








## Course aims, structure and learning approach

### Course aims




1) The course is designed to provide an introduction to:

-  Appreciative inquiry as an approach to change
-  the origin of Appreciative inquiry, core ideas and principles
-  Ai perspectives and theory that you can apply to everyday life
-  the five inquiry phases of the Stem and Leaf cycle-of-change

2) To provide learning material that will help you to:

-  *change* the way you view the world
-  *bring* more light and positivity into your life
-  *engage* in conversations that can generate constructive outcomes

3) For you to gain practical experience that demonstrates the core strengths of Ai:

-  that in every situation (however difficult it may appear) there is something positive or good to be learned
-  that the questions asked in every situation determine what is found
-  that Appreciative inquiry enables participants to discover the potential for positive change and how to make it happen

## Course structure

The course is designed as a six-week online course with learning material organised into six short Modules comprising a number of discrete Units of learning. Each Module is the equivalent of a half-day of face-to-face training. Learning Units comprise: visual presentations, self-reflective and one-to-one or group practical exercises, readings, reflection and an online discussion.

The *Becoming an Appreciative inquirer* online course has been designed for individuals to join with other learners in an asynchronous online environment. The course start and finish dates are pre-defined and materials are released on a scheduled weekly basis. Alternatively some learners may prefer an individual self-paced learning option with flexible start and finishing times and provision for this has been made. Opportunity to join the group online discussion forum is available for both options.

A *free sample of the course* material and structure is made available to give an insight on the learning approach and subject matter. You are encouraged to try this out before signing up for the full six-week course.

Included in the free sample material is an *introductory Ai exercise* to help you notice what happens to yourself and others when you begin to create appreciative conversations. In the full six-week course during *Week one Module 1* you will also find a practical exercise to illustrate the 'appreciative mindset' at work and the results that are generated. Both exercises will help you to understand something of the theoretical basis of Ai. They will also provide you with some insights on the difference that Ai can bring to everyday conversations and to one's view of the world.

During *Week two* of the course you will be guided through the theoretical aspect of the Ai change cycle, presented as the *Stem and Leaf cycle-of-change in five Ai phases*, using a sample Appreciative inquiry in the format of an Ai protocol. This format is designed specifically for conducting an Ai conversation or interview. The questions *flow* in such a way as to help to identify the specific changes needing to be made in respect of the topic being inquired into.

Once you have the confidence to work with Ai, experience its power and benefits and understand how the Stem and Leaf cycle-of-change works, you will likely be ready to move on in *Week three* to practise with another Ai protocol on a different topic. At this point you are asked both to adapt and try out the exercises with members of your family, your friends or work colleagues.

Following this stage, in [Week four](#), you will then be ready to devise your own Ai protocols to apply to conversations on topics that you select. You may choose issues that you most care about, or situations in your personal or work life that you would like to change, or long-standing problems that you would like to tackle in an appreciative way. The material in [Week five](#) focusses on the core skills of doing Ai: Reframing problems into appreciative opportunities and how to craft appreciative questions to create Ai conversations. These skills lie at the heart of Ai practice and in this module we will focus on them to help you to become more confident in the practice of Appreciative inquiry.

In [Week six](#) you will be given some resource material to help you plan and implement a more substantial (than one-to-one conversations) Ai project. The resources provided will guide you through each Ai phase of the Stem and Leaf cycle-of-change. The final discussion forum covering [Week six](#) material will focus on this exercise. The Course Director and your peers will be available to give feedback and advice on your Ai project plan. You will also be provided with further links and resources for you to continue to learn about and practise your Ai.

To support you further in developing an Ai project a separate extended online discussion forum is offered approximately two or three weeks after the end of the six-week course. This forum will be open for a two-week period. This allows you some time to develop your Ai ideas and practise and gain advice and feedback from other course members and the Course Director about how to implement your Ai project.

We will conclude the course with the opportunity to reflect on what's next for your development within this exciting Ai field and to give final appreciation to your peers and those who have enhanced your learning about Ai.

A formal course evaluation will be available to invite your feedback about your experience of the course. Your suggestions to further enhance the course for the benefit of future participants are also warmly encouraged.

## Learning approach

People learn best in different ways at different times and rates and will prefer different styles of learning over others (experiential, rather than visual imagery, sound or text, for example). Online learning gives the opportunity to embrace such diversity. This course offers a mix of learning delivery styles, but in the end, it is the actual *doing* of Ai, gaining

experience through practice and feedback, that will help you to *Become an Appreciative inquirer*.

### Rationale for weekly sessions

Research shows, and it is my experience as an educator, that where there is a structure to the learning with a defined start and finish time, learners are more likely to engage actively with the material and complete the course. I shall encourage and guide you, therefore, to follow the format as designed and to take the time each week to practise and join in with the discussion forum.

The course material is divided into weekly sessions to give you time to digest the content, to try out the practical work over a few days or a week, and to have time to check in with fellow learners in the discussion forum.

### Solo versus social learning

For those of you that prefer solo rather than social learning the course will also work for you as the practical exercises are designed for self-analysis and practice as well as for group work. You may choose how far you extend the Ai practice beyond your own experience to include others in one-to-one or one-to-many conversations. The core benefits of Ai, are of course, magnified as the ideas and practice spread through social interaction. The individual who simply responds to others in a more appreciative way will likely experience and generate positive changes.

### Individual self-paced learning preference

Although the course has been established as a group learning activity, it is recognised that some learners do prefer 'to go it alone'. There is, therefore, an option to take the course as an individual self-paced learning package with flexible starting and finishing points to suit your circumstances. The opportunity to join in the Discussion forums at the appropriate weekly stage of the group course will also be available to you. You may also join one of the extended two-week Discussion forums to discuss your Ai project at a time relevant to your study and within a six-month study period.

