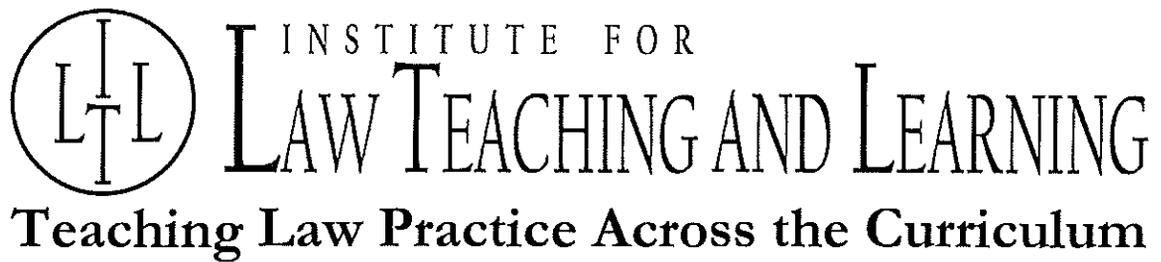


Workshop 4D

Appreciative Inquiry: Discovering and Learning From Our Strengths as Teachers

Emily L. Randon
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Session 4 Workshop – D ~ Friday, June 18, 2010 – 9:30-10:45 a.m.

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Introduction: This interactive session will use the Appreciative Inquiry model of organizational assessment to provide law teachers the opportunity to **identify, share and capture best teaching practices**, to be engaged in thought about the legal education teaching community at large, and to take an active and direct role in shaping their own professional development.

Often as professors we are reluctant to assess our approach to teaching, and even more reluctant to change our teaching strategies. This is understandable. In legal education, we often view “assessment” or “change” as a negative; as if every problem (or even we ourselves) will be scrutinized under a microscope, and deficiencies found and documented. We have learned from student evaluations that we are “satisfactory” in some areas, and “need improvement” in others. Still, we are hesitant to change our strategies, as the very idea of “change” can instill a belief that there is some existing deficiency to improve which suggests our current practices are inadequate.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) provides an alternative approach to assessment and change. Instead of looking for deficiencies, AI focuses on existing strengths and from these creates pathways toward an even better future. This table below illustrates the difference between a deficit based model and one based on strengths:

Problem Solving	Appreciative Inquiry
“Felt Need” – Identification of Problem	Appreciating and valuing the best of “What is”
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning “What Might Be”
Analysis of Possible Solutions	Dialoguing “What Should Be”
Action Planning	Innovating “What Will Be”
Assumes: organization is a problem to be solved	Assumes: organization is a mystery to be embraced
Back Door: What’s in the way of what you want?	Front Door: What do you want to create?

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND LAW TEACHING

AI was born from the positive psychology and organizational change movement in the 1980's and originally developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Case Western Reserve University. While it was not necessarily designed to assess educators (or education), a growing number of institutions have utilized AI principles to assess and enhance educational programs and faculties.

Ap-pre'ci-ate, v., 1. Valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life to living systems. 2. To increase in value.

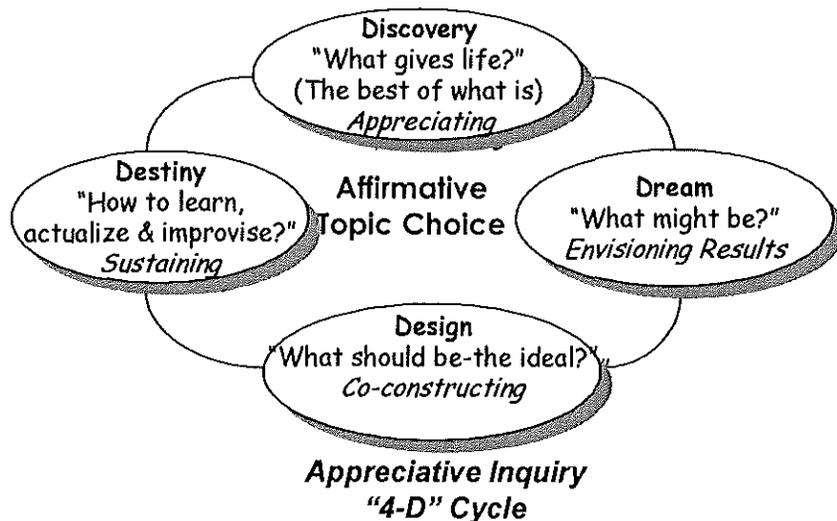
In-quire', v., 1. The act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities.

For our purposes in looking at our best teaching practices and the future of legal education, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) operates from the following assumptions:

- ❑ In every school or individual within that school something works and can be valued
- ❑ What we focus on becomes the reality we create
- ❑ The language we use creates our reality
- ❑ The act of asking a question begins the change
- ❑ People have more confidence to journey to the future when they carry forward the best parts of the past

THIS WORKSHOP SESSION AT THIS CONFERENCE

In this setting, AI asks participants to Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver a new way of assessing the education of our law students and our own teaching practices. Through a series of "interviews", stories and descriptions of excellent moments, we aim to craft a vision for an ideal classroom, learning environment and engaged teacher.



MY ACHIEVEMENT

An Achievement I am proud of
A Success. Something I'm Pleased I Did.

What made me do it

How I prepared

How I felt
beforehand

People who helped me

What happened first?

What happened next?

How people helped me

How did it turn out?

How I felt
afterward

What went particularly
well?

What this achievement
says about me

What helped it go so well?

How can I have more
achievements like this?

What else would I like to achieve?

What are the Next Steps?
What?

Who? When?