



Growing Hope: Learning in Community (A Teacher Workshop)

8:15 am Welcome and overview of the day

8:30 am Introduction of facilitator and of participants to each other

In groups of 6, please have each person share:

- Something you have discovered brings learning alive within a community
- A hope you have for today
- A current question that is a growing edge for you as a teacher

Write each on a post it note and post on the wall ‘maps’

Plenary: Debrief group introductions and clarify expectations for the day

9:15 am “The Landscape” **Bliss Browne, Imagine Chicago**
Overview of the day and of Appreciative Inquiry

Words Create Worlds: Hope Rocks

Share in small groups the language of learning: Design a question that evokes wonder... that opens the mind and heart to learning...that expands imagination about learning...

The story of Imagine Chicago www.imaginechicago.org

- How do we listen to the future and build on the best of the past?
- Reinvigorating schools and families as centers of learning and imagination; Renewing the heart of the teacher

The fundamental approach:

- *Understand* (what is): Inquiry about what has energy, value and meaning and is a trustworthy foundation on which to build
- *Imagine* (what can be): Dialogue about those best practices so it stretches what others see as possible.
- *Create* (what will be): Practical action including accountable roles and structures within which those values/goals can be realized

1:1 please share with a colleague your “internal” conversation so far – What has provoked, inspired, interested you? What connections have you made? What new questions do you now have?

10:30 am Coffee Break

10:45 am “The Roots” of Appreciative Inquiry: Theory and Key Practices
Principles of social construction

Overview of AI theory and practice

- Person who sets the question sets the direction and has the power of a change agent
- Images of the future are powerful. We move in the direction of what we can imagine
- Positive communication is essential to individual and community mental health and requires practice—we and our students are surrounded by culturally dominant negative vocabulary and mindsets
- Positive images of young people (and a positive environment in which they can learn) are essential to creating a social culture in which they are enabled to make a contribution worthy of their potential
- Human systems want to move in a positive direction, like plants seeking the sun. Positive questions and feedback create energy. Like the sun, they make it possible to live and to grow
- Building affirmative competence in students may be one of the most important life skills you can model and help them develop

“The Soil”

The Current Cultural Context

- The challenge of cynicism, problem solving and deficit vocabulary
Moving beyond mindsets of scarcity and limited resources.

Problem Solving vs. Appreciative Inquiry

The Key Stages of Appreciative Inquiry: interactive activities for

1. Setting affirmative topics (example: crime vs. community safety)
2. Creating open-ended constructive questions that discover what’s working (the power of “um”)
3. Provocative propositions that stretch our hope and imagination
4. Moving from inquiry into action

For more on AI : appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu

11:30 am Activity #1: An Appreciative Inquiry into Learning Spaces

12:15 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Debrief earlier inquiry

In plenary Gather themes. Moving from Idea to Action
What helps us live on the generative edge of chaos?

“The Fruit”: Creating An Atmosphere of Inquiry

2:45 pm Moving to Action: “Sowing the Seeds”

3:30 pm Break

3:45 pm Reflections, Revisiting our Hopes, Closing Learning Circle

5:00 pm Adjourn

An Appreciative Inquiry into Learning Spaces Activity #1



Please take 30 minutes to complete this interview with a partner. Find a place you would like to be together. Each person should spend 15 minutes interviewing their partner and taking notes of what he/she says, Then switch roles. Listen actively like you would to a close friend.

This interview is a chance to share ideas about what sorts of spaces and conditions make learning possible.

- As you think back on your experience as a learner, what stands out for you as a high point when you were especially alive and engaged and learned something especially important to you?
 - Describe the space in which this learning took place.
 - What were some of the internal/external factors that made it possible for you to learn?
 - What does this experience suggest to you about how context influences learning?
 - What single change do you feel would bring the school more alive as a learning community?
 - How can you help it happen? Who else would need to be involved?

Creating An Atmosphere of Inquiry : Activity #2

“Experiencing Creativity: Lessons from Science” (*Resource: A Simpler Way*)

Small Group Activity: In groups of 3.

Look at these (or your own) lessons from science about how life comes into being.

Examples:

- *“Everything is in a constant process of discovery and creating”*
- *“Life uses messes to get to well-ordered solutions”*
- *“Life is intent on finding what works, not what’s “right” (no permanently right answers)”*
- *“Life creates more possibilities as it engages with opportunities”*
- *“Life is attracted to order”*
- *“Life organizes around identity”*
- *“Everything participates in the creation and evolution of its neighbors”*

*Pick several of the themes to discuss. How are these lessons manifest in your school at the moment?

*Name 3 elements you consider essential to creating an atmosphere of inquiry in your school. How can these be further developed? What structures (mental and institutional structures) help creativity and imagination flourish? Examples?

*Each team creates a brief summary and presents their recommendations in an imaginative format (song, dance, poem, picture, sculpture, etc)



“To welcome a child is to accept responsibility for another person, to welcome the unfolding mystery of another’s life as your own. To welcome a child is to give priority to the unpredictability of another life, to tend it, to allow your own plans to be altered, even set aside, because of another’s need. To welcome a child is to learn to think and speak in response to a different and constantly changing worldview, to be outside of your own frame of reference. You learn patience and judgment and are confronted with your own very real and heretofore untested limitations. To welcome a child is to recognize the surprising expansiveness of your own capacity to love and to confront the shattering truth of your own violence and self-centeredness. To welcome a child is to have your heart stretched, made capable of loving in a new and unrepeatable way.”

-Sacred Dwelling, A Matter of the Heart