

Media Review: AI Commons - appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu

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Abstract

This media review offers both a description and a critique of the *Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Commons* website, housed by the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry at Champlain College. The purpose of this media review is to highlight the resources available on the *AI Commons* website as well as to offer some suggestions for improvement.

Keywords

Appreciative Inquiry, Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Appreciative Inquiry practitioners, Appreciative Education, media review

One of the key theoretical underpinnings for the Appreciative Education theory-to-practice framework (Bloom et al., 2013) is the organization development theory of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Appreciative Inquiry was first introduced in the 1980s by then a Case Western Reserve Organizational Behavior PhD student, David Cooperrider, who worked under the supervision of his advisor Suresh Srivastva (Cooperrider, 1986). The use of Appreciative Inquiry since has flourished and today is being used by a wide range of industries (including corporate, non-profit, military, and education) as a mechanism to create positive change and to optimize the effectiveness of these organizations. Now a full Professor at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management, Cooperrider is also affiliated with the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry at Champlain College, which is directed by one of Cooperrider's former PhD advisees, Lindsey Godwin. Although the AI Commons website was created in 2016 and originally housed at Case Western, it is now managed by the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry (n.d.) team at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont. Case Western is still listed as a continuing partner. The purpose of this article is to highlight the resources available on the *AI Commons* about Appreciative Inquiry as well as to make some suggestions for improvement.

Website Content

The AI Commons website currently has four dropdown menus at the top of the homepage: *Learn*, *Connect*, *Events*, and *Share*. The *Learn* section includes an introduction to Appreciative Inquiry, a brief history of AI, and additional AI resources. The *Connect* section has options to connect people with the AI communities and networks. The *Events* section features a calendar page for upcoming AI events. The *Share* section offers a variety of options for AI practitioners to submit testimonials, resources, events, and a community group or network.

In the middle section of the homepage there are seven blocks that offer additional information about AI. The Appreciative Education community will find *Education Materials* to learn more about AI as well as resources to teach others; *Online Resources* with

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informative websites and blogs about AI; *Global AI Community* to connect with AI practitioners all over the world; *Stories of Impact* to read about the impact of AI across the world; *Global Network Groups* to find AI groups near you; *Participate in the AI World Inquiry* to learn about AI's positive impact and AI World Inquiry to view videos uploaded to the AI World Inquiry.

Strengths

Appreciative Educators will find many features of the *AI Commons* website helpful. In particular, there is a user-friendly search engine that can be used to access stories and case studies pertinent to education. Those who are new to AI will find both the text and video overview of AI both engaging and helpful in the *New to AI* section of the website. Users will also find helpful resources in the "Resources" sections, including the *Facilitation Materials* and *Case Studies*. In the *Facilitation Materials* section, PowerPoint slide presentations about AI as well as materials needed to host Appreciative Inquiry Summits are included. The *Case Studies* section includes examples based on scenarios conducted at a broad array of organizations that can be used to help train people on Appreciative Inquiry. Lastly, anyone interested can add themselves to the *Global AI Community* by inputting their contact information and areas of expertise.

Suggestions for Improvement

Although there are plenty of helpful resources available related to Appreciative Inquiry, I also have some constructive suggestions for improving the website. My first suggestion is to keep the *Upcoming Events* section updated as there are no entries and there is an image of a 2017 calendar listed. I recommend including the links to sites for conferences or events of potential interest to AI practitioners. Because keeping an online calendar up to date can be challenging, another option would be to consider eliminating the calendar. If the calendar is kept, I recommend moving the calendar box from the bottom to the top and default it to the Monthly view grid instead of the agenda mode so visitors can quickly see an overview of the entire month.

Aesthetically, the sections that include multiple resources (e.g., articles, blogs, books, case studies) could be set up in a more visually appealing way to not only attract visitors, but also to keep them engaged. Adding pictures to the sections in the middle of the home page might also increase user engagement. Also, in the *Global AI Community* section found under the "Connect" drop-down, it would be helpful to list the industries covered for each of the practitioners on the list. For example, the website would also benefit from centering more stories of the impact of Appreciative Inquiry.

Conclusion

The AI Commons offers extensive information and resources about Appreciative Inquiry. Because Appreciative Inquiry is a key part of the theoretical infrastructure of both Appreciative Education and Appreciative Advising (Bloom et al., 2008, 2014), Appreciative Educators can enhance their own knowledge of Appreciative Inquiry quickly and efficiently by visiting the *AI Commons* website. The *AI Commons* provides Appreciative Educators with an avenue for expanding their networks within the larger Appreciative Inquiry community.

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