SEDA Spring Conference 2024

Session Title: Why do educational development? An Appreciative Inquiry

Session Type: Workshop (60 mins)

Main presenter(s): John Peters, Birmingham Newman University

Co presenter(s): na

Session Summary: The session will introduce the idea, intention and model of Appreciative Inquiry.

Participants will apply the four stages of Appreciative Inquiry to their own work as educational developers. In the process participants will be able to:

- Discuss and apply appreciative inquiry as a workshop format

- Share and reflect positively on what motivates them as educational developers

- Construct their perfect vision of educational development

- Design appreciative principles

- Establish a commitment to enhancing their educational development work.

Session Outline: As the conference call articulates, educational development and educational developers face many challenges at present. These can serve to reduce educational development to a managerial approach of addressing the requirements of University leadership, through training academics to correct deficiencies in their performative metrics. It is, therefore, timely to remind ourselves why we really do what we do. Appreciative Inquiry is a conscious reaction to deficit-focused activity. Instead it proposes 'a cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them.' [Coopperider and Whitney, 2005] By focusing on 'what gives life' it helps everyone improve collectively and individually because it values the positives and reinvigorates our commitment to achieving the best outcome for ourselves and our organisations.

This session will introduce the idea of Appreciative Inquiry [AI], explain the AI cycle, and lead participants through a workshop applying AI to their work as educational developers. In the process they will collectively reflect on what motivates their work and how that can help them grow and their work flourish. We will also examine whether participants could use AI methodology in their own setting.

Session Plan

10 minutes introduction: The idea, intention and model of Appreciative Inquiry

10 minutes: Pair discussion, stage 1 of AI, Discovery. Share stories of occasions when you felt a valued and effective educational developer.

10 minutes: group discussion, stage 2 of AI, Dream. What would it be like if educational development was always like this?

5 minutes: plenary discussion, sharing the dream.

10 minutes: Discussion, stage 3 of AI, Design. What would be the principles of this wonderful state of educational development?

10 minutes: discussion, stage 4 of AI, Destiny. What is the first next step towards achieving this better future?

5 minutes: plenary discussion of the merits of an AI approach.

References: Cockell, J, & McArthur-Blair, J. (2013) Appreciative inquiry in Higher Education Jossey Bass, USA

Cooperrider, D. & Whitney, D. (2005) Appreciative Inquiry: a positive revolution in change, San Francisco

Cousin, G. (2009) 'Appreciative Inquiry' in Researching learning in HE, Routledge

Jones, J. & Masika, R. (2021) Appreciative inquiry as a developmental research approach for higher education pedagogy: space for the shadow, Higher Education Research & Development, 40:2, 279-292

Kadi-Hanifi, K., Dagman, O., Peters, J., Snell, E., Tutton, C., & Wright, T. (2014). Engaging students and staff with educational development through appreciative inquiry. Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51(6), 584-594.

Ludema, J. Cooperrider, D & Barrett, F. (2001) 'Appreciative Inquiry: the power of the unconditional positive' in Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. Handbook of Action Research

Ye He & Symphony D. Oxendine (2019) Leading positive change in higher education through appreciative inquiry: a phenomenological exploration of the strategic planning process, Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 41:2, 219-232

The AI commons http://ai.cwru.edu