Briefing Paper Template
Seminar Series 2011:

Submission Date

Please submit the completed briefing paper to seminarseries@heacademy.ac.uk within two months of delivering the seminar.

Aims & Outputs

Please consider the following when completing your briefing paper:

The aims of the Briefing Paper are to:
1   Summarise the key issues presented at the seminar, including the implications of research/evaluation evidence for practice.
2   Stimulate discussion, share practice and support the sector's access to relevant research/evaluation evidence.

The briefing paper is designed to accommodate the following types of seminar:
1   Those describing findings from research or evaluation projects (either completed or in-progress) and their implications for practice;
2   Those describing the application of research and/or evaluation evidence to practice

The Briefing Paper Template on pages 2-4 outlines the basic requirements for the briefing paper and is meant to assist host institutions in summarising the seminar outcomes and also enable a consistent approach across the seminar series.

If you wish to provide any suggestions for how the template might be improved please email seminarseries@heacademy.ac.uk.

Please note the briefing paper will be disseminated through the Academy's EvidenceNet service. For further details on this service please visit the below web link:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/evidencenet

1. Background information	
Seminar Title:	Appreciative Inquiry: Translating theory to practice
Institution(s):	**Cardiff University**
Author(s):	**Deb Hearle, Gwilym Roberts & Steve Whitcombe** (15th February 2012)
Email(s):	**HearleD@cf.ac.uk , RobertsGW@cf.ac.uk , & whitcombes@cf.ac.uk**

2. Abstract:

The seminar was divided into 4 parts: To set the scene, Problem Based Learning (PBL) was introduced via a presentation of a recent doctoral study which explored the different perceptions of A 'level and Access students of the use of PBL.

The remainder of the session focussed on the theory and application of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Basic principles were outlined together with examples of ways AI can be applied in the classroom and in practice. This was supported by evidence from a second doctoral study and illustrations of the integration of AI and problem based learning.

Prior to a final discussion, an example of a Level 6 module designed to explore and develop management and entrepreneurial skills of final level occupational therapy students was used to demonstrate innovation in learning and teaching using AI. Examples of questions linked to each of the stages of AI were presented together with potential challenges and outputs.

The session concluded with deliberation on the use of AI across a variety of contexts to include learning and teaching, research, management and supervision and implications for practice. There was also discussion on the benefits and challenges of using and assessing AI versus more traditional learning and assessment methods with healthcare students.

3. Rationale:

Problem Based Learning requires students to work together in small groups and share their learning experiences. It draws heavily on andragogical principles where students need to be self directed and take responsibility for their own learning (Knowles 1980). Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to thinking, derived from problem based learning that works from the propositions of affirmative action and visions of the possible, rather than problem solving, finding what is wrong and looking for difficulties. It leads to individual learning and creativity (Cooperider 2004).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was initially introduced as a way to vary the learning and teaching approaches used across all Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 during the BSc(Hons) and PGDip Occupational Therapy Programmes in Wales.

These curricula in Wales are delivered across 3 sites (North and South Wales). The approach has been used successfully with students and with practitioners in the field to include the development of a new framework (The TRAMM Model, Morris et al 2011) to guide and measure Continuing Professional Development. From an initial student project this has now been presented across the UK and is currently undergoing a 12 month pilot across England and Wales.

A recent doctoral study into Occupational Therapy students' perceptions of knowledge and skills whilst undertaking a problem based learning (PBL) course informed the first part of this seminar. Findings from the research highlighted the value that students with different entry level qualifications (A level & Access courses) place on knowledge and how the past learning experiences influence their engagement with problem based learning.

Roberts (2011) doctoral study proposed a new dimension to PBL through the introduction of appreciative inquiry (AI), by which tutors guide students to view PBL scenarios/problems first of all with an appreciative eye. What PBL has in limitation, AI offers as its strength; the two appear to be naturally complementary. AI invites a completely different context and vision of learning. In contrast to developing an analytical eye, AI instead cultivates an appreciative eye. It is suggested that the development of transferable skills through this new proposed model may enhance the learning experience and clinical practice once the students have graduated as registered OTs.

From the students' evaluation applying AI to the PBL cycle was more holistic, realistic and inclusive of the whole. They considered the learning experience to be person centred and that it fostered a positive more creative learning approach to a scenario with a belief that the process was opened up rather than closed down.

4. Generation of Evidence:

Whitcombe's (2011), research used semi-structured interviews with third year occupational therapy students. The students were selected on the basis of their previous educational experiences and according to whether they studied for traditional qualifications (A' levels) or alternative qualifications, e.g. access courses in health and social care. The results of the study were analysed with reference to theoretical concepts developed by the sociologist, Basil Bernstein.

The doctoral study by Roberts (2011) used a qualitative phenomenological approach using semi-structured interviews to collect the data. An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) was used for data analysis. Eighteen PBL facilitators from three occupational therapy programmes were selected to be interviewed. Participants were selected from amongst academic tutors and based on their professional knowledge, experience, role specification and philosophical stance on learning and teaching in occupational therapy. In selecting participants, it was decided to include only tutors who had been working for a minimum of three years on pre-registration occupational therapy programmes in order to assure experience and/or knowledge of the philosophy and the academic culture in which it was being applied.

In addition when asked to evaluate the problem based learning approach inherent in the programme, 8 years of student evaluation via focus groups and questionnaires at level 6 were used.

The evaluation of the use of Appreciative Inquiry in the classroom was evaluated at the time using module evaluations. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and illustrated with the use of quotes. The output (TRAMM Model Morris et al 2011) is currently being evaluated by occupational therapists via completion of a questionnaire, three TRAMM snapshots plus completion of the TRAMM Tracker over a period of 12 months. It is anticipated that following the 12 month Pilot, a research study will analyse the impact.

5. Related key terms and concepts:

Appreciative Inquiry, Problem-based learning, Innovative practice, Creativity, Entrepreneurship.

6. Existing Evidence:

Whitcombe (2011) found that students' perceptions of knowledge were shaped by their previous educational pathway and that they perceived knowledge differently depending on experiences of learning. Students from a traditional 'A level' route tended to value academic, often discipline specific knowledge (what Bernstein (2000) refers to as vertical discourse), whilst those students coming from the 'access' route tended to have a less fixed view of knowledge, valuing personal experiences (what Bernstein (2000) refers to as horizontal discourses) and academic knowledge. Because the students from the A level route prioritised academic knowledge over personal knowledge initially they struggled to recognise that PBL integrates different forms of knowledge discourse. However, as these students progressed through the PBL course and gained more understanding of PBL this became less of an issue. This research illuminated how students' initial engagement in PBL and their expectations of curricula are influenced by their prior educational experiences. Therefore, PBL tutors and course designers need to make visible what they want new students to learn and how they expect students to participate in PBL. Similarly, if course designers require students to adopt an 'appreciative approach to PBL', it needs to be transparent as to how students utilise this.

Evaluations of students' experience in addition to Roberts (2011) doctoral study findings reflect those of other studies in the area. These include the development of facilitation skills, the role of the tutor, expectations of students, group processes, dynamics, conflicts, creativity, the period of adjustment and transition required. Specific findings that could be used to improve or enhance the PBL experience for both students and academic staff relate to an acknowledgement that the problem solving approach of PBL may inhibit creativity in thinking, learning and facilitation of small groups.

What PBL has in limitation, AI offers as its strength; the two appear to be naturally complementary. AI invites a completely different context and vision of learning.

In contrast to developing an analytical eye, AI instead cultivates an appreciative eye.

It is suggested that the development of transferable skills through this new proposed model may enhance the learning experience and clinical practice once the students have graduated as registered occupational therapists. As there are limited studies into the application of AI into PBL, further action research is recommended to evaluate the perspectives of both tutors and students in its application.

Findings from the module evaluation indicated that although students were initially anxious and concerned as to the accuracy of their work, most considered the learning experience to exceed their expectations. This is illustrated in the following statement generated by one group of students:

> "*We were encouraged to explore and develop our own module encompassing management and entrepreneurial skills, which relied on us being self directed and taking responsibility for our own learning. Initially we felt anxious, unsure if the direction we were taking was right. A university lecturer helped us to identify appropriate learning outcomes, which in turn mapped to those required of the curriculum. As we developed in confidence we were able to pursue our own well defined goals.*"

7. Research findings/New Evidence:

It may not be a chance occurrence that AI is emerging within the Roberts (2011) data as a contrasting approach in occupational therapy education (and potentially in practice). PBL facilitators may begin to realise the opportunity that it presents and its potential strengths in education and practice. According to some participants, what PBL specifically cultivates is an objective, critical and **analytical eye** that largely sees problems and their solution. AI appears to offer as its strength what PBL has in limitation, the two appear to be naturally complementary. In contrast to developing an **analytical eye,** AI appears to cultivate an 'appreciative eye' when approaching challenging situations.

All participants believe that students who follow a PBL approach to learning and teaching arguably do have to practice the art of problem solving and being part of the solution. Pressure to identify problems and how to solve them in PBL has historically been central to its application in occupational therapy education. This focus is what differentiates PBL from more traditional methods of delivering the curriculum. From the tutors' reflections, it appeared that they have little practice during their studies or in practice to look for what works and finding ways to do more of that. Looking at both AI and PBL in this manner not only creates a third dimension developed as a **creative eye** but also places them on polarities of a continuum, one positive the other negative; seeing challenges as an opportunity and not as a problem. The opportunity may therefore be present to harness both approaches in a single learning style and also to take this opportunity to see if another dimension can be added to PBL. Tutors approaching PBL with a more positive or appreciative eye, may give students much more of a positive, openly creative, holistic, person-centred and arguably more realistic approach to the challenges of PBL (Machon 2010).

8. Outcomes of research /evaluation evidence and the implications for policy and practice:

Academics

- PBL curricula and PBL tutors need to be explicit as how students are expected to engage in PBL and what learning tasks are required from them.

- Design learning materials that reflect and prepare students for real-life scenarios, encouraging them to see the value of the session for themselves.

- Staff development for AI facilitators to help establish a safe and challenging environment for student learning.

- Embrace the challenge of making the assessments clearly link to the work undertaken in the module, whilst not allowing assessment to provide the focus.

Professional Developers

- Promote the value of appreciative enquiry as means to highlighting individual/organisational strengths as well as needs.

Senior Managers and Policy makers

- AI can be resource intensive however it is important for managers to recognise the potential of AI for developing graduate skills and future employability.

Students

- It is important to make explicit links to learning outcomes in the curriculum as these are not always evident to the student.

- It is also critical to ensure students are prepared to work in this way so they can be effective and innovative in their learning.

Employers

- Recognition of the strengths of graduates who have learned in this way and the contribution they can make to practice as a result.

Professional bodies

- To acknowledge that integrated delivery can successfully map to learning outcomes and the requirements of the profession and statuary bodies.

9. Emerging themes:

Application

- The challenge of the application of AI in fast paced acute settings.

- Exploration of the use of AI as an approach within supervision and its impact on professional development.

- The impact of AI in a research environment

Terminology

- A debate about the need for re-design of terminology to more accurately reflect the use of AI in a health orientated setting

- Use of the terms concept, approach or technique in relation to AI

- The differences and integration of the terms analytical eye, appreciative eye and creative eye.

Curriculum Design

- Design of real life triggers that address and map explicitly to learning outcomes of the modules.

- How to ensure the use of AI does not result in major professional standards such as HPC standards of proficiency being neglected. How learning outcomes can be mapped to these standards.

- Promote skills and integrated knowledge and practice and encourage entrepreneurial thinking.

- Use of students as partners in designing learning opportunities.

10. Any other comments:

There is potential for the development of a network for those using AI in a health related education context, be it learning and teaching, research, management or practice.

11. References:

Bernstein B. (2000) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity, Theory, Research, Critique*, (Revised Edition), Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Cooperider D.L.,   Whitney D., Stavros J.M. (2007) *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook* (2nd Edition). San Francisco, USA. Berret Koehler.

Knowles M., (1980) *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy*, Chicago, USA. Follet.

Machon,A (2010). *The Coaching Secret. How to be an Exceptional Coach.* Pearson Education Limited.

Morris R, Salmon T, Lawson S, Hearle D, Leadbitter A, Morris M, and Mandizha-Walker M (2011) Creativity through appreciative inquiry**.** *OT News.* June 2011 pp26-27

Roberts,G.W (2010) . Advancing New Approaches To Learning and Teaching. Introducing Appreciative Inquiry To A Problem Based Learning Curriculum. The *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education.* Vol 2. No 1.

Rubin,R. Kerrell.R. & Roberts,G.W. (2011). Appreciative Inquiry in occupational therapy education. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. Vol 74. No 5

Whitcombe SW (2011) The Influence of Pedagogy on Problem-based Learning Students' Understanding of Knowledge, *International Journal of Cross-disciplinary Subjects in Education*, Vol 2, (4), 527-536.