

Words Create Worlds, January to May 2008



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We're going online!

Company of Experts.net will soon be offering workshops, training and other programs online! If you or your organization are going Green, then Company of Experts.net will be providing training solutions to help meet your training goals. We will be using a new software product that has more stability, has versatility and is easier to use. We have tested many products and this one exceeds what the others offer. The commitment we make is to offer our high quality programs with qualified, experienced trainers at an affordable price. Be Green – Train in Place with Company of Experts.net! We will be sending more information to you soon.

Looking for Hosts

We are planning our Winter, Spring, and Summer 2009 calendar, if you would like to host an AIFT or other AI workshop or training, just let us know how we may help.

AIFT Schedule

June 17-20, 2008

October 13-16, 2008

November 3-6, 2008

AB Tech Community College, Asheville NC

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Walnut Creek, CA

Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield, MA

Their Stories of Success

Congratulations to nine newly certified AI Facilitators:

Diane Palter Gill, North Shore Community College; **Phyllis Gleason**, Middlesex Community College; **Judy Gould**, North Shore Community College; **Judith Kamber**, Northern Essex Community College; **Linda Meccouri**, Springfield Technical Community

College; **Amy Seiberlich**, Leadership Institute for Interpreters, **Mary Wacker**, MB Wacker Associates

Diane Palter Gill and Judy Gould

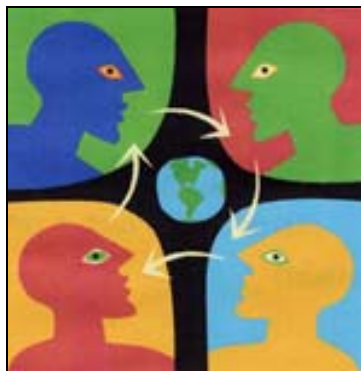
Diane Palter Gill and **Judy Gould** co-facilitated a summit that included the college vice president and division deans. After attending the AIFT **Diane** and **Judy** developed their plan to introduce AI to a small group with a specific purpose.

Working with their core group, the positive topic of inquiry was “the most positive and energizing experience working with a marketing initiative.” Using face to face paired interviews, the interview guide framed the questions using the positive topic.

Collaboration, An Invitation to Openness, Respect/Trust the experts/No egos, Commitment, Support for the Vision, Collective Ownership and Shared Mission all emerged as Life-Giving Forces that the group wanted to create more of. “We join hands in harmony. We STEP to the same beat. We include everyone in the dance (the process).”

Diane and **Judy** wished that this summit would have as positive an experience as they both had in the AIFT. They learned, in the process, that the positive outcome followed their lead. Their “personal best” experience was observing the creative process and the positive enthusiasm in a group which they had thought might be resistant.

Diane and **Judy** attended the AIFT, NECC with trainers Charles Miller and Jeanie Cockell.



Phyllis Gleason

Phyllis launched a year-long institute for mid-career, full-time faculty with an AI Summit. To prepare for the topic, she interviewed all of the Academic Deans at Middlesex Community College asking them what kinds of experiences they would like their faculty to have during the institute.

The positive topic was “*Creating Spectacular Success in the Classroom.*” Using the modified Interview Guide, the participants conducted face-to-face, paired interviews which **Phyllis** described as “incredibly powerful.”

The group identified the “Life-Giving Forces” as: Encouraging curiosity; Learning is an ongoing process; Honest and open communication; Serving others’ and, Valuing inclusion.

The group developed their “Provocative Propositions:

At Middlesex Community College our mission is to encourage curiosity through exploration and discovery of yourself, your community, and your world. (This group used T.S. Eliot’s quote, “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”)

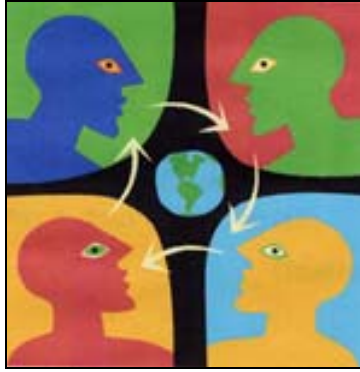
At Middlesex Community College we are passionate about our professions. We seek to make a difference in the world by promoting community, valuing inclusion, serving the greater good, and cultivating growth of self and others.

These are the “Strategic Intentions” that the group developed to realize the Provocative Propositions they created.

- Share best practices
- Work on a “Day of Service”
- Model behavior for students
- Adopt an Appreciative Inquiry Approach to our professional lives
- Do Classroom Observations
- Share curriculum/methods
- Use Small Group Instructional Feedback (SGIF) technique

Their work is on-going to realize their commitments. **Phyllis** reports that her wish was to “trust the process!” She reports that her personal best experience was in witnessing, first hand, the ...magic. **Phyllis** was amazed at the accomplishment in such a short period of time.

Phyllis attended the AIFT at Northeastern Community College in MA with Charles Miller and Jeanie Cockell as the trainer/Facilitators.



Judith Kamber

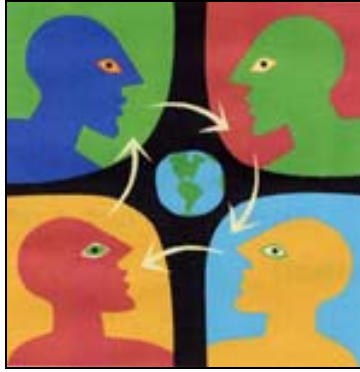
Judith Kamber worked with a University in South Africa to complete her practicum report. With more than 100 years in operation, the University is a multicultural (English and Afrikaans) institution serving over 16,000 students. Offering a full range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, the University is an important center for research and has close ties with a number of universities around the world.

Judith was invited to go to South Africa to help them on project and she suggested they use Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to explore Leadership Development at the University. The planning was done by email given the geographic and time differences with the small core group.

The positive topic was “**Encouraging Leadership at All Levels of the University.**” To facilitate conversation, on the day of the summit, the **Judith** spent some time with each person asking them the question - What do you consider to be great leadership and what are the most important qualities of a leader? When each person had spoken and their highlights posted to a flip chart, they began to work on the interview guide.

Judith reports that you need to be ready for the “mess.” Although paired interviews had been the intention, the participants wanted to hear what others had to say. Although new to the Ai world, **Judith** quickly made the adjustment and conducted interviews using their modified interview guide so that all could listen. Great going **Judith!**

In 2007, **Judith** coordinated an AI Summit at Northern Essex Community College designed to lead them through the development of their Strategic Plan. Also in 2007 and building upon their strategic plan Northern Essex Community College hosted the AIFT. NECC made a commitment to the training by sending a team of nine faculty and staff members bringing to their number to 10 facilitators on campus including Vice President Lane Glenn (an AIFT Trainer and Expert on Call!). Their mighty team of ten has been organizing to provide Appreciative Inquiry workshops on their campus. **Judith** is appreciative of the expertly facilitated AIFT by Jeanie Cockell and Charles Miller.

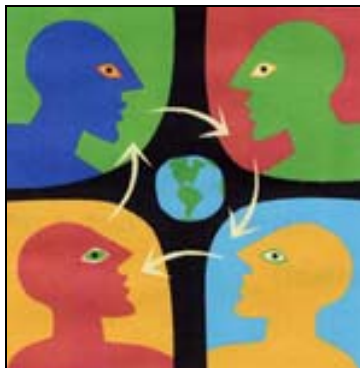


Linda Meccouri

Linda Meccouri, after attending the NECC AIFT began introducing AI and the AI interview process as a methodology for collecting stories and data relating to student success. With the success and energy that has been created, Springfield Technical Community College will be hosting an AIFT this fall.

For their inquiry they used face to face paired interviews. The life giving forces were about relationships faculty, staff and with each other, as well as opportunities for service. Linda told us “the room literally lit up when students shared their life giving force.” There was so much energy in the room that the students stayed for a long time after the initial session was over, creating shared images of a preferred future, making plans for service opportunities at the college and connecting in supportive ways.

Linda is grateful for the structure that is the foundation of AI – and calls the generic interview guide “simply elegant.” Her personal best experience was that the energy produced by the sharing of success stories was so palpable that people who were on their way to other places walked into our building to ask what was going on as if they were magnetically drawn to the positive energy. We were all so nourished by the stories of the students.”



Amy Seiberlich

Amy Seiberlich, facilitated an inquiry with members of the Denver, Colorado metro area Deaf community which included both Deaf and hearing as well as current

Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP) students at Front Range Community College (FRCC), former FRCC IPP students (now working as interpreters), Deaf individuals that utilize interpreting services and FRCC IPP faculty and staff. The core group selected the participants, developed the topic selection and approved the modified interview guide.

This project was to examine the issue of “attitude” in the field of interpreting, and to creatively explore ways to consciously perpetuate the “right attitude” in interpreter instruction and community support. This topic was chosen as a result of lengthy discussions about what “problem” the project hosts were working to address. This problem was then reframed into the positive statement above which served as the basis for the identification of three content areas critical to the development of interpreter attitude:

1. Classroom dynamics
2. Faculty support
3. Community/group membership

The interview process was conducted in two phases; the student phase, and the community phase. Both phases were conducted in exactly the same manner – after a brief introduction to AI and the purpose of the project participants took part in face to face interviews designed to identify moments in their past when they felt the most energy, enthusiasm and inspiration in the three key areas noted above. The students conducted paired interviews in spoken English; the community group conducted paired interviews in American Sign Language.

Amy says that her wish going in to this inquiry was that the outcome of this inquiry was that the outcome of this work be of value to the group. Amy told us she “encountered some resistance to employing AI for this project so my focus throughout the year long venture was to keep the group focused on the positive, life giving forces of their collective perspectives and experiences.”

Amy says her best experience facilitating was not just one experience, it happened several times. “People process information and experiences at different rates, but you can almost always visibly see the light bulb go off when a new understanding has sealed itself in someone’s being. There were multiple instances of that experience during the course of this project. That being said, there is one day that always makes me smile when I think about it; the day the group created visual representations of their dreams for the future. It was like being in a room of kindergartners – the room was buzzing with excitement and laughter – and the relief around being given permission to dream without limit was almost palpable. Amazing!”



Mary Wacker

Mary B. Wacker facilitated her practicum inquiry with a large Client Services Department which offers campus-wide technology to a university and has about 45 regular employees and 100 student employees. The newly formed department was looking to create “synergy” for positive client and co-worker relationships.

The focus group included 12 stakeholders including students, employees and managers. They developed the modified interview guide and the process for the inquiry. With scheduling challenges, the focus group conducted all of the interviews with members of the department who wished to participate. The title for the event was *Acknowledge Accomplishments, Build Our Future*.

The group renamed “Provocative Propositions” to “Preferred Futures” to address the campus sensitivity to harassment language. An example of their Preferred future:

We use the advantages of our organizational experience to provide a safety net for risk taking and exploration of emerging technologies.

We do this by appreciating the diversity of ideas and skills in our organization and encouraging staff to contribute based on their unique strengths and interests.

Mary cites her personal best experience as seeing their engagement and the ownership they took throughout the process. “I truly functioned as a guide helping them learn the process and then as a background facilitator as they took the process and ran with it.”

Would you like to be an Expert on Call?

The Company of Experts.net is looking for experienced AI Facilitators. Requirements include completing the AIFT program and certification; consulting experience using AI, training experience, training and/or education in adult learning theory; and references. For more information, please visit our website:
<http://www.companyofexperts.net/experts.html>

We are working on several projects and anticipate needing Appreciative Inquiry Facilitators in Washington D. C., Denver, Colorado and Little Rock, Arkansas.

If you have experience with strategic planning, accreditation, health care or feasibility studies we may have assignments in the future. We are planning on increasing the number of Experts on Call to meet client requests throughout the U.S. and internationally as well.

Words Create Worlds – Archive

You will find the archived editions of *Words Create Worlds* by using the link below.

http://centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/wcw_index.html

AIFT, Oklahoma Pictures online!

We have a new feature online and our first series up is from the AIFT in Oklahoma. We have the pictures, a short recap from the trainers – Kay Weiss and Charles Miller. Also added is a message board for short notes. We encourage you to check out the pictures and post a message if you like.

http://centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/tag/index_tag.php

Coming soon, AIFT, Northern Essex Community College, AIFT, Houston Community College and AIFT, Northwest Arkansas Community College

We congratulate each of the new Appreciative Inquiry Facilitators on a job well done. We look forward to hearing more stories of success!

Sincerely,

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