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# AI Practitioner

International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry



## The Open Issue

Edited by

**Lindsey N. Godwin, Luc Verheijen, Saskia Tjepkema and Shelagh Aitken**

Co-publishers

**The David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry and  
Kessels & Smit, The Learning Company**

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# AI Practitioner: The Open Issue

This issue of *AI Practitioner*, edited by the co-publishers and the managing editor, begins the new year with a new approach: an open issue. In it there is no overall topic, no link between the seven articles other than the authors' interest in and exploration of Appreciative Inquiry and its principles.

Usually, each issue of *AI Practitioner* has a unique theme curated by editors who have special knowledge or interest in that topic. But we often hear from readers who would like to contribute an article that is beyond the scope of any of our currently planned special issues. In the spirit of the Wholeness principle, we recognize that there are many voices that comprise our global community and we want to make sure we are creating an inclusive platform for all. Besides, from Frank Barrett's work, *Yes to the Mess*, we have learned lessons about the power of improv in jazz music, the beauty of variety, and the generativity that comes from coincidence and surprise.

## An open issue

So, for this first issue of a new decade, the co-publishers decided to do something different. There is no overall topic linking the articles in this issue. Instead, this is our first "open issue". It features a valuable and engaging array of contributions that didn't find a home in a themed issues. Articles were selected by the editorial team, from a variety of sources: people who contacted us via the website, who talked to us at conferences, or in discussion about other matters commented, "it would be nice to see an article in *AI Practitioner* about this".

*Articles were selected by the editorial team from people who emailed us or spoke to us at conferences, or elsewhere saying 'it would be nice to see an article about this in AI Practitioner.'*

So here they are, a selection of those articles that didn't align with a special theme, but that nonetheless powerfully illustrate the growing range of areas where AI is being applied around the globe. We know you will enjoy the myriad of articles, from a young mother using AI in social media to support other mothers through her "50-day gratitude challenge," to the ways in which combining artificial intelligence and Appreciative Inquiry can lead to sustainable leadership in future, to one of the most difficult environments of all: using AI in prisons in the UK.

We look forward to having future "Open Issues" that continue to highlight appreciative work happening around the world in various capacities. If you are interested in contributing to such a future issue, contact us at: [info@aipractitioner.com](mailto:info@aipractitioner.com).

### Learnings from the 2019 AI Practitioner Survey

In addition to these articles, we also want to share the learnings we gained from YOU, our AI Practitioner Journal community (one of which was that you seem open to occasional "open issues", by the way!).

In the Autumn of 2019, we conducted a survey of subscribers as well as those in the broader AI community to find out people's thoughts about what is going well, what they would like more of, and what they think AI Practitioner can do to better support the AI community. We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to reply. With so many surveys these days, adding one more can be a big ask. The replies we received were thoughtful and helpful. We have compiled an overview of findings and our learnings in a report that can be found on our website: <https://aipractitioner.com/2020/01/20/readers-survey/>.

*First and foremost, what we take from this survey is the experience itself.*

First and foremost, what we take from this survey is the experience itself. We are really grateful to the people who made the effort to share their thoughts and advice with us. We like to think of AIP as "our community" journal: that it is created by and for the readers/subscribers and the wider AI community. Sharing ideas in this way strengthens that notion, as several people explicitly mentioned in the survey. So we consider this something to be repeated – maybe in different forms, allowing for more interaction – in the future.

Second, we take away several learnings and inspired questions:

- AIP's combination of practice and theory is what makes it valuable to readers. You love to read case stories, to find practical applications and tools, with the addition of background on the underlying methodology or theory and information on the actual impact and effect.

*We look forward to continuing to evolve the AI Practitioner journal with and for you.*

- AIP readers are inspired by stories from around the world, by examples from different fields and contexts, told by a variety of voices. So the question for us as editorial team and board is: how do we find and invite as rich a collection of people as possible to share their experiences?
- A related question is whether it would be good to broaden our range of contributions, adding other media such as podcasts and videos to the mix. Perhaps we can experiment with that in the next year?
- Up until now, we have mainly thought of AIP as a journal with a rich website. The survey has fueled our thoughts on how to move forward in the future ... how rich do we want our website to be? Could it evolve into a forum and online community? And if so, how would it relate to AI Commons? Food for thought as we develop our vision for the future with the editorial board during the next year.
- With regard to the subscription model, it seems that there is room for innovation. Along with the classic “four issues per year” subscription, there is also interest in a model of “this many articles per year”. Perhaps we could offer both options to our reader base? This is definitely something for us to dive into.

These are all questions and ideas to take with us into 2020. And we look forward to continuing to evolve the AI Practitioner journal with and for you, the global community of practice!

## In this issue

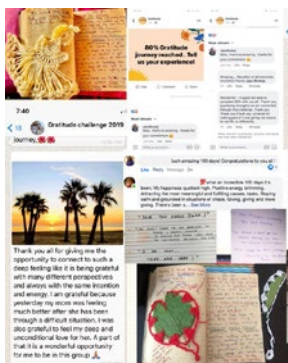
The issue starts with one that asks the question how does generative journalism differ from positive journalism? Peter Pula, one of the people who invented the term at Axiom News in Canada, says in his article that one way that they differ is that generative journalist looks to midwife the preferred future state, which is never more negative than the current one.

Ganesh Chella argues that, even with the time pressure that usually comes with coaching leaders, appreciating their skills before diving into assessment and labelling leads to better results and durable change.

Continuing the idea of working with business, Ankur Kumar Dhanuka’s article considers how a business conference can be designed to rise above the norm, have lasting results and raise expectations for success.



Read more about appreciating before assessing as a coaching strategy on page 14.



Read about the results of Jaya Bhateja's 50-day gratitude challenge on page 30.

Jaya Bhateja is the young mother mentioned above. Having realised that her job was not bringing her joy, she moved into coaching. When she became a mother, she joined social media groups that supported new mothers. But the tone, she found, was negative. She decided to set up a new group that would explore gratitude as an appreciative inquiry. In this article she writes about the results of her 50-day gratitude challenge.

Ganesh Kumaraswamy and Sam Mathi attended the “Cleveland (CLE) Rising AI Summit” as practitioner and participant. Their article documents their experience and learnings.

If you have ever Googled AI, you'll know that Appreciative Inquiry is not the only result. Artificial Intelligence is also high on the list. Joep C. de Jong has taken advantage of this in “AI (Appreciative Inquiry) + AI (Artificial Intelligence) = SFL (Sustainable Future Leadership)”, using his experience as a lecturer to explore what those in training today expect their future to look like.

Prisons are, as Charles Elliot says in his article “Testing Appreciative Inquiry to Destruction”, sad places. It's hard to get prisoners to talk about a positive future when all they have to look forward to is years of incarceration in UK prisons. But using Appreciative Inquiry to shape prison programs is having a positive effect.



Read about how Appreciative Inquiry has been embedded in a school system in Norway in our Feature Choice on page 67.

Our feature choice article for this issue is one that we first discussed with Bjørn Hauger a couple of years ago. In this updated version, he and Vidar Bugge-Hansen describe the SMART Upbringing development project in Re, Norway that has been running, successfully, for ten years.

The Research Review & Notes article by Karen Venter describes her involvement in a program in South Africa that researched methods to create a service-learning framework for positive institutions, working both at international and local levels. We hope you enjoy the “Open Issue”!

**Lindsey Godwin, Luc Verheijen, Saskia Tjepkema and Shelagh Aitken**  
**February 2020**

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# AI Practitioner Co-publishers

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- Provides cutting-edge educational offerings in AI and Positive Organizational Development,
- Provides AI-related organizational consultancy services to organizations,
- Serves as a scholarship incubator that advances the theory and practice of AI across all organizational sectors around the world.



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Kessels & Smit, The Learning Company is an international group of consultants, coaches and facilitators with a passion for learning and development. From their bases in The Netherlands, Belgium, South Africa and Germany they support individuals, organisations and communities around the world to strive for solutions that build individual growth, sustainable organisational development, and social change. They carry The Learning Company as their name because:

- Learning is at the heart of what they do: they aim to create and facilitate powerful learning processes.
- The professionals from Kessels & Smit want to be good company to each other and to people they work with: they believe the best solutions are developed in partnerships.
- They strive to be a learning organisation, constantly renewing their work processes, structures and approaches. The company is their “laboratory”, where they experiment and find answers for learning and development and organisational questions.

# AI Practitioner

International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry

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