

**Title:** **Discover, dream, design and deliver: using appreciative inquiry to support and value reflection and educational development with staff and students in higher education**

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### **Abstract:**

The proposal exemplifies the use of appreciative inquiry as an educational development/change management tool.

### **SEDA Values**

Indicate which SEDA Values may be relevant to your proposal:

An understanding of how people learn		Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice	x
Working and developing learning communities		Working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity	x
Continuing reflection on professional practice	x	Developing people and processes	x

### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a more developed knowledge of the theory of appreciative inquiry as a methodological approach
2. Understand how appreciative inquiry may be used in practice as a tool for development and change and reflect upon the advantages and potential drawbacks to using such a tool
3. Understand the challenges faced and consider the values to uphold when involving a cross-section of academic and professional support staff and students in review and development activity
4. Identify other educational development contexts/projects where an appreciative inquiry approach could be used

### **Session Outline**

This session will focus on the use of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008; Cousin, 2009) as an educational development tool to facilitate change. The context for use was the need to involve a group of academics, professional support staff and students in

generating ideas to effect change to review and transform one HEI's open day for pre-application students. However, this session will focus not so much on the outcomes of the project itself, but rather on the use of appreciative inquiry as a research methodology, using the open day review project as a 'worked example'. In particular, the session will scrutinise the values base that such a tool draws out. Using the SEDA values as a starting point, the session will demonstrate that appreciative inquiry is particularly consonant with the following values:

- engaging with scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice, drawing upon alternative perspectives, theories, and models to question and challenge our practice;
- demonstrating continuing reflection on professional practice;
- developing people and processes through supporting reflection upon learning
- working inclusively with diverse groups

The session will outline the different elements of appreciative inquiry as a methodological approach and will explore its particular suitability as a change and transformation agent. Qualitative feedback from project participants suggest that the use of appreciative inquiry in this context was an inclusive and effective way of improving the processes and culture under review.

**Key issues to be addressed are:**

1. An introduction to appreciative inquiry as a methodological approach
2. Appreciative inquiry in practice as a tool for development and change – using a 'worked example'
3. The challenges faced and the values to uphold when involving a cross-section of academic and professional support staff and students in review and development activity
4. Feedback from participants in the process

**Session Activities**

Presentation: 20 minutes

Facilitated discussion: 20 minutes

**Key areas for discussion will be:**

- What are the group's views on the claims made with regard to the values base engaged with during this project?
- What other values could be supported through an approach such as this?
- What do you see as the advantages to using appreciative inquiry as a change and development tool?
- What are the potential drawbacks to using appreciative inquiry in this way?
- There are limited examples where appreciative inquiry has been used in an educational development context (Chapman and Giles, 2009; Giles and Kung, 2010; Lehner and Hight, 2006) In what other educational development contexts/projects could this approach be used?

## References

Chapman, L. and Giles, D. (2009) Using Appreciative Inquiry to Explore the Professional Practice of a Midwife Lecturer. Vol. 31, No 3, 297-305.

Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., Stavros, J. M. (2008) Appreciative Inquiry Handbook. Ohio: Crown Custom Publishing.

Cousin, G. (2009) Appreciative Inquiry, Chapter 10 in Researching Learning in Higher Education. London: Routledge and SEDA

Giles, D. and 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. Vol 50, No 2, 308-322.

Lehner, R. and Hight, D. (2006) Appreciative Inquiry and Student Affairs: A Positive Approach to Change. College Student Affairs Journal. Vol 25, No 2, 141-151.