is an underexplored phenomenon. Specific Instructor behaviors in students' perception that add to rapport building have not been formally questioned detail (Frisby and Martin, 2010). Recent research (Webb & Barrett, 2014) qualitatively examined the specific instructor behaviors that students define as helping in building rapport in the college classroom. A CIT (Critical Incident Technique) study conducted on a total of 230 participants revealed 514 behaviors, and following were the results after the researchers categorized them into five themes provided by Gremler and Gwinner(2008):

Uncommonly Attentive Behavior	25.9%
Connecting Behavior	23.7%
Information-sharing behavior	20.6%
Courteous behavior	18.9%
Common Grounding Behavior	10.9%

In another study conducted by Granitz et al(2009), faculty view of factors leading to good rapport between faculty and students has been listed. Here 40 faculty members from public and private business universities of US were contacted for their perception on the factors leading to good rapport. This was followed by content analysis of the data and these were categorized into three themes:

Approach	77.5%
Personality	52.5%
Homophily	10%

### VII Appropriateness in Teacher-Student Rapport

1. A teacher should be friendly and easy to talk to. He/ She should show concern for student progress, should offer to help students with problems, and should be

tolerant of other viewpoints (Murray, 1985).

2. A teacher should take interest in students as individuals even in large groups. He/she should show sensitivity towards student responses. He/she should encourage questions, risk-taking and creativity. Students should be encouraged to join in rule-setting (Lowman, 1995).
3. A teacher should manage the large lecture class formally as well as informally. Gorham & Christophel(1990) found that a sense of humor, appreciating the performance of the students, outside classroom conversations were of paramount importance in learning as were disclosure of the self, encouraging conversations, and inviting students' viewpoints or even understanding their feelings. Using comprehensive language also led to positivism. He stressed that the importance of these behaviors increases as class size increases. Further, in order to personalize the large lecture class, the teacher should make an attempt to meet the students informally. He/she should learn their names and ask them for their autobiographical data; help the students identify themselves as 'the class' ( Davis B, 1993).
4. To improve their relationship with students and enhance students' learning, a teacher can provide structure at the onset of a course, encourage class participation, make an effort to know students by name, make changes in student tutors and shuffle study groups, use right humor and share personal stories. A professionally close relationship that permits good level of accessibility outside class works towards rapport. He/she should also develop good mentoring skills (Whitman, 1987).
5. A teacher should display respect for the students. Rodabaugh R (1996) provided useful illustrations of how teachers can communicate appropriate respect for students: provide them ample time to ask questions, allow challenges to the professor's views, and encourage open debate.
6. A teacher should use appropriate body language in/out of the class. Rodabaugh R (1996) suggests that since negative feelings easily find a route out through



body language, so this should be consciously avoided.

7. A teacher should be able to make a distinction between students and peers. Students have a sense of admiration towards faculty members but at the same time, they don't wish to be the best of friends with them (Rodabaugh, 1996, p. 41).

### VIII Conclusion and Indications for Future Research

Hence it is concluded that teachers should make appropriate use of 'rapport' in and out of class. Teacher-student rapport can lead to several outcomes. It may lead to good learning environment, student performance and even goodwill of the institution.

Plethora of theoretical and conceptual research work exists that relates to the construct of 'rapport'.

However, ample research gap exists in the area of empirical research. Researchers should focus on empirical research that answers the following:

- a) Does a correlation exist between teacher-student rapport and classroom environment?
- b) Does gender of the student impact his/her rapport with the teacher?
- c) Does a correlation exist between teacher-student rapport and performance of the student?
- d) Does teacher-student rapport impact goodwill of the institution (college/University)?
- e) Does rapport between the same set of teacher and students change with time?
- f) Does body language of the teacher impact teacher-student rapport?

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