How Has Appreciative Inquiry Lived Up To its Promises? What Will the Future of Appreciative Inquiry Look Like?

Edited by
Robbert Masselink and Wick van der Vaart
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Welcome to February 2016 issue of AI Practitioner

When Anne Radford asked me, about a year ago, to take over the responsibility for *AI Practitioner*, I was very enthusiastic, but I didn’t realize fully what my “yes!” really meant. And now, a year later, the first issue since Anne’s retirement from the AIP is ready and I hope that you will enjoy it.

For this issue, I’ve invited my colleague Robbert Masselink as the guest editor. Robbert is one of the leading AI practitioners in the Netherlands and he is extremely curious: he seems to have read all the books about social constructionism and variations in this field.

We have chosen “How has Appreciative Inquiry lived up to its promises and how do we envision its future?” as the topic for this issue. AI has been around now for about 30 years. We wondered what people who have been working with an appreciative approach for many years have discovered and what their dreams for the future are. We’ve also invited people who are fairly new to our field to share their thoughts with us.

Lindsey Godwin and Joep de Jong look back on their long experience working with Appreciative Inquiry. So does René Bouwen in an interview with Robbert Masselink and myself. Gervase Bushe, Ralph Stacey and Ingeborg Kooger have contributed reflective essays about the limits of AI and about new fields for AI practitioners to explore.

We’ve also added a new section to *AI Practitioner*, called “Nourish to Flourish”, an idea that came up in a conversation with Keith Storace during the last WAIC in Johannesburg. In this section you’ll find: Voices From the Field: short stories by AI practitioners in preparation for the WAIC in Brazil, 2017; new variations on classical methods and tools; and a book review by Sarah Lewis.

I hope that you’ll find this issue of *AI Practitioner* nourishing.

Wick van der Vaart
Editor-in-Chief
AI Practitioner
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Appreciative Inquiry Resources

Appreciative Inquiry Resources features a rediscovery of classic and new resources for your use. Resources will include list-serves, books, journal articles, book chapters, DVDs, websites, blogs, podcasts, etc. ... all in one place useful for learning more about AI to help with your consulting practice, internal work, teaching, training and extending your knowledge base and resources.

As elsewhere in the February 2016 issue of the AI Practitioner, we are sharing resources that span the young history of Appreciative Inquiry.

Starting with one of Ken Gergen’s influential resources from 1982, we decided to look for resources that show the development of Appreciative Inquiry in (roughly) five-year periods of time. If you are new to exploring these Appreciative Inquiry resources, we hope you enjoy seeing the progression of AI throughout these years. For those of you who are revisiting these resources and the development of AI, we hope that you enjoy revisiting the evolving story of AI and these resources as much as we have.
1982
**Toward Transformation in Social Knowledge**
Ken Gergen (1982)
ISBN: 978-1-4612-5708-0

Ken Gergen’s ideas in this book were influential in the development of Appreciative Inquiry. The discussion on generative theory is embedded into the core of AI philosophical discussions as well as AI methods. Ken Gergen published a second edition to this text in 1994.

1987
**Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life**
David Cooperrider & Suresh Srivastva (1987)
http://goo.gl/sh1PiL

This chapter summarizes well many of the early ideas of AI. Much like David Cooperrider’s doctoral dissertation, this chapter is a call for action research to reach its potential as a tool for fostering social innovation and to advance theory and practice.

1992
**A Chicago Case Study in Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry**
Bliss Browne (1995)
http://goo.gl/phwaCn

Imagine Chicago was created in 1992. This article by Bliss Browne is an early writing about the use of AI by Imagine Chicago to foster intergenerational civic engagement and community development.

1997
**Lessons from the Field**
Sue Hammond and Cathy Royal (1998)

This is one of the first published books that focused on practitioner stories about AI. The book is divided into five sections, including case studies, community application and application of theory, as well as other resources. Sue and Cathy also published a revised version of this text in 2001.

1998
To further contribute this sharing of stories by practitioners, Anne Radford published the first electronic AI Newsletter in 1998, leading to the development of *AI Practitioner*. 
2002–2004
In the years around 2002, there were three cases of Appreciative Inquiry that demonstrate how AI had broadened its application into multiple sectors by this time. These sectors were the military, education, and global politics and corporate citizenship. The following are three resources that tell the story of three events from these three sectors.

**US Navy Leadership Summit (2002)**
https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/ppNavy.cfm

Many of the documents and resources related to the US Navy Leadership Summit and its AI design are still available on the AI Commons.

**Leap of Faith: ReDiscovering the Wonder–Full World of Education (2003)**
https://goo.gl/0Uz9dN

This summary PowerPoint presentation tells the story of this wonderful gathering of people focused on AI and education.

**UN Global Compact (2004)**
https://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/commentFeb05.cfm

This page in the AI Commons provides commentary and resources related to the UN Global Compact gathering in 2004, where the Appreciative Inquiry approach was used with about 500 participants.

2007
Just like a series of events around 2002 showcase the development of Appreciative Inquiry, a series of publications about five years later reveal how the roots of AI were spreading into different fields. In 2005, Jackie Kelm published her first book on Appreciative Living. In 2008, Dawn Cooperrider Dole, Jen Hetzel Silbirt, Ada Jo Mann and Diana Whitney shared their ideas about using Appreciative Inquiry to help families thrive. Then, in 2009, Jackie Starvros, Gina Hinrichs, and Sue Hammond published a book about SOAR. At this point in time, the practice of AI had clearly grown in many different directions.

**Appreciative Living: The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry in Personal Life**
Jackie Kelm (2005)
ISBN: 978–0977216109

**Positive Family Dynamics**
ISBN: 978–0971231290

**The Thin Book of SOAR: Building Strengths-based Strategy**
Jackie Starvros, Gina Hinrichs, and Sue Hammond (2009)
ISBN: 978–0982206805
2012

A Contemporary Commentary on Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life
David Cooperrider (2013)
ISBN: 978-1848554887

In the fourth edition of Advances in Appreciative Inquiry, David shared his latest ideas about Appreciative Inquiry in organizational life. It is most interesting to pair this chapter with a revisit to the Cooperrider & Srivastva article of 1987 shared above to get another sense of the development of AI through these years.

2015

An Invitation to Social Construction (3rd Edition)
Ken Gergen (2015)
ISBN: 978-1412923019

It seems fitting that the most recent resource we share is connected to a resource that is so much a part of the foundation of Appreciative Inquiry. Ken Gergen’s latest edition of this book on social construction is written especially for readers who are new to the idea of social construction.

Papers and Blogs

Systemic Inquiry – Exploring Organisations
Louis Klein (2005)
doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03684920510581620

The theory of Applied Narratives from which the systemic inquiry (SI) methodology is derived relates to Heinz von Foerster’s impact on the practice of organisational development, change management and systemic intervention. Understanding an organisation being an observer of itself gives way to benefit from constructivism and systems theory and puts the people and their contribution back into the centre of interest. Systemic inquiry shows a way to work closer with the organisation and the people and overcomes the necessity to deal with resistance.

Assessment of the State of AI: Past, Present, and Future
Therese F. Yaeger, Peter F. Sorensen, Ulf Bengtsson (2005)
*Research in Organizational Change and Development*, Vol. 15
Series editor(s): Richard Woodman, Professor William Pasmore, Abraham B. (Rami) Shani
eISBN: 978-1-84950-319-8
This article presents an assessment of 50 studies based on a review of more than 400 publications and papers. The final section includes a summary and discussion of the state of Appreciative Inquiry up to the date of publication.

A Blueprint for Change: Appreciative Inquiry
Terri D Egan and Ann Feyerherm (2010)
https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/a-blueprint-for-change-appreciative-inquiry/

The authors note that there is a perverse belief that struggling is an honourable pursuit. What if life and work were effortless that what people wanted flowed from what they could imagine and then create? They suggest that the process of change need not be one of pain and struggle, but one of stirring the imagination, creativity and energy.

Using Appreciative Inquiry to Facilitate Implementation of the Recovery Model in Mental Health Agencies
Laurene Clossey, Kevin Mehnert and Sara Silva (2011)
doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hsw/36.4.259

This article explores how AI could be helpful in shifting an organization’s culture to render it compatible with recovery through descriptions of two mental health centers’ use of the tool. The experiences described indicate that AI, if used consistently, empowers staff.

Appreciative Leadership: Delivering Sustainable Difference Through Conversation and Inquiry
MacNeill, Fiona and Vanzetta, Jillian (2014)
doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/ICT-09-2013-0058

The aim of this two-year evaluation study was to explore the impact of designing a bespoke Appreciative Leadership Programme (commissioned by Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust), around a specific set of organisational values and the associated sustainability linked to the delivery using conversation and inquiry.

Organisational Development, Appreciative Inquiry and the Development of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIEs): Part Two: The Pilot Study and Evaluation
Suzanne Quinney and Leo Richardson (2014)

This paper describes the application of Appreciative Inquiry in homeless hostels and demonstrates the benefits of using AI with the staff and residents, as both a personal development and an OD tool for hostels who want to become a psychologically informed environment (PIE).
A Complex Adaptive Systems Perspective to Appreciative Inquiry: A Theoretical Analysis
Payam Saadat (2015)

In the literature, analysis of the effectiveness of AI is confined to psychological and managerial explanations such as highlighting the promotion of positive mindset and collective organizational planning. This paper discusses a Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) perspective and present a new model for understanding the functionality of AI, exploring the effects of AI on the behaviour and interactions of agents/employees related to how they cope with change.
About the International Advisory Practitioners Group IAPG

IAPG members work with AIP to bring AI stories to a wider audience:

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Purpose of AI Practitioner

In 1998, Anne Radford founded the newsletter which became AI Practitioner in 2003. She was editor-in-chief of AI Practitioner from 2003 to 2015.

This publication, distributed quarterly in February, May, August and November, is for people interested in making the world a better place using positive relational approaches to change such as AI.

AI Practitioner Editor/Publisher

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