

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) – A New Approach to Problem Based Learning (PBL)

A new model of inquiry for students & practitioners

**Application via case study in
healthcare education and practice.**



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Cardiff University



- **Learning Objectives**
- **What is Problem Based Learning and why question its effectiveness ?**
- **What is Appreciative Inquiry – Historical Context**
- **Applying AI to PBL**
- **Case studies**
- **Research evidence**



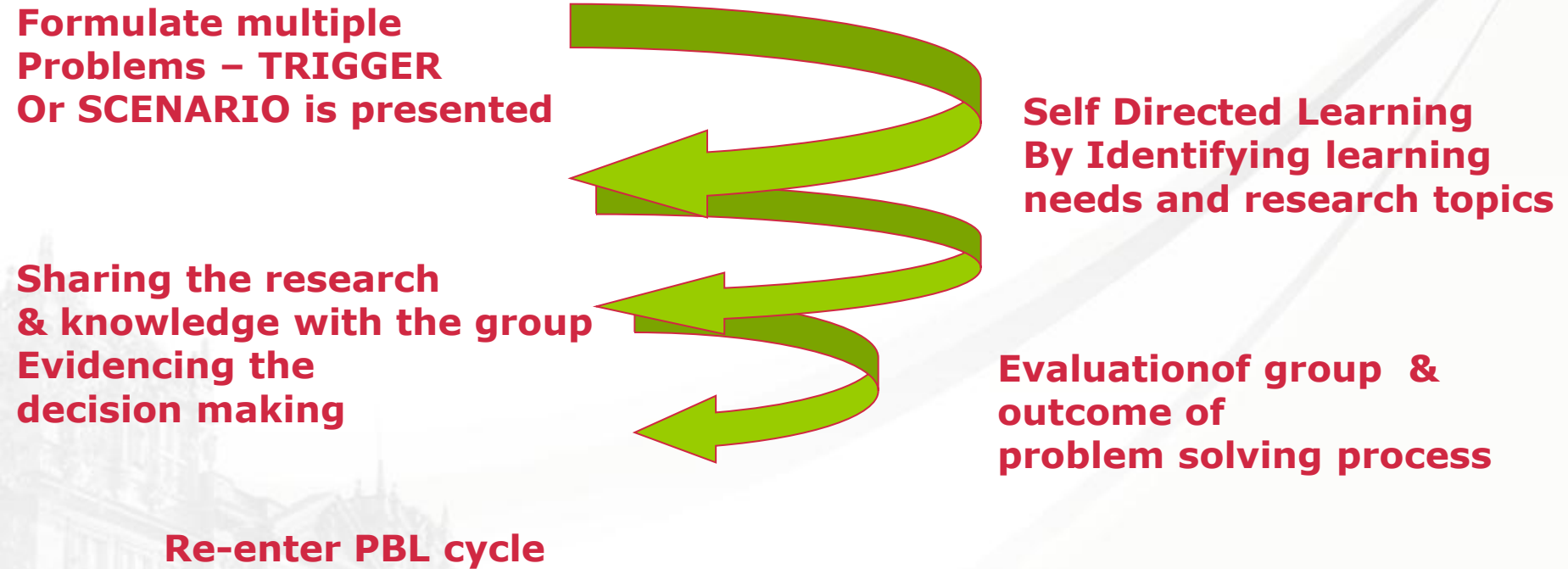
What is Problem based learning (PBL)

- PBL is a student-centred pedagogy
- Students learn about a subject in the context of complex, multifaceted, and realistic problems .
- The goals of PBL are to help the students develop flexible knowledge, effective **problem solving skills**, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation
- Working in groups, students identify what they already know, what they need to know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to **resolution of the problem**.
- The role of the tutor is that of facilitator of learning who provides appropriate support of the process, modelling of the process, and monitoring the learning
- The tutor must build students confidence to take on the problem, encourage the student, while also stretching their understanding

(adapted from Wikipedia)



Historical PBL cycle at Cardiff University :-



FOCUS IS ON SOLVING THE PROBLEM

(This model forms the basis of the interview process when students apply for the course – simulated PBL group)



Case Study 1- Peter(

kindly reproduced with permission of TIME Magazine NewYork)



- **Learning Needs**

- Homeless
- Mental health problems
- Drug and Alcohol abuse
- Welfare State – abuse
- Manipulating use of the dog
- Societal nuisance
- Poor personal hygiene
- Occupationally deprived
- Associated crime



Negative/problematic attitudes towards the image
Concern at the level of assumptions and mind sets



Students Evaluation of the PBL Process:

10 years of end of course evaluation - feedback from final year (level 6) students reported the following reflections (amongst others) from their PBL experience :-

- there is often **missing information** at the end of a PBL process
- each problem is unique – and therefore **no fixed** formula
- Is the outcome right or wrong – by whose standards
- with more information the **problem changes**
- although they look for it, there is often **no single right answer**
- **excess anxiety** about the pressure to always solve the problem
- excessive focus on the problem solving often creates anxiety when a **problem cannot be solved – (fear of failure)**
- pressure to solve the problem tends to **limit creativity and lateral thinking**
- Expectation that the tutor will step in and rescue the group if stuck



Evaluation of 9 groups of 8 students :-

- 94% stated that they were happy with the group dynamics
- 6% students stated that they were not.

What happened ?

- QA focus was on the 6% unhappy students instead of asking the other 94% what worked for them !!!

WHY ?

- It appeared that the academic staff/groups were obsessed with learning from mistakes instead of allowing the successes to multiply enough to crowd out the unsuccessful !

therefore PBL as an approach appeared to place emphasis on the negative aspects of problems within the process & group !



Parallel evidence emerging from PhD study into tutors experience of PBL facilitation

- similar concerns about focus on problem solving
- concerns about personal style of facilitation
- concerns about lack of creativity – need to get from A to B in shortest of time
- dependency on the right answer – usually the tutors perspective
- fear of failure
- Anxiety that PBL was not truly client centred – focus on the problem
- first inclusion of appreciative inquiry and positive psychology

(exploration of the literature and evidence resulting in attendance at AI master class with D Cooperrider at the Wellcome trust)



A CHALLENGE PRESENTED TO 6 GROUPS

PBL Trigger / Scenario (Level 4)

- academic staff were to attend the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) conference in Sydney Australia (2006)
- **PROBLEM - How do we get from Cardiff to the Conference**
 - 3 x PBL GROUPS & 3 x AI GROUPS
(both sets given separate key notes)



Learning needs identified by the traditional PBL groups in the experiment :-

- flight, time /cost
- airport. where/when/how
- Stopover-where/how long /cost
- visa/passport requirements
- clothes/season/luggage
- WFOT conference – location etc
- accommodation/where/with whom
- Australian dollars/how much
- return journey



APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY - WHAT IS IT?

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach:-

- **works from the propositions of affirmative action**
- **works from visions of the possible, rather than problem solving**
- **Invites us to look at situations with an appreciative eye rather than only with an analytical eye**

(based/adapted from Cooperrider & Strivastva 1987)



- ***Ap-pre'ci-ate***, v., 1. *valuing; the act of recognising the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems* 2. *to increase in value, e.g. the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: VALUING, PRIZING, ESTEEMING, and HONORING.*

In-quire' (kwir), v., 1. *the act of exploration and discovery.* 2. *To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION, STUDY*



- **Consult/inclusive** with/of people
- **Learn** from past experience and successes
- **Involve** individuals, whole organisations or communities in change
- **Build a vision** for the future that everyone can share and help put into practice



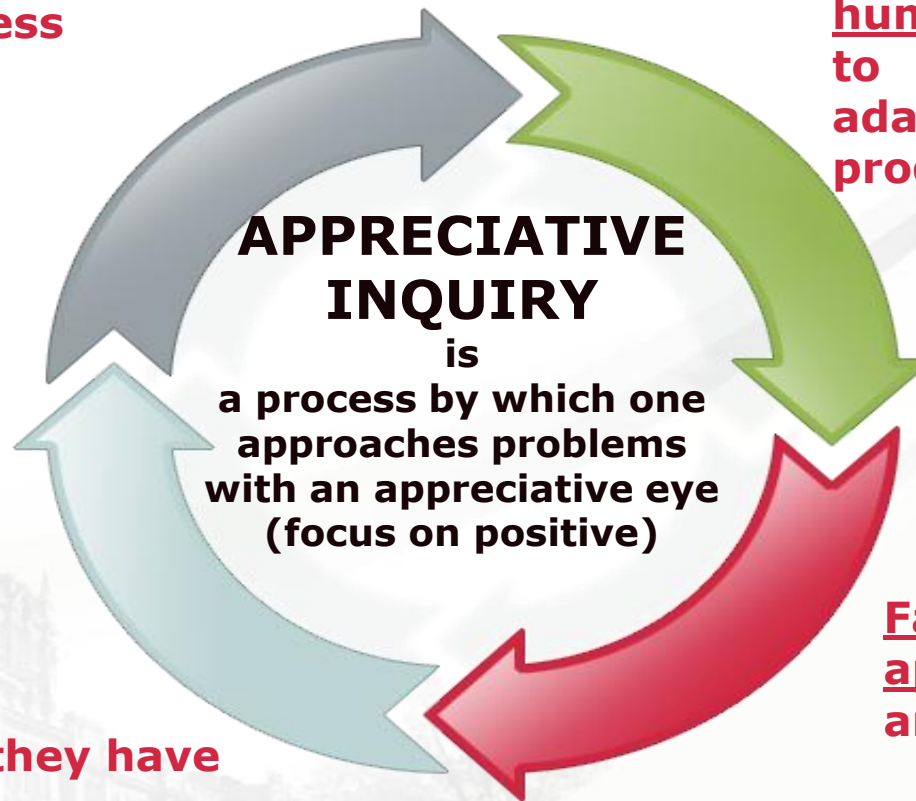
Appreciative questions versus problem focused questions

- What's working well now ? Vs what's not working well?
- What opportunities are there? Vs what are your main challenges?
- What have you achieved so far ? Vs what have you not been able to achieve ?
- What do you find easy to achieve? Vs what do you find most difficult ?
- What are your aspirations, what do you want to achieve etc etc

Basic Appreciative Inquiry cycle :-

Builds on people's strengths, it negates the value of weakness

Acknowledges the human potential to adapt and progress



Develops a sense of commitment, confidence & affirmation that they have been successful

Favours a positive approach to challenges and problems

***PBL & Appreciative Inquiry represent the poles of our learning
One feeds and informs the other and yet both are extremes***



Emergent Paradoxical Approach

Balance of Pros & Cons of this scenario.

in essence how does the journey serve & also limit the individual/group

Appreciative Focused (appreciative eye)

- excitement
- adventure
- conference/CPD
- friends/family
- getting away/holiday
- being a tourist
- different culture
- famous landmarks
- long haul flight – what to do
- stopover/Hong Kong etc
- photos/memories
- Kudos
- Once in a life time opportunity

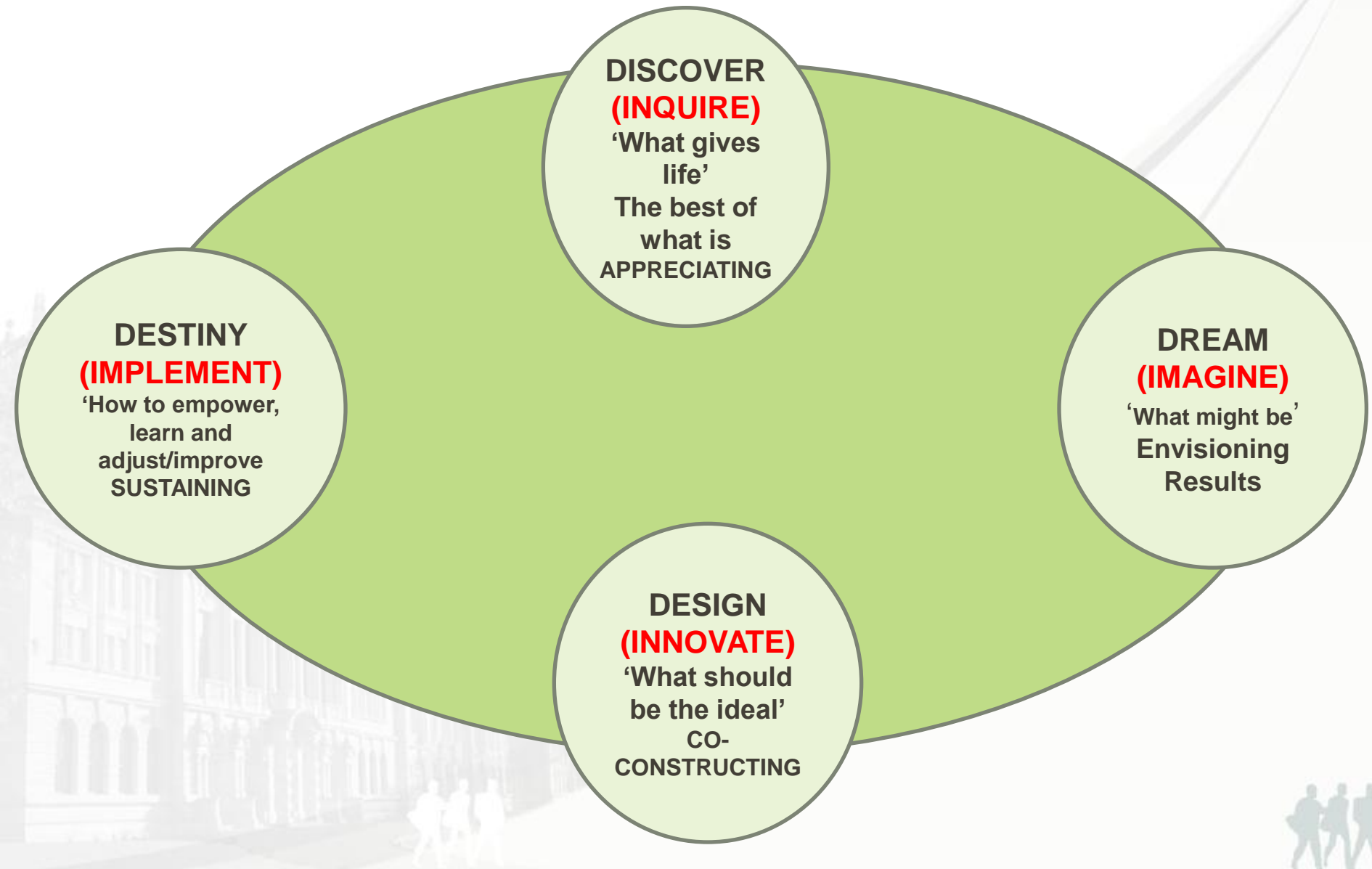


Problem focused (analytical eye)

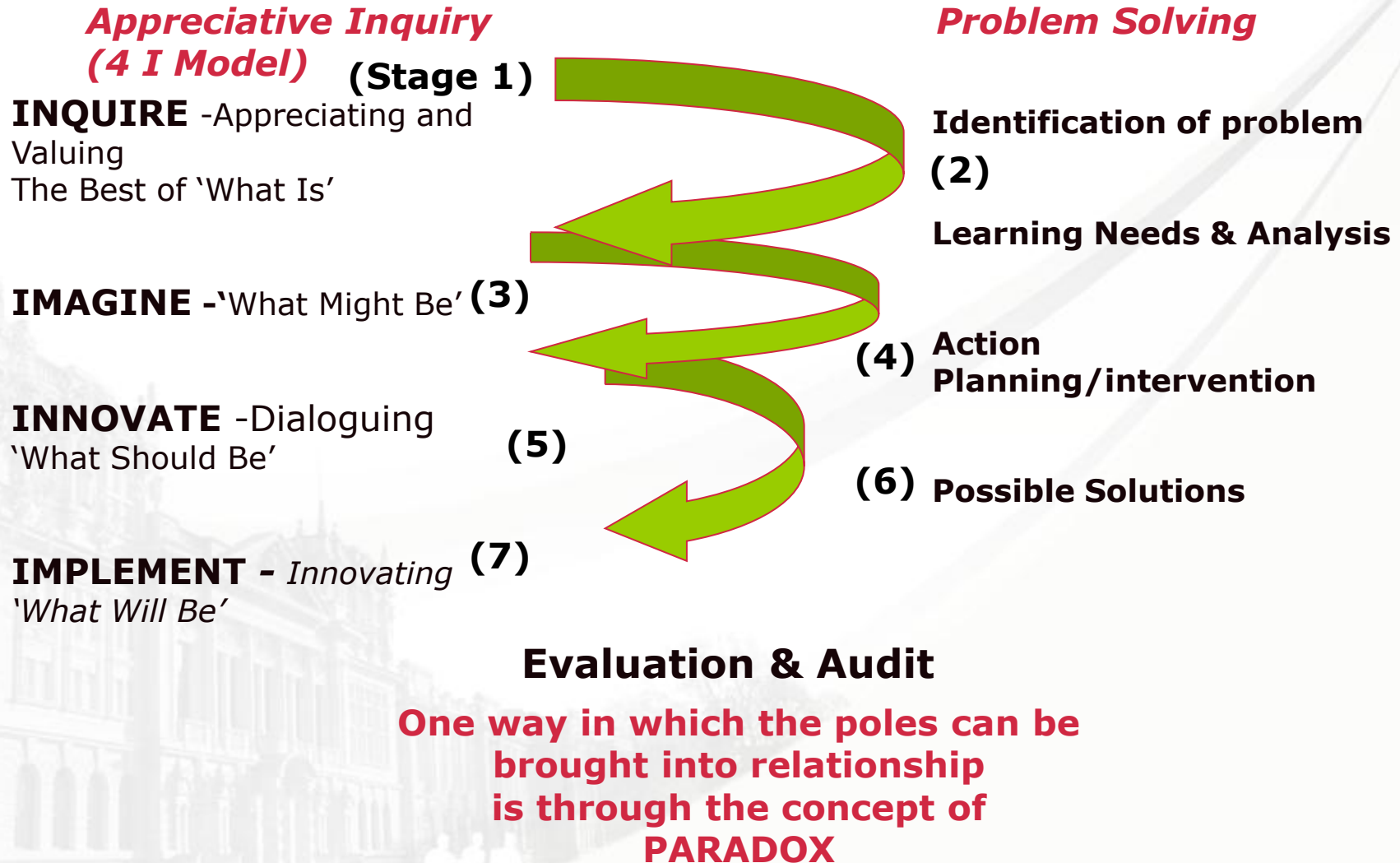
- home/pets/garden
- flight, ticket/time /cost
- airport.where/when/how
- Stopover-where/how long /cost
- visa/passport
- clothes/season/luggage
- WFOT conference.etc
- accommodation/where/with whom
- Australian dollars/how much
- return journey & back to work
(dealing with jet lag)

4 D Model/Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry

(adapted Cooperider & Whitney. 2005)



Proposed new PBL cycle at Cardiff University :-



Ref: adapted from Cooperrider & Strivasta (1987)



THE THREE EYES OF THE OT PROFESSIONAL

ANALYTICAL

APPRECIATIVE

CREATIVE

(AND THREE ASSOCIATED LEVELS OF LISTENING)

(Machon. 2010)



REACTIVE – Habitual and compulsive – fast moving

PRACTICAL – Focus on facts and data

PROBLEM SOLVING and SEEKING - sceptical

CRITICAL – quick to judge right from wrong

RATIONAL – logical and deterministic

(Machon. 2010)



GIFT

RAPID PROBLEM SOLVING

FOCUSSED

PRACTICAL

DATA DRIVEN

EDGE

1-D

REACTIVE

DISPASSIONATE

PARTIAL VIEW OF SELF AND OTHERS – REAL NEED
OF CLIENT MOST OFTEN OVERLOOKED



REFLECTIVE AND CAN PACE – curious to question rather than compelled to answer

COMFORTABLE TO OBSERVE AND WITNESS – in fact this is the eye of the inner observer and witness

OPENS UP RATHER THAN CLOSES DOWN – Comfortable to explore and understand - self and another



TO BE AND BECOME A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER AND TO UNDERSTAND, RELATE AND APPRECIATE your CLIENT

Offers you the ability to:

- ✓ Question rather than answer (be reflective)
- ✓ Empathise - to be emotionally aware of yourself and your clients wishes and needs
- ✓ To be able to hear limitation and fallibility
- ✓ To appreciate yourself and your client



IMAGINE A COIN

One face = Analytical
2nd face = Appreciative

Limitations of one = strengths of other



The characteristics of the creative eye

RESPONSIVE, DYNAMIC AND FLEXIBLE – can choose a perspective an eye and way of listening

ABLE TO REPEATEDLY RE-ORIENTATE AND REBALANCE

MASTERFUL – adaptable able to cultivate self-resilience and care



The characteristics of the creative eye

RESOURCEFUL – motivational, aspirational and passionate

SELF-DIRECTED AND SUFFICIENT

BALANCED AND PATIENT

DEEPLY AUTHENTIC AND HONEST – accommodates the whole of who you are

UNCONDITIONAL – comfortable with 'not-knowing' or needing to have the answer

UNCOMPROMISED – innovative and creative



Fosters your ability to:

- ✓ Truly listen and respond with compassion
- ✓ Be able to coach and guide another in how to help themselves
- ✓ Motivate and discover what motivates
- ✓ Truly reflect, relate and respond
- ✓ To manage and resolve conflict
- ✓ To cultivate self resilience and balance
- ✓ To see the whole as well as your part in it



- How do students evaluate the introduction of AI into their programme?
- How do staff evaluate the introduction of AI into their programme?
- What are the principal issues for both and to what extent do they coincide?

(2010- Rubin,R & Kerrell,R – Canterbury Christ Church University)



- Qualitative study
- Focus groups with first year cohort of students at UK university
 - 85% (25) students participated
 - 4 focus groups
- Individual interviews with 8 staff
- All audio-recorded and transcribed
- Thematic data analysis



- AI was enjoyable
- AI was thought provoking and creative
- AI made a positive difference to placement practice
 - especially with mental health clients
 - not all practice educators saw the point



Peter -Case Study 1- 2nd Week of the programme (level 4)



- **Learning Needs**

- Homeless
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- Welfare State – abuse
- Manipulating use of the dog
- Societal nuisance
- Poor personal hygiene
- Occupationally deprived
- Associated crime



Negative/problematic attitudes towards the image



- Element of choice
- Whose problem is he – his own or societal attitudes
- Unkempt – by whose standards ?
- Occupationally engaged as a carer ! – RSPCA data
- Evidence of substance abuse ?
- As a young man what – human potential
- Employment potential



New case study – presented within 2 weeks of starting the course?



- Hangover !
- Couch potato
- Lazy
- no role or purpose
- Unemployed
- Lives on the welfare state
- Lives off parents – designer clothing
- Man flu
- Yuppy Flu
- Food poisoning
- Depressed and anxiety
- Relaxing and taking time off



- ENTREPRENEUR EYE !
 - Potential consultancy role for OT (Private Practice)
 - OT as a Life Coach
 - Role for OTs in NHS , LA and third sector



HOLISTIC & REALISTIC

INCLUSIVE OF THE WHOLE

PERSON CENTRED APPROACH

**FOSTERED A POSITIVE
MORE CREATIVE LEARNING APPROACH TO A SCENARIO**

**FEELING THAT THE PROCESS IS OPENED UP
RATHER THAN CLOSED DOWN !**



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