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.
Workshop Outline

• 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:

- **Formulate multiple Problems** – TRIGGER Or SCENARIO is presented

- **Self Directed Learning** By Identifying learning needs and research topics

- **Sharing the research & knowledge with the group**

- **Evidencing the decision making**

- **Evaluation of group & outcome of problem solving process**

- **Re-enter PBL cycle**

**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 New York)
4 Years of evaluating the initial learning needs for this trigger/scenario

- 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 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)
Appreciative Inquiry

• **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
What is AI used for

• **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

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY is a process by which one approaches problems with an appreciative eye (focus on positive)

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)

DISCOVER (INQUIRE)
‘What gives life’
The best of what is APPRECIATING

DREAM (IMAGINE)
‘What might be’ Envisioning Results

DESIGN (INNOVATE)
‘What should be the ideal’ CO-CONSTRUCTING

DESTINY (IMPLEMENT)
‘How to empower, learn and adjust/improve SUSTAINING
Proposed new PBL cycle at Cardiff University:

**Appreciative Inquiry (4 I Model)** (Stage 1)

**INQUIRE** - Appreciating and Valuing
The Best of ‘What Is’

**IMAGINE** - ‘What Might Be’ (3)

**INNOVATE** - Dialoguing ‘What Should Be’

**IMPLEMENT** - Innovating ‘What Will Be’

**Problem Solving**

Identification of problem (2)
Learning Needs & Analysis (4)
Action Planning/intervention (6)
Possible Solutions

**Evaluation & Audit**

One way in which the poles can be brought into relationship is through the concept of PARADOX

Ref: adapted from Cooperrider & Strivasta (1987)
THE THREE EYES OF THE OT PROFESSIONAL

ANALYTICAL
APPRECIATIVE
CREATIVE

(AND THREE ASSOCIATED LEVELS OF LISTENING)

(Machon. 2010)
THE ANALYTICAL EYE

**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)
THE GIFT AND THE EDGE OF THE ANALYTICAL EYE and EAR

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
THE APPRECIATIVE EYE

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
The role of the appreciative eye in OT practice

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
2\textsuperscript{nd} 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
THE CREATIVE EYE

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
INITIAL OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE

- 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)
Methodology

• 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
Main themes

• 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)
Evaluation following the new approach

- 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
Additional learning needs

- 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?
Learning Needs

- 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
Myalgic Encephalopathy (ME)

- ENTREPREUNER EYE!
  - Potential consultancy role for OT (Private Practice)
  - OT as a Life Coach
  - Role for OTs in NHS, LA and third sector
Outcome of the learning process to:

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!
References