

Using  
**The 5 Languages of Appreciation**  
to Strengthen Student Engagement

**Chelsea Biggerstaff & Jeff Johannigman**  
Certified *Five Languages* Facilitators  
Faculty Development Coordinators  
Austin Community College

5  
Languages of Appreciation at Work™

Chelsea Biggerstaff









Ψ INDIANA UNIVERSITY



Jeff Johannigman





BS, Computer Science    MA, Human Services







“Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival – to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated.”

- Stephen Covey, author  
“The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”

# Goals:

- Explore the importance of appreciation as a motivator in and out of the classroom
- Recognize signs that appreciation is needed or not effective
- Learn the *Five Languages of Appreciation*
- Brainstorm ways to apply the *Five Languages* with both students and colleagues
- Identify your own challenges and blind spots in using the *Five Languages*

From *Forbes Magazine*, August 2014

# 79%

of employees who quit their jobs cite **lack of appreciation** as a key reason for their leaving

## Group Warmup



- Take an Index Card
- Write down one answer to:  
***"How can you tell if your students don't feel appreciated?"***
- Swap your card with a neighbor, then keep swapping cards with others until we call time.
- Share the answer written on the card you hold.
- If somebody else gives a similar answer to the one on your card, please sit down.



## Cues That Appreciation is Needed

Discouragement

Irritability and Resistance

Increased Absenteeism or Tardiness

Cynicism and Sarcasm

Apathy and Passivity

Social Withdrawal

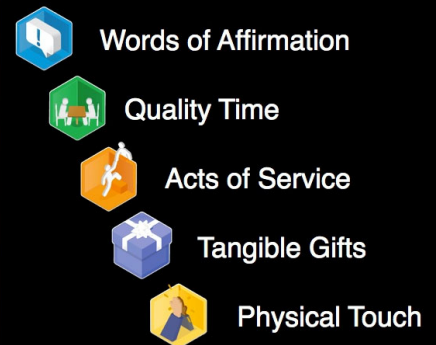
Negative Work Environment

## CLASSROOM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Key Component	Explanation	Engagement	Non-engagement
Behavioral	Observable behaviors demonstrating effort, persistence, and help-seeking	Attendance, active participation, content-relevant discussions and questions	Sleeping, off-topic conversations, unproductive use of technology, help seeking to avoid tasks
Cognitive	Meeting or exceeding course requirements, investment to master challenging problems or tasks	Correct use of vocabulary, small group in-depth discourse on lesson topics, reflection on their own thinking	Rehearsal and repeating vocabulary verbatim
Emotional	Interest, enjoyment, sense of belonging, or value in course topics	Connecting content to personal lives, academic studies, or career fields; pride displayed in work	Bored, rejected, neglected, frustrated, angry, and anxious students

(Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Trowler, 2010)

## Five Languages



## Words of Affirmation



Using words to communicate a positive message to others

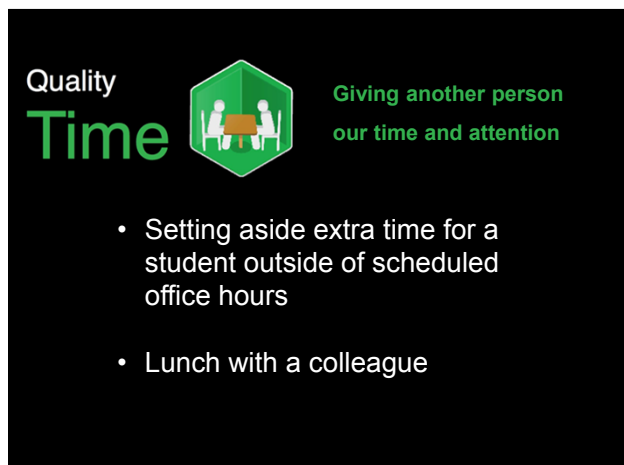
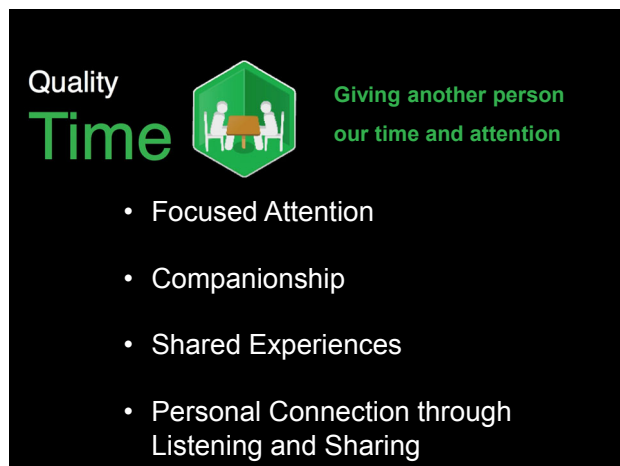
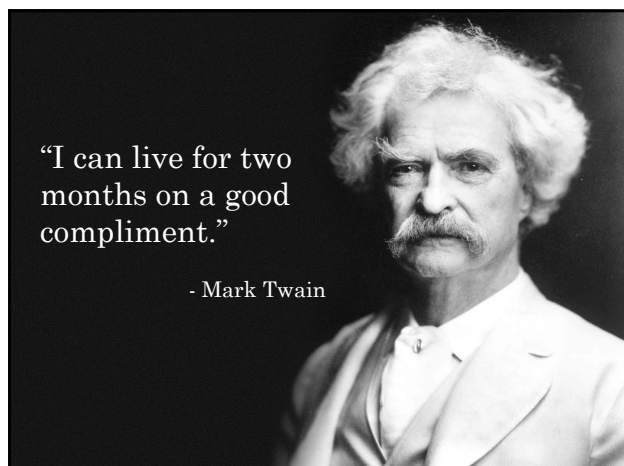
- Personal, One-on-One
- Individually or in Front of Others
- Written Communication
- Public vs. Private Affirmation

## Words of Affirmation



Using words to communicate a positive message to others

- Email a student with a specific compliment on something they said in class
- Occasional unexpected "thanks" for a particular effort.





Nobody cares how much you know,  
until they know how much you care.

— Theodore Roosevelt —

AZ QUOTES

## Acts of Service



Providing physical  
assistance to others

- Ask First
- Be Cheerful
- Do It Their Way
- Finish the Task

## Acts of Service



Providing physical  
assistance to others

- Helping a student install or use a program needed for class
- Doing a “lunch run” for a colleague who has a lot on their to-do list.



The best way to not feel hopeless is to  
get up and do something. Don't wait for  
good things to happen to you. If you go  
out and make some good things  
happen, you will fill the world with hope,  
you will fill yourself with hope.

— Barack Obama —

AZ QUOTES

Tangible

## Gifts



Giving the right gift to a  
person who appreciates  
tangible rewards

- Even small, inexpensive gifts can be meaningful
- Most common gift is food
- Focus on experiences, not things

Tangible

## Gifts



Giving the right gift to a person who appreciates tangible rewards

- Snacks or treats for the class.
- Tickets to a sporting event or a concert for a colleague who likes that team / band.



Physical

## Touch



Has the potential to encourage others

- People need touch for physical and mental health
- Limit to handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, and pats on the back
- Spontaneous

Physical

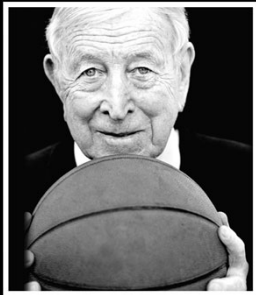
## Touch



Has the potential to encourage others

- Congratulatory high-five for a student
- Fist-bumping with a co-worker





“Give players the opportunity to achieve without fear of failure. A **pat on the back** is more important than a kick in the pants.”

- Coach John Wooden

### Group Activity:



Use Post-Its to write examples of how you would use the *Five Languages*.

Place your examples on the matching flip-chart pages for those languages.



### Group Activity: *Do's and Don'ts*



Move to your assigned flipchart page.

Try to have balanced representation for each language.

Select the post-it examples that you like best. As a team, answer:

**Select 3-4 of the best examples to share**

***“What advice do you have on how to use this language?”***

***“What mistakes should you avoid in using it?”***

## Overcome Your **BLIND SPOT**



# BLIND SPOTS

Your least valued language may actually be the most important in your career success and development.

# WEIRDNESS

People often feel weird when they begin applying these concepts - especially when they've just received instruction on the appreciation model.

## Overcome the **WEIRDNESS** Factor

Acknowledge it.  
Understand that everyone  
is in the same situation.

Do it anyway.  
Trying new behaviors  
takes practice & almost  
always feels unnatural at  
the beginning.

Give one another the  
benefit of the doubt.  
Accept others' actions as  
being genuine.

## Discussion - Barriers to Appreciation

*Do you appreciate  
everybody you teach?  
Everybody you work with?*

*What should you do if you  
don't appreciate someone?*



"I don't like that  
man. I must get to  
know him better."

- Abraham Lincoln



*I have learned  
that people will  
forget what you  
said, people will  
forget what you  
did, but people  
will never forget  
how you made  
them feel.*

**Maya Angelou**  
1928-2014



*Photo by Michael Collopy*

## The Finish Line



What is the most useful  
idea you got today?

What is the biggest  
challenge you will face in  
applying this knowledge?