Appreciative inquiry (AI) is based on the heliotropic principle, which has been variously described as art and science, holistic theory and practice, and practical philosophy and change process. AI engages people and organizations in discovering what gives life to human systems when they are most effective and constructive and using that knowledge to envision and create the preferred future. Instead of beginning with problems to be solved, AI uses a social constructivist view that reality is socially created. AI is rooted in multiple fields, including action research, organizational development, and chaos theory. The principles underlying AI are constructivism, simultaneity, poetics, anticipation, and the positive. The process of AI involves the following activities: (1) discover (talk to one another to identify exceptional/peak moments); (2) dream (envision what might be if the peak moments were the norm); (3) design (develop "provocative propositions" to achieve the vision and strategies to implement them); and (4) deliver (act on provocative propositions, establish new relationships, and mobilize resources). Some critics are concerned that AI glosses over problems. Under the right conditions, AI can be genuinely transformative; however, it requires time, trust, and a "new mental metabolism." (An annotated bibliography listing 23 publications and 3 World Wide Web sites constitutes approximately 75% of this document.) (MN)
Appreciative Inquiry
Trends and Issues Alert No. 41

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Appreciative Inquiry

Resources


To explore organizational conditions that facilitate self-directed learning, a participatory research workshop used AI. Major enhancers were involving individuals, taking personal responsibility, valuing differences, communicating, taking risks, and innovating. However, some thought that AI rather than SDL was the focus of inquiry.


Describes how Bliss Browne’s implementation of Imagine Chicago <http://www.imaginechicago.org> was grounded in AI principles.


A project to advance sustainable development and facilitate sustainable livelihoods by providing governmental and nongovernmental organizations in India with a better method of designing and delivering programs used AI to identify and reinforce community strengths, achievements, and vision.


Extension educators can extend and accelerate the community-shaping process by using action research processes like AI, which helps a community design and work toward an ideal future. One adaptation, the Porch Cookie Project, helped a community create new knowledge and shape its culture.


Sourcebook contains 18 chapters that discuss rethinking human organizations and new horizons in AI and report case studies and empirical studies.


Adopting an AI methodology, a task force identified the best of what is currently happening in child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered parents and their children, to envision what might be, and to develop provocative propositions for shaping the most positive future imaginable for child care that supports these families.


Part 1 is an introduction to the psychological and social underpinnings of AI. Part 2 goes through the process of an AI. Part 3 presents case studies of appreciative inquiry at work in organizational and community settings.

Used AI in interviews and group discussions to understand the concept of cultures of training and learning in enterprises and to investigate what makes case studies and other information about exemplary enterprises interesting and convincing enough that other enterprises will follow their lead.


Gives an overview of AI and presents a practical application of visioning with members of the Participatory Development Forum.


Examines how AI works in practice and how its benefits can be realized in most organizations. Detailed case reports show how the approach is actually applied as well as its consequences.


Covers the basics of AI and presents a case study of its use in a community change process involving youth in the South Bronx.


Workers and executives from Roadway Express came together to strategize about the company's future at an AI summit. They discovered that all levels wanted the same things for the company.


Discusses how the application of AI to local government in Hampton, Virginia, revitalized the city's work force.


Explains how to manage a career and live a desired lifestyle by applying AI to the process of career development.


Presents a theoretical framework for teaching and learning research literacies. Describes a classroom demonstration involving graduate student cohorts in appreciative inquiry into practitioners' ways of writing. Addresses the issues of human subjects, informed consent, and the ethics of representation.


A comparative case study contrasted the impact of AI with that of a management education intervention on the development of relational capital in a U.S.-India biotechnology alliance. Overall, AI was found to support building relational capital in this transcultural strategic alliance.


A leadership development program for managers used appreciative learning, based upon appreciative inquiry. Participants identified prior successful learning experiences for use in future work performance, creating a multiplier effect of positive experiences.


Involved a number of health care agencies and groups, including older people, working together to examine and develop practice in an area of shared concern using the AI process.


AI was among the processes used to develop the United Religions Initiative, an interfaith network inspired by the United Nations.


Following a brief history of AI, this book discusses the steps of the process with illustrative case studies for each. The issue of evaluation is addressed, and an appendix answers frequently asked questions about AI.


Describes the social constructionist view of organizational change. Explains AI principles and the 4-D model for positive change, with case examples.


Appreciative inquiry, an approach focused on generation of a vision for an organization, may be adapted for management classes. Students and teachers conduct collaborative inquiry into successful experiences, creating positive images that generate positive action in the classroom.

Zemke, R. "Don't Fix That Company!" Training 36, no. 6 (June 1999): 26-33.

Details the use of AI as part of GTE's corporate culture change effort, which won an award for outstanding organizational development practices from the American Society for Training and Development.

Websites

AI eResource Center: http://www.aradford.co.uk/pagelaces/newsletter.htm. Links to AI resources; current and back issues of the AI E-Newsletter, available by subscription.


Appreciative Inquiry Commons: http://appreciativeinquiry.crw.edu/. Comprehensive worldwide portal at Case Western Reserve University devoted to the sharing of academic resources and practical tools on Appreciative Inquiry; includes research, case studies, listserv, network, resources and websites, events and training, AI tools.

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