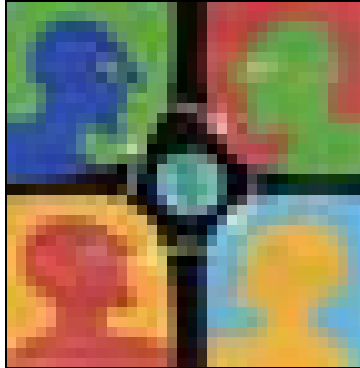


## Words Create Worlds, January 2007



Congratulations to four newly certified AI Facilitators: **Mark Connelly**, South Africa; **Shelley Roberts**, Washington State; and **Gayona Beckford-Barclay** and **Kelly Lemons**, both of Maryland. Before sharing their stories of success, here are a few announcements:

**February 15-16** - AI Conference, %Appreciative Inquiry: Creating Dynamic Destinies,+featuring Diana Whitney, Jim Ludema, and Gervase Bushe, Vancouver, BC. For more information, go to <http://www.tcf-ti.com/>

**February 20** - Call for Proposals deadline for the third International Appreciative Inquiry Conference, %The Power of Positive Change: A Symphony of Strengths,+ to be held September 16-19, 2007, Orlando, FL. This promises to be an exciting and inspiring conference featuring David Cooperrider, Martin Seligman, Marcus Buckingham and Jane Magruder Watkins. It also could feature YOU! For more information, go to <http://www.2007aiconference.com/>

**February 28 – March 3** . AIFT©, Houston. Take advantage of a greatly reduced %epeater+fee to re-energize your passion and deepen your understanding of Appreciative Inquiry or encourage a colleague to attend. <http://CenterforAppreciativeInquiry.net/>

**March 14-16** - For Academic Leaders, Department Chair Institute in Elgin, Illinois. <http://DepartmentChairInstitute.net/>

**AI Practitioner** is a quarterly newsletter that is filled with stories of success from a variety of domains. Information on subscribing (including a few free issues) is at <http://www.aipractitioner.com/>

**1,036 people** have now completed an AIFT©; 13% of them have gone on to complete a Practicum and Report to become officially certified as AI Facilitators by Company of Experts.net. ***It's never too late to complete!***

And, remember, if you need an AI Facilitator to help you co-facilitate an Inquiry, or other consulting services, just contact **Kathy Becker** at COE.net, [Kathy@coe.net](mailto:Kathy@coe.net), <http://CompanyofExperts.net/>

Last July, **Mark Connelly** <con@iafrica.com>, Turning Point Psychological Services, and Ally Connelly (certified last summer as an AI Facilitator) co-facilitated an Inquiry with the Children's Workshop, a Montessori pre school based in the suburb of Claremont in Cape Town, South Africa. Both Mark and Ally, husband and wife, participated in AIFT© Cape Town last March; the Trainers were Charles Miller and Nancy Stetson.

The Children's Workshop consists of about 120 children and 15 staff members. The school has developed a strong reputation in the 25 years it has operated. In 2005, the school appointed a new principal. Mark and Ally pulled together a Core Group of five people, including the new Principal, to help them get clear on a topic of Inquiry and modify the generic Interview Guide. They first met with the Core Group and brainstormed the problems, issues or gaps that were important to the school before helping the group reframe the issues into positive, affirmative topics of inquiry. The group finally decided that 'Truly Respectful Practices' was what they wanted to create more of at the school.

The Core Group then modified the interview guide to focus the inquiry on Truly Respectful Practices. Here are some highlights:

1. Tell me a story about a time when you felt truly respected and valued and your contribution was appreciated. Describe the situation. Who was involved? What happened? What were the circumstances or conditions that supported the experience of respect? What was significant or special about what happened? What did they do to make you feel respected? How did it affect you? What can we learn from this experience?

2. Let's talk for a moment about some things you value deeply; specifically the things you value about yourself; about the nature of your work; and about the Children's Workshop.

Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a person? as a member of the Children's Workshop?

When you are feeling best about working respectfully, what do you value about it?

What is it about the Children's Workshop that you value? What is the single most important thing that Children's Workshop has contributed to your life?

3. What do you think is the core value of the Children's Workshop? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make the Children's Workshop totally different than it currently is? Give some examples of how you experience those values.
4. If you had three wishes for creating a truly respectful environment at the Children's Workshop, what would they be?
5. Imagine arriving at work one day and seeing the Children's Workshop on the cover of TIME magazine. Inside is a story about our school being the model for exemplary respectful education. How does the cover headline read? What is the picture? What does the story inside say about how we got there? How did you contribute? How will you celebrate?

The group used face-to-face paired interviews for the inquiry. Staying in their pairs, they then formed three small groups. After hearing each others' stories and identifying the life-giving forces in the stories, each group developed a visual, then a verbal Provocative Proposition to create more of the life-giving forces that support truly respectful practices.

They were then inspired to commit themselves to some specific actions for realizing the dream or vision. For follow-up, the new Principal agreed to meet individually with each staff member on a regular basis. Also, a group volunteered to coordinate a regular staff fun social event. One person from each of the three small groups volunteered to be leaders of the initiatives, with one person agreeing to serve as the convenor of the three leaders for regular meetings to notice and celebrate progress. Also, Mark and Ally committed themselves to meeting with these leaders on at least two occasions to facilitate a feedback process of 'what's working'. This will create further opportunities for appreciative inquiries into further topics.

Mark's reflections: The more I facilitate appreciative interventions the more I marvel at the willingness of people to engage with the process and the more I realise my role as a facilitator of a process, and not a 'doer', or 'teller' of how things should be. One impression I was left with after this inquiry is the powerful effect of the 'whole' inquiry process, rather than this being a sum of its parts. The inquiry as a whole had a powerful effect on participants individually, and also on the whole group of staff of a school. I think that what it is that creates this effect is elusive. There are hints of what might contribute to it, but I just can't put my finger on it. It's a bit like an individual therapy process - is change or movement occurring because we have made this commitment to meet, is it what I contribute to the process, or what you contribute, is it the process we engage in? It is all of these, and not just one. My role as a facilitator of an experience is put into perspective, and in ways, the inquiry, or experience is greater than me.

Mark also said, %had a number of 'personal best' experiences in this inquiry. One of these was when the groups shared their visual presentations and then shared their written provocative propositions. The provocative propositions were so amazing and I felt relief, and also a great sense of 'they've got it and now they are running with it'. Another ('personal best') was facilitating this inquiry with Ally. This inquiry represented the first time we have worked together on a common project, something we have been aiming towards for many years.+

**Shelley Roberts** <[sroberts@companiesarepeopletoo.com](mailto:sroberts@companiesarepeopletoo.com)>, President of Companies are People, Too in Bothell, Washington, participated in AIFT© Longview in September 2006. The Trainers were Charles Miller and Kay Weiss. Shelley then successfully facilitated an inquiry with an international company. Unfortunately for us, Shelley does not have permission to share her story. Congratulations anyway, Shelley!

**Gayona Beckford-Barclay** <[GBeckford@ccbcmd.edu](mailto:GBeckford@ccbcmd.edu)>, Assistant Director of International Education and Multicultural Learning, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and **Kelly Lemons** <[KLemons@ccbcmd.edu](mailto:KLemons@ccbcmd.edu)>, Coordinator of Equity Programming, both at the Community College of Baltimore County, co-facilitated an Appreciative Inquiry Summit at CCBC on the topic of Global Education in November of 2006. They both participated in AIFT© Baltimore in December 2005; the Trainers were Earl Bloor and Nancy Stetson.

The inquiry involved a cross-section of participants from within CCBC as well as stakeholders from the local community. Participants mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know people from different arenas, e.g., local government, community, etc. They also enjoyed going through the AI cycle, making significant connections, and coming up with Provocative Propositions and inspired action steps.

One of the Provocative Propositions they created was, %We dream of a world where the following is true:

- o Our institution is globally oriented
- o We are committed to developing true global citizens
- o Language and culture are infused in all aspects of education
- o Everyone has the opportunity of international exchange and experiential learning
- o International understanding is fostered through profound international and intercultural experiences

Our goal is to achieve this dream.+

A second Provocative Proposition stated that, %CCBC's commitment to Global Education fosters curricular and co-curricular experiences that build the

relationships necessary to prepare students to be global citizens who can effectively participate in a complex and diverse society.+

CCBC used the Provocative Propositions as mission and vision statements in a Spring 2006 Global Education Advisory Board Proposal document.

Gayona and Kelly were moved by the sharing of information amongst the groups. Additionally, there was a collective passion within the total group regarding intercultural competency as well as global awareness. By the end of the day, there had been some powerful ideas created that would help increase global awareness.

As always, I hope you continue to be as inspired by these stories of success as I am so that, together, we can keep shifting our paradigm from problems to ***possibilities!*** Together, through our conversations with each other, our words, we can create the kind of world in which we wish to live.

Best wishes,



[Nancy Stetson](#)

Editor, Words Create Worlds  
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