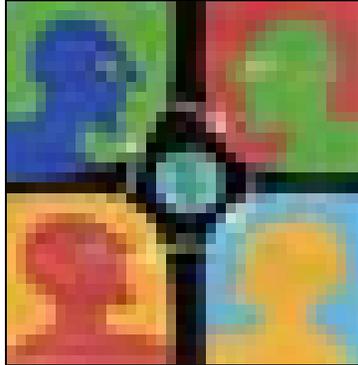


Words Create Worlds, January 2006



From June 2003 through December 2005, Company of Experts.net held **32** four-day AIFTs© for **789** participants, **90** of whom (11%) have satisfactorily completed a practicum and submitted a report for certification by Company of Experts.net (COE.net).

At the top of the list are the folks who participated in the **Victoria, BC Training** (February 2004), with 9 out of 28 participants completing their certification, a whopping 32%. Congratulations, Victoria!

Next in line are **Houston I** (December 2003) and **Stockton I** (February 2004), with 8 Completers each

St. Louis I (June 2003), with 7 Completers each

Archbold (June 2004), **Denver** (June/July 2004), and **Enfield** (August 2004), with 6 Completers each

Niagara on the Lake, BC (April 2004) with 5 Completers

Albuquerque (January/February 2005), **Phoenix** (August 2003), and **Sacramento** (January 2005, with 4 Completers each

San Diego (July 2004), **Lansing** (July 2004), and **Stockton II** (November 2004), with 3 Completers each

Eugene (June 2005), **Los Angeles** (June 2004), **Port St. Lucie** (May 2005), and **Portland** (December 2003), with 2 Completers each

Anaheim (June 2003), **Nanaimo** (August/September 2005), **Bothell** (April 2004), **Tenaya Lodge** (a two-day training in March 2003), **Tucson** (February 2004), and **Vancouver** (June 2003), with 1

Completer each

And **Albany** (September 2005), **Baltimore** (December 2005), **Binghamton** (June 2005), **Dallas** (April 2005), **Houston II** (November 2005), **Makati City** (November/December 2005), **Pewaukee** (September 2005), and **Williamsburg** (September 2004), with no Completers yet.

Let me know if you think I've made a mistake in my record keeping. Also, why not add your name to the growing number of certified AI Facilitators in the New Year? Just send us your story of success; I'm attaching the format.

NOTE: If you have successfully facilitated an inquiry for a **community college**, please share that story now! I'm in the process of writing a second book about Appreciative Inquiry in the Community College and would love to be able to include your story.

COE.net also dozen AIFT Trainers who are available to **deliver an AIFT to your community or organization**. If you're interested in hosting an AIFT, contact Kathy@COE.net (in the U.S. and Canada) and Nancy@sonic.net (in other countries).

"...the more I teach, use, and learn about AI, the more I am experiencing my own transformation...I am learning to create and ask powerful questions that move conversations, people, and organizations to a new level of communication and potential."

So says Reverend **Vicki Hammel** <revhammel@aol.com>, who just joined the ranks of AI Facilitators. Vicki participated in the **Enfield Training** in August 2004. Here's her story of success:

In June 2005, Vicki facilitated an Appreciative Inquiry for the Committee on the Ministry (CoM) of the Central Association, Massachusetts Conference of The United Church of Christ. There are 22 members of the Committee and all were in attendance. The CoM is the judicatory, or decision-making body on matters that pertain to ordained persons, or those seeking ordination, and churches in the Association.

The CoM's positive topic was "Working Together to Serve God." The question they explored was "How might we work together in the

coming year to serve God as faithful, joyful, disciples, who are passionate about the church, and about ministry?"

Based on the stories coming from the paired interviews, the groups identified the life-giving forces, i.e., the factors, conditions, and forces that supported their working together to serve God:

From the themes, they then identified their positive core as ***Spirit, Listening to each other, Relationships, and Diversity.***

The Provocative Proposition they co-constructed was:

Following the leading of the Spirit, and because God is still speaking to us, and among us, we build authentic relationships with the members of the Committee on the Ministry, allowing ourselves to be known, claimed, changed, and transformed in this holy process.

We are loved, therefore we risk loving one another, forgiving one another, seeing Christ in each other: thereby strengthening the Committee on the Ministry's faithfulness in mission and embodiment of the kingdom.

Face to face we choose to: Risk honesty, confess diversity, and to trust God's spirit to surprise us.

Relying on God's Grace, we trust one another, and invite those in ministry with who we are in covenant, into that sacred trust.

The CoM then developed a number of Strategic Intentions to begin realizing the Dream they had co-created. Many of the Strategic Intentions have already been realized.

Impact

According to Vicki, the impact of the AI and subsequent development of specific plans of action has been to move the work of each subcommittee forward in a dramatic way. As the subcommittee's organize and complete their tasks, they are freeing up their time, providing needed leadership in their area, and moving the commitment and excitement about this work to a new and higher level. The meetings of the CoM as a whole are efficient, high energy, and fun. People look forward to coming to meetings, and know that their time, energy, and talents are appreciated and desired.

Each working group reports at the monthly meeting of the full CoM. They share their stories of success with the group as a whole, and also ask for feedback, support, and similar information/experiences other working groups might be having/share. The Committee will celebrate their accomplishments in the late Spring 2006 when each committee will have a brochure, policies and procedures, and a booklet of primary documents. Then they will move to another possible future when they begin the Appreciative Inquiry process to determine strategic initiatives for the next year.

Here is Vicki's "Personal Best" story: "I wanted the Committee as a whole, and each working group, to identify goals and action plans that would: create energy and passion for their work together; empower members of the CoM to imagine new possibilities for the future; move them to a new level of commitment by sharing the best of their experience, and the successes they can build on; teach the CoM about AI and equip them to use the process in their own parish work.

"I learned that I am a good facilitator, and that the more I teach, use, and learn about AI, the more I am experiencing my own transformation. The AI process is transformative not only for the possibilities to be embraced in the inquiry, but for the participants as well. It has also been transformative for me. I am learning to create and ask powerful questions that move conversations, people, and organizations to a new level of communication and potential. In this inquiry, I learned how much more I want and need to learn about myself, the process, facilitation, and the ways in which AI theory will carry over into my daily life.

"

My personal best experience was the whole inquiry, and specifically the reporting back to the whole group by a person who was a negative Ned, and a cynical Sam who was doing his best to impede the process. As he reported back the provocative proposition for his group he was beaming, and he was totally into the process. His report reflected what I would call a personal transformation that was apparent in his voice, demeanor, and sense of accomplishment. It was amazing to see him "unfold" during the inquiry process, and to know that he was changed by the power of the possibilities that he called forward out of his own experience. It was AWESOME!!!!"

Best Wishes for a healthy and vital New Year,



Nancy Stetson

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