



Creating the future...together
2010-2015

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitation Training Certification Report

Cynthia Welsh

College of the North Atlantic – Qatar

December 2011

1. Name and Contact Information:

Co facilitator with Rolene Pryor:

Cynthia Welsh

Teacher Certification Specialist

Teaching and Learning Centre

College of the North Atlantic – Qatar

2. Brief description of the organization, group, or community you worked with.

College of the North Atlantic – Qatar (CNA-Q) opened in September 2002 through an agreement between the State of Qatar and College of the North Atlantic (CNA), in Canada. CNA-Q is Qatar's premier comprehensive technical college. With approximately 650 staff and 4500 full and part-time students, CNA-Q is one of Qatar's largest post-secondary institutions.

CNA-Q combines a Canadian curriculum and industry expertise in a number of program areas, including Business Studies, Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, Industrial Trades, Security, and Information Technology. In addition to these schools, there is a Language Studies and Academics department.

The faculty involved in this Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process were all Communications (CM) Instructors who are part of the Language Studies and Academics department.

3. List the names and/or category of stakeholders you included in the Core Group, the cross-section of people that helped you identify the topic and modify the Interview Guide.

Allan MacKinnon -Lead Instructor of the Communications Department

Rolene Pryor - Manager Quality Assurance

4. What was the positive topic that the Core Group identified for inquiry? What method did you use to help them identify the topic?

The positive topic focussed on instructors' "peak experience" as part of the communications team. They were asked to talk about their biggest / most memorable success in the CNA-Q communications department.

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- How did you contribute to this success?

Attach or include the modified Interview Guide they used, i.e., the Generic Interview Guide slightly modified for the positive topic of the inquiry.



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See **Appendix A** for modified interview guide.

5. *What method of interviews did people use to inquire into exceptionally positive moments, face to face paired interviews, or some other way?*

The interview session involved face-to-face paired interviews lasting 30 minutes. 15 minutes was allotted for each partner.

6. *Attach or include a list of the High Energy Themes (Life-Giving Forces, what they MOST wanted to create MORE of) that the group identified in the stories they shared.*

See **Appendix B** for a list of the High Energy Themes as identified by participants.

7. *Attach or include the Provocative Proposition(s) the group or organization created from the LGFs.*

The following are the provocative propositions, a.k.a. "preferred statements of the future", that were created from our session.

- 1. *The CM team leads by example (initiative, collaboration, course development, continuous improvement).***
- 2. *The CM team is open to change and growth and willing to lead the way in collaboration and peer support.***
- 3. *The CM team is relevant, well-resourced and exemplifies professional collaboration with each other and with other departments.***

8. *Attach or include the organization, group or community's Strategic Intentions and the individual Commitments, Offers, and Requests that were created to realize the Provocative Proposition(s).*

The Strategic Intentions were to gather information for future planning and to celebrate past successes.

See **Appendix C** for a list of the individual Commitment, Offers, and Requests as identified by participants.

9. *Impact or Results: What organizational, group or community attitude, process or structure changes have people already made as they move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)? What progress have people made toward their Strategic Intentions or Initiatives or Pilot Projects? What stories of success can you share?*



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I have witnessed enthusiasm towards the AI process from this group and have heard the participants from this department talking about it with other faculty members in other departments. They are selling the AI process because they found the experience to be worthwhile for their department. There is a lot of excitement percolating within the CM team.

As a next step, the CM team has made a plan for next semester, January 2012, with the Dean and Chair of the department. See Appendix D for their plan to develop and implement their steps forward.

10. What will you do to ensure that people continue to move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)? How will you help them gather stories of success? How will you help them celebrate? How will you, as the AI Facilitator, support their ongoing success?

I have offered to help with the facilitation of the follow-up sessions in January, March, and April, (see Appendix D). My role as the liaison between the CM team and the Teaching and Learning Centre, as well as my involvement in the AI workshop, will make me a likely candidate to continue with the process with the CM team, and help to facilitate the sessions in their plan for the future.

11. What did you wish for in the inquiry? What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation? What was your "personal best" experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?

What did you wish for in the inquiry?

I wished that the CM team would find the process rewarding and be engaged for the two half-day sessions. I wanted the process to reinforce the appreciative inquiry model many of them experienced in the college-wide strategic planning sessions with Rolene Pryor and Kelly Saretsky. I was also wishing that they would find some exciting plans for the future of their department.

What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation?

From this particular inquiry I was able to experience the appreciative inquiry process from the facilitator's perspective. The two sessions were well planned and moved along smoothly. The participants were very engaged and were extremely focused and kept to the time restrictions that we had allotted. The team was positive and were used to working collaboratively so it was a pleasure to work with this group.

I have been using appreciative feedback in the Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW) I facilitate for instructors since participating in the AIFT and believe in the process. I have totally 'bought-in' to everything that is AI related, both in my personal relationships and professional relationships.

What was your "personal best" experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?



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I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the interviews and discussions as I circulated around the room. The CM team was so engaged and stayed on-task throughout the process. It was also wonderful to hear such positive dialogue from the group. I think it was interesting for the newer faculty members to hear about the past successes within the department. I think it helped to bond people who otherwise would not have had the chance to spend time together.

I hope that other departments within the college take the opportunity to go through this process, because we are at the beginning stages of a five year plan, and now is the time to make changes and set our goals.

12. Have you received permission from the "client" or "clients" to tell us their story? In other words, does Company of Experts.net have permission to share this story with others? If not, who would COE.net need to contact to receive permission?

Company of Experts is welcome to share anything that is included in this document.

APPENDIX A



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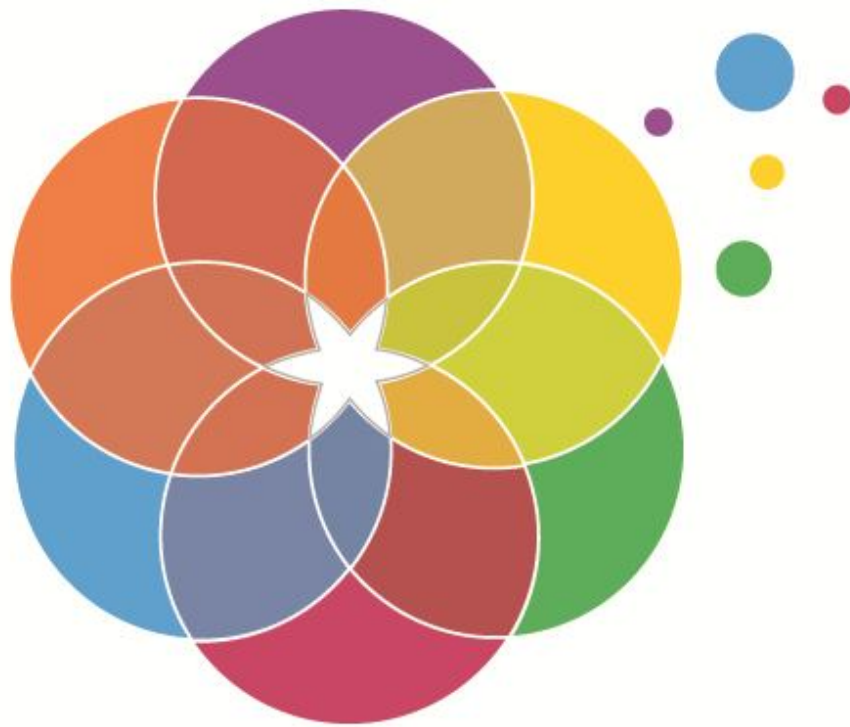
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Interview Guide

Celebrating CM Team Successes



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Interview: Instructions

Using the following questions, interview your partner.



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Feel free to ask follow-up questions, particularly if your partner seems excited about a particular topic. Listen carefully; take some notes in the space provided. Try to recall the best *stories* from your interview. Listen for any “quotable quotes”.



Interview: Peak Experience

The Communications Team has had a very successful year. We have successfully partnered with Engineering for PR courses, we have developed common evaluations for student writing, we are in Year 2 of Pilot Project, ESP resources for many courses have been developed, etc.

Please tell me about your biggest / most memorable success in the CNA-Q communications department.

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- How did you contribute to this success?



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Interview: Values

What do you value most about the Communications department?

- How do you add to these values? What do you contribute?



Interview: Wishes for the future

The Communications department has had a number of successes recently, particularly with the success of the common writing evaluations and the reading course pilot project. Now, we would like to build on these successes as we move into the future.

What three **(3)** wishes do you have for the future of the Communications department? What would you like to see *more* of as the Communications group moves forward?



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*"A team is a group of people
who go out of their way to
make each other look good."*

Bob Farrell



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APPENDIX B: High Energy Themes

Collaboration

Rationalize evaluation and delivery

Sharing of resources

Autonomy

Endorsement from, and support of, management

Personal satisfaction

Release time to develop professional resources

Collaboration with other schools

Organic collaboration between all participants

Collaboration within (and without) department

Open, enabling leadership

Good environment

Department-specific assessment as much as possible

Success

Collaboration

Camaraderie

Collegiality

Many opportunities to contribute/participate

Respect

Growth

Support

Sharing of resources

Collaboration

Transparency

Sharing of resources

Partnership

Collegiality

Cross-departmental and cross-curricular professional support

Rapport between faculty

Rapport with students

Professionalism

Support



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Appendix C

Offers

I offer to work with other CM faculty to develop an integrated, writing across the curriculum, approach
To assist CM staff in technical and software matters
I offer my interest and knowledge of epistemology to fellow faculty anytime
I offer my time to champion new and relevant ideas from instructors to improve resources or effective delivery to students
I offer to assist any teacher or employee on improving PowerPoint slide production as this is a relatively new technology that many users have never learned
I offer to help with developing clear assignments / expectations within a team
To compile a unified assignment binder with delivery schedule for CM 2360 in order to encourage wider faculty participation in the delivery of this wonderful course
I offer to host a course team meeting once a month
Share classroom management strategies with less experienced staff members
I offer to work on developing resources and course materials
Will help instructors develop PPT slides (animations, graphics, etc.)
Open to others for inquiries about materials, process, action, etc.
I offer to revise some resources for CM1401, update materials
To explore ways to tweak courses to improve students' analytical skills
I offer my Tuesday mornings for exploring collaborative opportunities with other departments
I will share the materials I develop with other instructors who are teaching the same courses
Facilitate AI and share AI throughout CM faculty
I offer to speak to one non-CM teacher about his/her expectations for student writing
To collate final 2300 papers for the past 1-2 years and put these in a PDF file
To co-facilitate faculty workshops on writing

Commitments

I commit to reading one peer reviewed journal article on relevant educational topics every week
I commit to meet with faculty in other departments to review their current writing assignments and develop alternative assignments
I commit to meeting with another School to ensure that CM curriculum is meeting their needs
To seek innovative teaching methods with technology specifically for CM
I commit to acting as a liaison with other departments / schools on instructor requests to drive collaboration
I commit to sharing with my colleagues the process/approach used in partnering with the Business/Marketing course
I commit to meet program teachers once a semester to discuss general changes or advancements in the field as it could pertain to my class topics
To meet with fellow instructors in a xx course to check for similarities / differences and share
I commit to pursue professional development opportunities, i.e. Masters Degree
I commit to engaging other departments in finding collaborative opportunities with CM
To meet weekly to discuss course progress with instructors of the same course
I commit to assisting new instructors with courses I have experience teaching



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I commit to follow up with our team for each course twice each semester
I commit to furthering collaboration with other departments
To developing course materials for each course I am assigned to the best of my ability
I commit to setting up one hour meetings, early in the course, with each of my students
To share online resources from courses taught (from 9 years of teaching at CNAQ) for teamwork and team teaching
I will attend any and all sessions with other faculties / schools in the interest of developing closer curricula
To review/discuss assignments for clarity

Requests

I would like on-going practical help with using technology in course delivery
I request an opportunity to research some of our methods to evaluate success
A dedicated photocopy centre (staffed appropriately)
To have a greater impact/control in course content to streamline courses for Qatar students and existing course time
I request that all teaching teams add at least 3-5 new and improved resources to their courses
I request that the department / division make sabbatical semesters available on an application basis
I request that specific mentor(s) be assigned to new instructors
I request the VP Academics to authorize 1 additional hour for CM2300, CM1401
That people teaching the same course have a collaboration meeting before the semester begins
I request that leads and ICs of other departments begin thinking of ways that CM collaboration could improve the experiences of students in their department
I request that our team have one fun social night each semester
I request that other instructors be willing to share materials and ideas as well, and also provide constructive feedback so I can improve the materials I develop
Materials support for delivery of new courses (1190, 2180, 2181)
I request that time be set aside each week for teaching team meetings or focus groups to solve curriculum-related problems or issues. Too many potential times on Tuesdays get taken by other, not too important, matters
That faculty work with an AWC mentor (or other willing faculty) to design assignments and present them clearly
Use of an LMS for CM and LSA courses
I request that CM faculty meet to discuss strategies for writing across the curriculum
I request that instructors be assigned courses that they enjoy and feel confident / competent with



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Appendix D

Statements of a Preferred Future

1. *The CM team leads by example (initiative, collaboration, course development, continuous improvement).*
2. *The CM team is open to change and growth and willing to lead the way in collaboration and peer support.*
3. *The CM team is relevant, well-resourced and exemplifies professional collaboration with each other and with other departments.*

Developing and Implementing an Action Plan

January: 3 sessions, approximately one hour each; each session will focus on one of the 3 statements of a preferred future.

Each session will follow this format:

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Choose 5 of the 10 action items to narrow the focus
- ✓ Instructors will then break into 5 groups according to the action item they prefer.
- ✓ These groups will develop a plan for the action item and commit to action to implement it.
- ✓ Each group will report back to the whole group to explain the action plan that has been developed.

March: a check in session (approximately 2 hours)

This session will follow this format:

- ✓ Each group will give a progress report to share with others the status of the action plan that was developed: what has been done and what remains to be done, etc.
(Note: since there are 3 statements of a preferred future and 5 groups per statement, then there will be 15 reports of about 3 to 4 minutes each.)
- ✓ Groups will then review their plan to see if any changes are needed.

April: final reporting

This session will follow this format:

- ✓ Each group will report on what has been accomplished and how well the goal of the action item was met.
- ✓ Groups will be given an opportunity to consider further implications: where do we go from here. Should we continue? Are there new directions? Are there implications for Intersession? Etc.