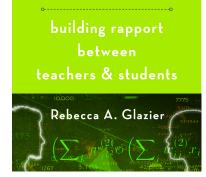# Connecting in the Online Classroom: Building Rapport Between Teachers and Students

connecting in the online classroom

building rapport between teachers & students

Rebecca A. Glazier

A Discussion Guide

Introduction
- How did you respond to the thought experiment on page 2? How similar or different are the student's experiences to the experiences of the students you teach?
- What was your experience teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic like? How does that influence your views of online teaching or your views of rapport-building?

Chapter 1: The Promise and Peril of Online Higher Education
- Do you think online higher education is more promise or more peril at this point in time? What do you think might tip the balance in the future?
- Do you believe that higher education is facing an online retention crisis, or does the crisis framing exaggerate the problem?

Chapter 2: The Digital Divide
- Were you surprised by the data on retention gaps presented in Chapter 2? Do you know what the retention rates are in your own online and face-to-face classes? Before reading the chapter, what explanations would you have given for any retention gaps in yours or others' classes?
- What did you think of the definition of rapport building presented on page 43? How does this fit with similar concepts like instructor presence, humanizing, or pedagogies of care?

Chapter 3: Relationships Matter
- Do you have any memories of a teacher with whom you particularly connected? How did that relationship affect your learning and your enjoyment of the class and the material?
- In what ways might students in online classes feel like they are treated as "second class" at your institution?

Chapter 4: Strategies for Building Rapport
- Discuss some of the rapport-building techniques listed in Table 4.1 (page 84). What other techniques have you used or can you think of? What have you found works best? What are you excited to try?

Chapter 5: Students on the Margins
- How did you feel after reading the section "A Mile in their Shoes" (pages 126-129) in this chapter? What else are the students on the margins of your campus going through?
- One of the most challenging issues professors have to deal with is cheating. How can you balance rapport-building with academic integrity?

Chapter 6: The Tradeoffs
- Does rapport-building ask too much of faculty? What can institutions do to support faculty and what role might technology play?
- What is the role of student responsibility in their own success? Can rapport-building go too far-- e.g., through email reminders and flexible deadlines--and end up replacing that responsibility?

Chapter 7: Building a Support Network
- If you could get the administrators at your institution to do one thing to improve teaching and learning, what would it be? Are there any suggestions from this chapter that you could propose to them?
- What do students need to know before taking online classes? Should there be gatekeeping that prevents unprepared students from enrolling in online classes?

For questions, or to schedule a book discussion or professional development seminar, please contact Dr. Rebecca A. Glazier:

✉ rebecca.glazier@gmail.com
🌐 rebeccaglazier.net
🐦 @rebeccaglazier