THE USE OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH TO UNLEASH THE TALENTS AMONG SELECTED UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS OF SOUTHVILLE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AND COLLEGES

Joanne Rieta Miranda, Ph. D
Associate professor
College of Education
Southville International School and Colleges
joanne_miranda@southville.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach in designing activities for underachieving students of SISC. It aims to incorporate AI principles to help underachieving students believe in themselves, as inspired by the success stories of famous scientists i.e. Albert Einstein and Thomas Alva Edison, Business tycoons i.e. Singapore's Adam Khoo and other prominent names in the society who were ones underachievers. The 4-D Phases of AI such as Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny were integrated. The researcher made use of Qualitative-Descriptive design. Purposive sampling was used in choosing the respondents. The respondents are Education major students who are not doing well in school. All of them are transferees. Three are from a popular College in Manila and 1 from Las Piñas. The Education major students were asked to research about 10 Life testimonies of successful people who were once underachievers. It is their project in their Facilitating Learning class. They created a 5-10 minute video out of it and they presented their output in class. The researcher interviewed the students regarding their reflection about the videos. The researcher asked the students to create a journal that indicates the following: 1. Discover (strength and weaknesses in academics) 2. Dream (Their plans for their future in the next 5-10 years. They specified their plan in terms of career, family, etc. It also includes their dream travel destinations, dream house and lot, etc. 3. Design (How to make their dreams come true) 4. Destiny (execute their plans to make their dreams turn into reality). It was made clear to the researcher that underachieving students lost their self-confidence because of lack of affirmation from their parents, siblings and even their former teachers. The affirmation of people in authority is a crucial factor developing confidence among underachieving students. Parents and teachers must work hand in hand to motivate and not to discourage underachieving students. The underachieving students were inspired by the life testimonies of the famous personalities; they kept their journals as they step towards fulfilling their dreams. Student A is using her talent in the arts as she makes crafts and artworks for her students. Student B discovered her talent in baking and teaching children. Student C used to be very shy and timid but now, he is well adjusted to his environment. He gets along well with his classmates and he graduated last March 2015 and passed the Licensure Examination for teachers. Student D is very good in dancing and she is now sharing her talents with her students. The respondents are still a work in progress. Follow up investigations, tracer studies are recommended to gather more meaningful results.

Key words: *Appreciative Inquiry, Discover, Design, Deliver, Destiny, Affirmation*


1. Introduction

Appreciative inquiry involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a student's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties, their essential contributions and achievements (Cooperrider, 2001) as cited by (Fisher, 2008).

The researcher aimed to motivate underachieving students to develop their self-confidence and discover where they are good at. Using the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry, the students will make ways not only to dream but also to create action plans and execute their plans one step at a time. Students are encouraged to take risks without fear of failure.

Cooperrider & Whitney (2008) enumerated the five basic principles of Appreciative Inquiry. First, is the Constructionist Principle - Wherein children learn at its best when they portray the active roles of a designer and constructor of their ideas. Second, is the Principle of simultaneity- where AI involves the art and practice of questioning. Third, is the Poetic principle- wherein learners are expected to interpret and analyze the story and the testimonies of the successful people who were once underachievers. Fourth principle is the Anticipatory principle. This is when the student imagines themselves enjoying the fruits of their labor and the fulfillment of their dreams. Lastly is the Positive principle. Individuals and organizations have hope for a better way of life when one thinks positively about the future.

2. The 4 – D Phases of Appreciative Inquiry
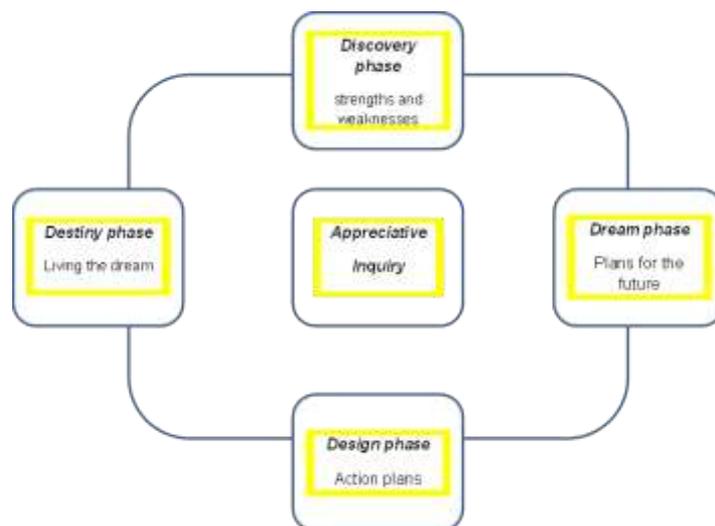
Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the study
The 4-D Phases of Appreciative Inquiry

The four phases of Appreciative Inquiry are as follows:

1.   **The Discovery Phase**: This phase consists of participants seeking to search out and examine the best things about them. It includes identifying patterns, themes, possibilities, strengths, passions, unique attributes.

2.   **The Dream Phase**: This phase consists of the participants attempting to envision a positive future. They attempt to use their best to shape and support their future hope. It includes creating bold statements of ideal possibilities based on what works.

3.   **The Design Phase**: This phase allows participants to begin to think of strategies to implement Dream Phase discoveries. It is often necessary to discuss and determine changes in order to facilitate any implementation.

4.   **The Deliver or Destiny Phase**: is the implementation phase and it requires a great deal of planning and preparation.

In a research conducted by Doveston & Keenaghan (2006), the 4-D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry served as a guide in identifying, acknowledging, and amplifying the skills important to improving social dynamics within the classroom. They discussed the methodological issues which rose from this collaborative, participative form of inquiry. The results from the project show that the interpersonal skills of the students were improved.

Engaged in the process, the students willingly wrote and spoke about their experiences of the course, constructing and co-constructing ideas that were professional in nature on one hand and deeply personal on the other. The process and outcomes affirmed the application and power of this strengths-based approach to uncover experiential and interpretive data pertinent to the ongoing development and sustainability of an academic course. Kung, S, Giles, D. and Hagan, B. (2013)

3. Statement of the Problem

Appreciative Inquiry approach was used to answer the following questions:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the respondents in terms of academics? (Discover)

2. What is their dream profession and why? (Dream)

3. What do they love to do on their spare time?

4. How do they see themselves after graduation? After 5 or more years? (Design)

5. How are they going to fulfill their dreams? (Destiny)

4. Research Design

The researcher made use of Qualitative-Descriptive design. All of the respondents were enrolled in Facilitating Learning as their major subject. All the respondents were asked to create an infomercial, where they would feature 10 famous failures in the field of education. Likewise, they answered a self-made instrument that includes the 4-D phase of Appreciative inquiry: 1. Discover- where the students have to discover their learning styles, their strengths and weaknesses 2. Dream- what they want to be in five or ten years 3. Design- their action plans and 4. Destiny- how to live their dream. If the answers are not comprehensive enough there will be a follow up interview to gain more meaningful insights.

5. Results and Discussion

Student A

Student A transferred to SISC last June 2010. She is dyslexic thus; she had difficulty with reading and spelling. She is very good in drawing and other forms of artworks. She wanted to be an animator. She wants to go to Spain. She is now using her talent in teaching her students. She is now on OJT and she conducted a thesis about using Appreciative Inquiry in teaching Art among Dyslexic students. She graduated last March 2016 and she is currently having her own tutorial center.

Student B

Student B transferred to SISC November of 2010. She had a hard time in Math and Science subjects. She loves to bake and she enjoys teaching little kids. She is now teaching full time in a tutorial center in Alabang. She is still in the process of developing her craft in terms of teaching as well as baking. She graduted last march 2016 and she is currently opened her own preschool.

Student C

Student C transferred to SISC last 2011. He is a bit shy when he entered SISC. Most of the time, he preferred to stay in the corner the whole period. He is not confident in terms of oral and written forms of communication. After a year, Student C was able to adjust to his environment. He gets along well with his classmates. He graduated last March 2015 and he passed the Licensure Examination for teachers. He is now teaching full time among 1st grade students.

Student D

Student D is also a transferee in SISC last June 2011. She said that she doesn't really like her course. She is very good in dancing. She finished her on-the-job training and she is now sharing her talents with her students in the US.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

All of the respondents have similar issues with people in authority. They said that parents and even former teachers sometimes don't look up to them. They lack the affirmation from people who are dear to them.

With the use of Appreciative inquiry approach, the respondents were inspired and motivated by the life testimonies of Successful people in the society who used to be underachievers. Using the 4-D phases of appreciative inquiry, students dared to discover their strengths, dream, and design ways on how to make their dreams into reality and deliver, where they start to make ways of fulfilling their dreams.

The respondents are still a work in progress. Follow up investigations, tracer studies are recommended to gather more meaningful results.

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