

1973

Successful Rapport Sessions

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Recommended Citation

Hungerford, James J. (1973) "Successful Rapport Sessions," *Iowa Science Teachers Journal*: Vol. 10 : No. 4 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/istj/vol10/iss4/7>

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SUCCESSFUL RAPPORT SESSIONS

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When the purpose of the "rap" session is not understood there may be considerable waste of time. Often changes occur, but advance questions for student thought are important for success of a session.

In a democratic session the students and instructor communicate with each other and build for a better chance of wholehearted participation in discussions. While the instructor can contribute from his experience and wisdom, he need not be what one could call the "rap" leader. In a good session everyone has the opportunity to contribute as well as listen. If the instructor preplans the topic for the session, one shouldn't lose control of what the class will discuss. The instructor will influence thinking and opinion without dominating the discussion. The task of the instructor is to inform and educate in such a way that it generates trust among the class.

Ideas, whoever originates them, must be discussed. The instructor should know and accept the fact, frequently overlooked, that the members of the class have many worthwhile ideas. All they need is the chance to express them. Some in science call this creativity. Actually it is letting the student speak what he thinks, original or not.

No two classes are going to be the same. So if uniformity or heterogeneity over the same topics bothers anyone he had better stay with dictatorial instruction. One should not be interested in homogeneity or standardization. One should be interested in heterogeneity and individualization. If a person is a manipulative instructor, he probably feels it seems less of an effort to be that way. Under a dictatorial type of instructor-student relationship, interest soon begins to wane.

Possessiveness is a common feeling among instructors, a feeling that one's way is the only right way to do things. This is not to say the instructor should not show leadership, guidance and give the students support.

The experienced science instructor will encourage individuals to see and attack problems then reach independent conclusions from the data available. So far as possible, the "rap" session may help individuals learn to understand themselves and others better. One should be aware of conservative students who are merely holding back and only need to be asked to respond.

In every class some individuals are more advanced in their thinking than others. Frequently, the instructor can bridge gaps of thought between students; maybe even then some.

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