Empathic understanding - and being perceived by the individual as they are is considered a learner-centered element for building classroom rapport. Learners express empathic understanding—a third element of learner-centered teacher-student relationships—and they organize the material they need to be heard, seen, accepted, and understood.

Four “classic” empirical strategies for building rapport—empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, congruence, and critical thinking—are like four intersecting axes. They form a tetrahedron, a geometric figure with four triangular faces. The vertex of the tetrahedron is the relationship, where the four axes intersect. As the tetrahedron is rotated, points on the surface of the tetrahedron are formed. These points represent the space of all possible relationships. The tetrahedron is an abstract representation of a relationship, but it is useful for understanding the complexity of building rapport.

**REFERENCES & FURTHER READING**


