

NUFS Workshop 2014

*Newsletter No. 5***Workshop in September****<Part 1 >****Date:** September 13, 2014, 10:30-14:00**Venue:** NSC College, Building Minami, Room A-31**Presenter:** Brad Deacon (Nanzan University)**Title:** “Unmasking the Structure of Rapport”

Abstract: Creating strong rapport with students is a critical skill for every educator, and it is good to know that rapport has a structure that can be emulated. This workshop gives participants an opportunity to take their rapport to the next level through a modeling tool called the Experiential Array (Gordon&Dawes, 2005).

First, the presenter will introduce a brief theoretical framework for modeling as a tool for eliciting rapport. Next, the participants will develop their modeling skills through practical activities including matching, mirroring, and active listening. Then the process of modeling will be made explicit through a live demonstration with one volunteer participant in order to explore specifically how he/she creates rapport in the classroom. Later participants will be gently guided to use the Experiential Array in order to explore the creation of rapport with other teachers. Participants will leave with a richer ability to create greater rapport in their own classrooms.

The number of participants: 34**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- ‘What are you? – 2 true things and 1 lie’. It was very interesting. Especially one lie made me interested in my pair. This is a good idea which makes students join the activity positively.
- As an English teacher and also a homeroom teacher, to generate rapport with students is very important. At the beginning of the course, students are nervous and don’t know each other in their new class. Easy group activities help them have rapport. As a homeroom teacher, students are often told not to do this and that. Mirroring and matching are good to generate rapport.
- I think I can utilize the exercises and activities with my homeroom class rather than with English classes. Because I’m teaching at junior high, as for English class, it’s sometimes more important to have routine and discipline students rather than nicely start the class with ‘pacing’, saying “How was your lunch?”, “Oh, you’re tired because you ran 10km in PE. It’s okay to be drowsy.” However, it’s important to keep in mind these things in mind.
- VAK practices – because people (students) can notice about both non-verbal and verbal communication through the activities.



- The interview activity will be great for both high and lower level (confidence) students for learning about each other, as well as learning how to use some conversation strategies such as clarifying, asking for examples, active listening, asking for meaning, and so on.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- I've always been having trouble with creating rapport for shy, unmotivated students, but what I learned today such as matching, mirroring, active listening will be great help to make good relationship.
- Building rapport with students can be done through the activities and some techniques as well as building relationships with students outside class. I'd like to be aware of 'pacing', 'mirroring' and 'watching' when I talk to my students. I've also learned that just observing is not enough to understand students.
- I've learned a great deal about ways to understand an individual such as through auditory, visual, kinesthetic which I feel is the most base of building a good rapport.
- I learned that active listening is a skill that I should improve a lot. I tend to give my own opinion quickly or try to manipulate someone's thinking in order to convince him/her if we disagree with a certain topic. I think I should put a lot of effort to this. My students need time to speak up and a person to listen to them.
- Through the activities, special rapport was born. My partner, who joined this workshop for the first time but had to leave in the afternoon, will join the next workshop because we laughed and learned a lot together in the morning. We felt that we built up good rapport.
- Rapport strategies can be used not only for class but also for my daily life.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Is there anything we should do when we listen to others (interview others)?

A: Yes. Be ready to really listen. In English there is the expression: "we have two ears and one mouth for a reason."

For the purpose of modeling another teacher, the "Parking Lot" section can serve as a useful repository for our own extraneous thoughts, ideas, and questions that can come up during the modeling process. These can be explored later because it is most important to fully focus on the speaker and their experience.

Being curious about others and their experiences is a good way to focus our listening skills as well.



Q (2): I was wondering what if I am out of rapport. How can I recreate rapport?

A: First of all, it can be useful to not be in rapport with others on occasion. To illustrate, you may be in a hurry to go somewhere which may necessitate temporarily being out of rapport with others in order to

break away.

To reestablish rapport it is important to first get in better rapport with ourselves. Deep breathing is a good technique. Then it can help to pace the students where they are before leading them. An example with a group of tired students would be to acknowledge their state (“I can see that many people are tired today. That’s natural and I sometimes get tired too.”) Then you could help them to change their state by stretching or moving about in some way. Once they’ve been paced enough you could then lead them to participate in a class activity.

In classroom situations, it’s good to remind ourselves that sometimes we will simply be out of rapport with our students. See the paper “Unmasking the Structure of Rapport” that I wrote with Brian Cullen and the examples under the section “Secondary Strategies” for some other ideas to reestablish rapport: <http://www.standinginspirit.com/en/unmasking-the-structure-of-rapport/>

Q (3): When language is a barrier between you and your students, in what possible ways can you build a good rapport? Especially when the students are very rebellious.

A: Sometimes it’s important to be honest and admit that we can only succeed so much with some classes and some students. In addition, as I write this I honestly feel that it’s only fair to say that I don’t have all the answers. Every context presents its own unique challenges and we should constantly be learning together with our students in our contexts. That’s a general “answer.”

When I first began teaching I tried to be more “genki” in the hopes that I could somehow get the more challenging students to come around and be more engaged in the class. I think I was putting too much responsibility on myself then. Now I try to meet students where they are. In other words, I pace them by acknowledging that some students may not have a reason for learning English other than having been told that they have to by the school. I can understand their feeling because at first I didn’t want to learn French as a second language in Canada (though I changed my mind later). So, their resistance is not something to be taken personally. Instead I say that I don’t have a choice to be in their class either because the school told me that I have to teach this group. I then say that what we do have choice over is whether we make our time together meaningful or miserable. When students understand this and that they have a role in how the classes unfold then we are in better rapport and are more empowered.

I recommend the book “The Courage to Teach” by Parker Palmer for some other ideas related to this question.

Q (4): I would like to know some concrete examples how to create rapport in the classrooms based on what we learned today.

A: One main purpose of our workshop was to offer each participant the chance to recognize within yourselves that you are in many ways your own best resource for learning. In other words, through exploring your own experience and each other’s you can gain a lot of insight into how you create and maintain rapport in your own classes. Honestly, teachers can sometimes spend too much time outside themselves looking for answers when we already have many answers within ourselves. Probably not the answer you wanted, right?



For more concrete examples, however, see the link to the article above in question #2. This article has some other useful examples too: jalt-publications.org/files/pdf-article/jalt2013_005.pdf

Q (5): I found that the activities using the three modalities were limited by the use of L2 and the speaking ability of the learner. For example, intonation broadcasts emotion and those who haven't mastered that will have trouble. How do we identify how capable our students are at handling and working with different modalities?

A: This is a question that is more connected to teaching in classes as opposed to teacher development, which we focused on in our workshop. The modalities exercises were one way to practice honing our sensory acuity skills by focusing on others. This is a skill that is useful when listening to others and gathering information, such as when we later interviewed a partner in the modeling activity.

Specific to your question, though, I agree that the differences in the auditory modality in particular can be very noticeable in our classrooms. As a time-stressed language, English does present challenges for learners whose L1 is different. Intonation, as you mention, is one challenge that we face in helping students to develop more appropriately. By being observant I feel that we can notice more about the modalities that students excel at and need work at as well.



Q (6): Do you have any good activities when I teach in a larger class which has more than 20 students?

A: Sorry, but I am not sure what you mean by “good activities.” However, allow me to provide a useful connection that is relevant to our workshop. When I first modeled other teachers I focused on “rapport” in general. After writing an article on it I realized, as did my collaborator, that rapport is too large of a construct to provide the more specific information that I needed. Thus, I then modeled people on their ability to create rapport in specific areas such as storytelling. The results I got were more focused and useful in ways that I could then replicate what they shared. The more specific we are in what we ask for the better sometimes.

Answered in a different way: How about creating a research project out of the above question using modeling? Make it specific, then find someone who already is skilled at teaching the kinds of activities you want to teach, and model them by asking the four questions. Finally, “try on” their model and notice what happens that is different in your own classes.

Q (7): It's really important for me to build a good rapport with my students but I'm not a proficient Japanese speaker so I consider it as a barrier. What's your advice?

A: No matter what level of Japanese you achieve you can always be a model for your students as a language learner yourself. Learning other languages is very important for teachers and really helps us to empathize with our students and their struggles. We can be models in the ways that we deal with mistakes, become language users and not just language learners, and other ways. Let your students know

that you are just like them and you understand that this rollercoaster language learning experience is sometimes you are both a part of.

Q (8): I think pacing could be challenging with ‘genki’ SHS/SH class. How could I employ it effectively?

A: If the students are “genki” then it would seem that they are in a good state to do something physical like standing while talking, running dictations, or some other kinesthetic activity. Thus, you could pace them by finding activities that suit their energy level which can then be connected to your lesson objectives. I would imagine that once they’ve gotten some of the energy out of their system that they would then be in a more relaxed state to be lead into another activity.

Again, whether it is seeking an answer to this question or any other, I would encourage you to find a teacher who is successful at doing what you want to do yourself and then modeling them. In doing so you will gain richer insight on both a surface and below the surface level of ways that you can grow your own teaching ability.

<Part 2>

Date: September 13, 2014, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato (NUFS), Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 22



Workshop in October (Scheduled)

Date: October 11, 2014, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31

Presenter: Eric Kane (EFL Learning)

Title: “Adapting and Applying Young Learner Activities and Concepts in Your Classroom”

Please send an email to Chihaya (chiha143@nufs.ac.jp) to attend this workshop.