

# Innovation through Appreciative Inquiry

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## Introduction

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to thinking that works from propositions of affirmative action and visions of the possible leading to individual learning and creativity (Cooperrider, 2007). With collaboration between Cardiff and Glyndwr Universities, this innovative project was produced as part of a 4 year part-time BSc(Hons) Occupational Therapy programme by a group of 5/6 students and 1 staff facilitator. This 20 credit, Level 6 Professional Studies module was designed to develop management skills. It ran over 10 weeks with 3 hours contact per week plus self directed learning. Groups used Appreciative Inquiry integrated with Problem Based Learning (Roberts 2010) and sessions were complemented by 6 x 1 hour keynote lectures.

## The Trigger

Your area has had some difficulties recruiting staff of all grades. This has meant that in your post as a newly qualified Occupational Therapist in a busy rural service, you have been working predominantly on your own with little access to supervision. You have brought this to your line manager's attention and as a consequence the occupational therapy lead has delegated to you the responsibility for developing a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) initiative within the Department.

## The TRAMM Model



The TRAMM Tracker provides a framework to record and measure TRAMM activities and HPC requirements.

## 1. Discover

Students explore knowledge and best of what is

- Defined CPD & how it is evidenced.
- Driving forces/requirements for range of professions?
- Explored Frameworks, supervision & mentorship.
- Benchmarked best practice.
- How to write a business case.
- How to influence your manager/obtain money for CPD.
- How to discover what people really want (Marketing).
- How do rural services run? What are the challenges?

## 2. Dream

Students consider and articulate their vision

- Wanted a framework.
- List of what could constitute CPD.
- Opportunities to disseminate good practice.
- Different mechanisms to support each other.
- Opportunities for income generation (budgets).
- Need a way to measure and evidence.

## 3. Design

Students articulate potential

- Started to design CPD model.
- Business case commenced identifying necessary aspects to be addressed.
- Investigated and considered the best ways to make change happen (e.g. managing change, managing people, teamwork, leadership, communication, marketing tools, budgets, requirements for audit etc).

## 4. Destiny

Students decide what will be – 'Do it'

- TRAMM model designed.
- Business case completed.
- Proposal presented to group as 'Dragon's Den'.
- Handout developed for peers.
- Plus
- Presented at student research conference.
- Published (Morris et al, 2011).
- Developed TRAMM Tracker (measurement tool).
- Presented at HEA conference in Edinburgh (2010).
- Accepted for presentation at College of Occupational Therapists national conference in Glasgow (2012).
- Being piloted UK wide.
- Plans for research and further publication.

The 4 Stages of  
Appreciative  
Inquiry



## Student feedback

"We were encouraged to explore and develop our own module encompassing management and entrepreneurial skills, which relied on us being self directed and taking responsibility for our own learning. Initially we felt anxious, unsure if the direction we were taking was right. A university lecturer helped us to identify appropriate learning outcomes, which in turn mapped to those required of the curriculum. As we developed in confidence we were able to pursue our own well defined goals."

## Conclusion

Appreciative Inquiry allowed students to explore areas which may otherwise have been considered 'surplus to requirements' and from this learning not only embraced the use of analytical, appreciative and creative 'eyes' (Machon 2010), but allowed innovation to extend beyond university into practice.

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References: Cooperrider,DL, Whitney D, Stavros JM. (2007) *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). San Francisco, USA. Berret Koehler. Machon,A ( 2010). *The Coaching Secret. How to be an Exceptional Coach*. Pearson Education Limited.  
Morris R, Salmon T, Lawson S, Hearle D, Leadbitter A, Morris M, and Mandizha-Walker M (2011) Creativity through appreciative inquiry. *OT News*. June 2011 pp26-27, Roberts,G.W ( 2010) . Advancing New Approaches To Learning and Teaching. Introducing Appreciative Inquiry To A Problem Based Learning Curriculum. *The Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*. 2 (1) pp15-24.

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