

Appreciative Inquiry (AI): An Annotated Bibliography

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A number of resources exist to provide information about Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Two of these resources, in particular, include the Appreciative Inquiry Commons (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/research/bibPublished.cfm>) and “Appreciative Inquiry in the University” (<http://www.appreciativeadvising.net/publications.html>). Appreciative Inquiry Commons is an online resource, which compiles and presents the most recent research in the field of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The purpose of the website is to make AI research available with the goal of helping facilitate positive change and organizational leadership. In addition to the comprehensive listing of AI research, the website provides an introduction to AI and information about current practices, events, learning opportunities, and an opportunity to contribute to the field of AI.

Another online resource is the work of Ray Wells at the Philadelphia Institute of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research. The “Appreciative Inquiry in the University” is a compilation of web sites, books, videos, and references for four-year colleges and universities. The list includes information on AI and links to additional resources, which are categorized for easy access. The use of “Appreciative Inquiry in the University” is targeted toward student affairs professionals.

Both the Appreciative Inquiry Commons and the “Appreciative Inquiry in the University” resources provide valuable information on AI. However, additional work is needed recognizing the link between AI and higher education. Unlike other resources currently available, this annotated bibliography is specific to higher education and only includes current, peer-reviewed journal articles. It is intended to bring together the most recent information available regarding AI in higher education and present that information in a way that will be useful to higher education professional interested in AI.

For higher education professionals interested in the scholarship of Appreciative Education, this annotated bibliography overviews recent (2007-2012) publications that focus on Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Searches of the following databases, Academic Search Complete Education Full Text, ERIC, and PsycINFO, using the keywords *strengths-based*, *positive psychology*, *higher education*, and *appreciative inquiry* yielded 20 articles that were included into this piece. Each entry has a basic description of the article’s purpose, methodology, findings (where available), and larger implications.

Also, keywords were identified for the articles included in the annotated bibliography. Some of the common keywords, with their operationalized definition for the purposes of this project, are:

- Mixed methods-studies include a combination of qualitative and quantitative data;
- Organizational change-articles include information regarding higher education program development and change through the use of AI;
- Individual change- articles include information regarding individual development and change through the use of AI in higher education;

- Classroom context-the use of AI within the classroom setting to improve teacher preparedness and the student learning experience in higher education; and
- Global context-studies include data collected from countries outside the United States.

Keywords were selected based upon how well they fit into the established criteria and were used to identify commonalities among the articles. Each keyword was selected in an effort to inform readers about the important main ideas behind each article included in this annotated bibliography.

Of the 20 articles included in this annotated bibliography, ten were empirical studies, two were literature reviews, and eight were program descriptions. The vast majority of the included works were qualitative in nature, and included data gathered through interviews and self-reflection from participants. A few of the studies employed a mixed-method approach and used both qualitative and quantitative data to present the findings. As more institutions strive to promote strengths-based practices at their university, it is our hope that this annotated bibliography will serve as a resource and inspiration.

Annotated Bibliography

Bushe, G. & Kassam, A. (2005). When is Appreciative Inquiry transformational?: A meta-case analysis. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41(2), 161-181.

Despite the growth of organizations using Appreciative Inquiry (AI), few attempts to measure its effects exist in the literature, especially as a means of transformational change. The article compares literature by whether change was "improvisational" versus "implementation approach." This meta-analysis includes 20 cases and studies of AI research from 1990-2005. Each case or study was identified and reviewed using the following criteria: was change transformation or not; was outcome new knowledge or new processes; intervention created generative metaphor; intervention adhered to 9 principles of AI; intervention followed the 4D cycle; intervention began with collecting stories of the affirmative topic; intervention focused on figure or ground; and intervention concluded with implementations or improvisation. Although this study considered mainly cases involving organizations that were not universities, a few of the outcomes may be the basis for change strategies, specifically changing how people think versus what they do and by becoming more improvisational.

Keywords: Organizational change; qualitative method (meta-analysis)

Calabrese, R. L., Roberts, B. E., McLeod, S., Niles, R., Christopherson, K., Singh, P., & Berry, M. (2008). Emerging technologies in global communication: Using Appreciative Inquiry to improve the preparation of school administrators. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(7), 696-709.

The study describes how practitioners from Canada, the UK, Singapore, and the USA, engaged in a collaborative process to discover how to improve the preparation and practice of educational administration on a global basis. Participants of the study include educational administration practitioners, university faculty in educational administration, and the editor of an *International Journal of Educational Management*, and represent three continents and four countries. Findings of the study suggest collaboration and relationships are at the heart of an

educational administrator's practice. Implications of the findings suggest that Appreciative Inquiry may be used to foster global collaboration.

Keywords: Individual change; education administration; global context; program description

Calabrese, R. L., Zapeda, S. J., Peters, A.L., Hummel, C., Kruskamp, W. H., San Martin, T., & Wynne, S. C. (2007). An Appreciative Inquiry into educational administration doctoral program: Stories from doctoral students at three universities. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 2(3), 1-29.

The study identifies five doctoral students in educational administrative programs and, using Appreciative Inquiry (AI), describes the positive experiences regarding the doctoral program and dissertation process. The five participants in this qualitative case study were either currently enrolled or had recently graduated from their doctoral programs and represented three different universities. Findings were based on reflective narratives, which were found to center on three kinds of relationships, the relationship of faculty to the student, the relationship of the faculty dissertation major professor to the student, and the relationship created by faculty linking theory to the student's work context. Based on these relationships, it was found that the student's perceptions of the level of caring in the doctoral program influenced the students' perception of the program quality and a caring relationship between faculty and student reflected in the students' work context. The findings emphasize the importance of AI in understanding the program, as well as, the students and suggest that AI methods may be used for program improvement.

Keywords: Empirical study, qualitative methods, doctoral education

Chapman, L., & Giles, D. (2009). Using Appreciative Inquiry to explore the professional practice of a midwife lecturer. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 31(3), 297-305.

The study discussed the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to examine one's own teaching practice. Within an eight week period, one instructor used AI through self-reflection, dialogue with students and colleagues, and journals. Provided with feedback from the instructor, themes regarding teaching were identified. Main themes include: the telling of practice stories; varying teaching styles; safe, open and pleasurable learning environment; lecturers with warm, friendly personalities and good use of appropriate humor were found to be approachable by students; the role of the lecturer within the narrative curriculum; students' learning; and the need for the teaching staff to challenge the students' cognitive and meta-cognitive thinking processes. Results of the study suggest the AI approach is suitable for a holistic consideration of an individual's professional practice.

Keywords: Empirical study; individual change; qualitative methods

Conklin, T. A. (2009). Creating classrooms of preference: An exercise in Appreciative Inquiry. *Journal of Management Education*, 33(6), 772-792.

The empirical study outlines steps for an in-class exercise titled "The Preferred Classroom," with the goal of designing and organizing a college classroom for the term. The data was collected in Organizational Behavior, Management, and Leadership Development courses at

the graduate and undergraduate levels using reflections and open-ended questionnaire students completed after the exercise. The study achieved the following four objectives: provided an opportunity for students to learn about and experience a process that is being used in organizational life and which they are likely to encounter once they enter the work force; confronted tacit and explicit norms of learning; created an experience that fosters greater self-reliance, independence, self-direction, and autonomy; and encouraged students to take responsibility of their education through an exercise that recognizes their experiences as valid, worthy, and reliable. The findings suggest there are future opportunities to use similar exercises in other courses. While the study focused on AI in the classroom, the impact of the exercise on participants beyond the course is implied.

Keywords: Empirical study; empowerment; classroom context

Fergy, S., Marks-Maran, D., Ooms, A., Shapcott, J., & Burke, L. (2011). Promoting social and academic integration into higher education by first-year student nurses: The APPL project. *Journal of Further & Higher Education, 35*(1), 107-130. doi:10.1080/0309877X.2010.540318

The context of the empirical study was an Academic, Personal, and Professional Learning (APPL) model used in the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences of a university in Britain. Quantitative data were collected from a total of 73 students who completed a questionnaire at the end of their experience in the APPL group. Additionally, qualitative data were collected from a focus group that was asked more in-depth questions regarding the APPL groups. The case study used Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as the framework to evaluate the research and suggests the continued use of AI in program evaluation.

Keywords: Empirical study, global context, mixed methods, organizational change

Fifolt, M., & Stowe, A. M. (2011). Playing to your strengths: Appreciative Inquiry in the visioning process. *College and University, 87*(1), 37-40. Retrieved from http://www.aacrao.org/Files/Publications/CUJ8701_WEB.pdf

The purpose of the article is to outline the basic tenets of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and to describe how these concepts were applied at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The article also discusses the key factors that contributed to the successful implementation of AI in a strategic visioning process. The key factors of success include openness to trying something new, the right combination of people, a commitment to transparency, focus on the positive, and a shared responsibility for results.

Keywords: Program description

Fiorentino, L. (2012). Positive perspectives on the profession: Reframing through Appreciative Inquiry. *Quest, 64*(4), 209-228. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2012.723464>

A literature review used to review Delphine Hanna's lectures and to organize examples of the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Examination of the literature focused on teacher preparedness and field development. The article is divided into three parts, the first reviewing past lectures and identifying similarities in the context of each lecture, the second discussing

alternative approaches to current contextual setting and planning for the future, and the third giving examples of positive outlook on the future.

Keywords: Qualitative methods (literature review); teacher preparedness; organizational change

Giles, D., & Alderson, S. (2008). An Appreciative Inquiry into the transformative learning experiences of students in a family literacy project. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 48*(3), 465-478.

The empirical study outlined an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) with adult students in a tertiary bridging program and captured the students' stories of transformative learning. The data were collected in a number of ways including focus groups, observational journals, individual interviews, and written documentation. Findings include the role taken by the adult educator is critical for the students, the atmosphere for learning must be socially enabling, the educational outcomes must recognize the wider family, and bridging education must be inclusive of all the students. The findings demonstrate a strengthened relationship within the learning environment and allow previously unsuccessful students to identify personal experiences that show their success in tertiary studies. The use of the AI has enabled the imaginative capturing, and speculation, of educational experiences that results from the rich and grounded stories and has enabled a new discourse to emerge that is hope-filled amongst students whose previous experience of education has been unsuccessful.

Keywords: Empirical study; individual change

Giles, D., & Kung, S. (2010). Using Appreciative Inquiry to explore the professional practice of a lecturer in higher education: Moving towards life-centric practice. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 50*(2), 308-322.

The empirical study is used to describe how Appreciative Inquiry (AI) influenced a lecturer's professional development. A lecturer in higher education provided individual reflection based on AI. Four of the main findings include, close relational bonds are enabled by teachers whose values and beliefs align with their practice, teachers must keep their own values and practices in line with the organizations' values and practices, teachers must address students as holistic beings, and teachers' professional development needs to be ongoing and linked to an increased awareness of changes in both personal and professional lives. Further implication for research is the use of AI as a tool for regeneration for educators.

Keywords: Empirical study; individual change; teacher preparedness; global context

Grandy, G., & Holton, J. (2010). Mobilizing change in a business school using Appreciative Inquiry. *Learning Organization, 17*(2), 178-194.

The study explores the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a pedagogical tool used to create opportunities for development and change in the context of a business school. The empirical study took place at a liberal arts university Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. Data were collected using a 4D model through a focus group and over three sessions with students in classes following discover, dream and design. The experiential nature of the AI process was a success in promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration and team building, and

empowering individuals toward a collection vision. Four possibility statements were developed, which serve as a starting point for future planning for the business school. The possibilities include meaningful relationships with professors and peers, leadership opportunities, experiential learning, and creativity and flexibility in program design. Future implications suggest the study be used to implement change in the school.

Keywords: Empirical study; business higher education courses; organizational change; global context

He, Y. (2009). Strength-based mentoring in pre-service teacher education: A literature review. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 17*(3), 263-275.

The purpose of this literature review is to present a new approach, grounded in a review of strength-based theory, to pre-teacher training and mentoring. Overviews literature on strength-based theories, including StrengthsQuest (Clifton and Anderson, 2002), Hope Theory (Synder, 1995; Snyder et al., 2003), Academic Optimism (Hoy et al., 2008), Happiness (Seligman, 2002), and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) /Appreciative Advising (AA) (Cooperider and Whitney, 2005; Bloom et al., 2008). Development of strength-based mentoring model for application in teacher education rooted in (AA) model with pathways and activities for Disarm, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, and Don't Settle. The article has a number of connections to AI/AA approach and could be used across numerous undergraduate majors and concentrations as well as in graduate training at the master's level.

Keywords: Qualitative methods (literature review); strength-based theories; pre-teacher training; pre-teacher mentoring

Jacobs, H. M., & Berg, S. (2011). Reconnecting information literacy policy with the core values of librarianship. *Library Trends, 60*(2), 383-394.

The focus of the piece is the application of Appreciative Inquiry (AI), information literacy, and the American Librarians Association (ALA) core values as ways to reengage with the possibilities and potentials from AI within information literacy to meet larger goals within the profession. One interesting aspect of the article is the discussion about how AI might be used as a tool to remind librarians about their mission and values. Another is how AI might be an asset in teaching college students to ask critical questions, rather than seeing librarians and their knowledge as a one-dimensional repository. At a time when information literacy is in question, AI is one way to expand the role of librarians and other professionals in higher education who also participate in the education of learners.

Keywords: Organizational change; applied AI; librarianship; program description

Lahman, M. (2012). Appreciative inquiry: Guided reflection to generate change in service-learning courses. *Communication Teacher, 26*(1), 1-4.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2011.625362>

The article describes a program that lead students through a guided reflection process in an effort to maximize academic learning and civic engagement in service-learning courses. A reflection on the 4D process as it relates to teaching identifies ways in which the model may promote transformative change within the classroom. Larger implications suggest the use of

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) by teachers as an assessment tool will help provide documented evidence of effective teaching, in turn providing documentation that students involved have met the academic and civic outcomes of the service-learning course. Finally, the use of AI in service-learning classrooms may be the means to transformative change similar courses.

Keywords: Classroom context; guided reflection; service learning; program description

Lewis, R. E., & Emil, S. (2010). Appreciative Inquiry: A pilot study of school counselor graduates. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 49*(1), 98-111.

Using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a framework to evaluate positive direction for program development, the empirical study describes the development of a pilot survey used to assess graduates' perceptions of a school counselor education program. Participants included 29 graduates of a master's counselor education program. The findings identified program strengths and strategies for program improvement. Implications of the study suggest using AI as a method for survey development used for program improvement, and exploring professional identity development.

Keywords: Empirical study; program development; school counselor education program; graduate education

Neville, M. (2008). Using Appreciative Inquiry and Dialogical Learning to Explore Dominant Paradigms. *Journal of Management Education, 32*(1), 100-117.

Neville (2008) describes the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) principles and preliminary findings of its impact on students in a business course. The study focusses specifically on AI in the classroom as a way to encourage students to engage with each other in positive ways. Within the article, a larger discussion of theory and resources for further investigation were provided. For instructors who wish to implement similar pedagogical strategies, the author also gives guidance that may be useful for adaptation in Table 3. The approach of the class may be useful for instructors who wish to reframe seminar classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Keywords: Curriculum description; classroom context; pedagogy

Somerville, M. M., & Howard, Z. (2010). "Information in Context": Co-Designing workplace structures and systems for organizational learning. *Information Research: An International Electronic Journal, 15*(4).

The article details an "information in context" program from Auraria Library in Denver, Colorado. The goal of the program is to create organizational structures and communication systems with and for library employees. The project resulted in several of the co-designed knowledge initiatives being implemented within Auraria Library to enhance communication, decision making, and planning systems, which included both face to face and technology enabled initiatives. Based on the findings, larger implications of the project include the use of Appreciative Inquiry in the process to engage individuals in organizational change.

Keywords: Program description; organizational change; librarianship

Spence, D. (2007). An evaluative case study of an Appreciative Inquiry process for futures planning with the College of Education at a public university in Tennessee (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, (UMI No. 3287745).

The focus of this evaluative case study is the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in students' futures planning process, to evaluate its use and effectiveness, and to identify participants' highpoints using this approach. The findings of this case study include identification of high points: (a) sense of inclusion; (b) increased awareness of community; (c) equity of voice; (d) collaboration; (e) positive energy, creativity, ownership, and commitment; and (f) definition of goals and creation of plans. Future implications suggest the use of AI as a possible framework, especially in implementation stage of organizational change of a program.

Keywords: Organizational change; evaluative case study; program description

Storms, B. A., Prada, M., & Donahue, E. (2011). Advising doctoral candidates to degree completion. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Department*, 2385-2392.

The article detailed the experience of two doctoral students in Ed.D programs with whom Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was used for advising throughout their dissertations. Although the students were enrolled in two different Ed.D programs, each was working full time in addition to their doctoral studies. In an effort to describe how AI was used to advise each student, strengths of the advisor and the students were recorded. Analysis of collected data demonstrated specific themes, which were then used to confirm and expand the findings. It was found that both the advisor and the student must share common interest in school improvement as well as complimentary working styles, agreed upon calendar, and advocacy with committee members. The findings provide an overview of the lessons learned to support doctoral students.

Keywords: Empirical study; doctoral students; strength-based advising

Thibodeau, J. (2011). Appreciative accreditation: A mixed methods explanatory study of Appreciative Inquiry-based institutional effectiveness results in higher education (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research (Paper 53). <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss/53>

The focus of this empirical study is to examine the effects of using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in accreditation and related institutional effectiveness activities within higher education by using the current research of AI in higher education. The study sample was employees of two-year and four-year institutions of higher education in the Mid-West United States. Each participant was involved in an appreciative conversation day leading into their institution's accreditation process and served on at least one committee during or as a result of the conversation day. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and as a result, participants described structural and climate changes at their institutions, as well as, changes in themselves regardless of their level of participation. Quantitative results of the study conclude no significant difference in perceptions of either institutional or individual change among three levels of participation and the two characteristics most strongly correlated with perceptions of

positive institutional change are on-going communication and allocation of resources. The findings suggest further use of AI can create positive energy for individuals within an organization and AI may be used in strategic planning.

Keywords: Empirical study; mixed methods; organizational change

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