

**Appreciative Inquiry Certification
Practicum Report**

Teambuilding and Visioning – The Generative Approach

Organization: TRU World, Thompson Rivers University

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AI Certification Report

1.0 Description of the organization

Global-mindedness is one of the key components of Thompson Rivers University's values and strategic plan. The university mission statement is as follows: "TRU is a comprehensive, learner-centered, environmentally responsible institution that serves its region, national and international learners and their communities through high quality and flexible education, training, research and scholarship". TRU World is the international department whose mission is to coordinate and facilitate international initiatives for the university in close collaboration with academic divisions and service areas. The diversity and scope of Thompson Rivers University international initiatives is substantive. TRU has over 1600 students from over 80 countries. In addition, there are over 1400 students who study in TRU programs in overseas partner institutions. TRU has an array of study abroad opportunities for domestic students including a large array of bilateral exchanges and faculty led field schools. As a globally minded campus, the university has invested in specialized supports for international students. These units exist within the TRU World Global Operations department. These include a team of International Student Advisors, International Admissions, International Academic Advisors and an International Student Activity Program.

1.1 Background of the unit and group

TRU World is taking an opportunity to re-invigorate the International Student Advisor (ISA) Team. It is a team first established in 1991 responsible for providing specialized support for international students. The team's mission is to be responsive to the needs of international students as it relates to their personal, campus and local community experiences. They are responsible for pre-departure assistance, arrival support, orientation, housing, and ongoing advice, assistance and advocacy. It is a multi-cultural team well positioned to facilitate the bridging of cultures. TRU World is known for the high level of personalized services. Over the past two decades the team has continually expanded in size and cultural diversity. TRU World has received recognition for the quality of its services. In 2009, it was recognized with the national (Canadian) award; the Lynn Howes Award for Distinguished International Service Support Programs awarded by Languages Canada. In 2010, the longstanding quality and ongoing innovation was recognized by the province of British Columbia by way of the BC Council of International Education Award for Excellence.

Recently, due to the pressures of continued growth and personnel changes it appeared that the team's cohesiveness was under strain. Both the team members as well as the leadership had identified this as a concern and priority. The senior

leadership is committed to the team's ongoing excellence. The desire was to reinvigorate the team as well as the refresh their approach and overall vision.

Practicum Context:

Each year, the team attends a planning retreat. I had an opportunity to provide an overview of the Appreciative Inquiry concept to the key senior leadership and proposed the idea of undertaking my Practicum with TRU World. It was seen as an ideal opportunity to incorporate the Appreciative Inquiry methodology for both team building and visioning. The result was that one full day of the two day annual retreat was dedicated to the Appreciative Inquiry Process. This included any prior time needed to work with a core group to identify the positive topic and interview guide. In addition, follow-up and sustainability initiatives would also emerge.

The following overview provides the details.

2.0 Core Group

Categories of stakeholders included in the Core Group: The cross-section of individuals who helped to identify the topic and modify the interview guide.

Three representatives of the management team; The Associate Vice President, the Director and Associate Director played an initial role. The Associate Director is the team's immediate supervisor.

The International Student Advising Team (ISA) team has nine members. Initial input on perception were gathered from several members of the ISA team; two long term and one newer member. This was done through face-to-face discussions with the facilitator. The approach was informal and open ended. In addition, two representatives of complimentary teams who work closely with the ISA team shared their insights.

The Director and Associate Director worked closely with the facilitator to refine the core topic and modify the interview guide. The Associate Director is coordinating the overall ISA retreat.

3.0 The positive topic identified for inquiry. The method used to help the organization identify the topic.

The topic was identified based on initial discussions and interviews of the core team (as outlined above). The facilitator worked closely with the Director and Associate Director to specify the objectives as well as formulate the positive topic.

The positive topic:

The broad goal was team-building. Underlying positive elements were the following:

- Positive climate which includes ongoing support, trust, collaboration and effective communication among the team, staff, and administration
- Exceptional team spirit; including the celebration of their diversity and openness to change and innovation.
- Reinvigorate passion for the field of international student support.

3.1 Two preliminary sessions and one main session:

Identification of Positive Topic and Modify Interview Guide

Stage 1: Preliminary discussions

I met with the TRU World, Associate Vice President to propose the opportunity for an Appreciative Inquiry workshop as a practicum. He was supportive and took the proposal to the broader TRU World Management team to invite their participation. The International Student Advising (ISA) team was selected for this first initiative. The possibility of session for additional units in the future was also identified. The Director and Associate Director of that unit were enthusiastic and themselves interested in learning from the methodology.

What method did I use to help identify the topic?

i. Step 1: Preliminary Sessions with Core Group:

On a number of occasions, I met with Senior Management team, the team's direct Supervisor (Associate Director) as well as core team members. Each session provided insight to the key issues and desired outcomes; ideas for the core positive topic as well as priorities. (I began meeting with this team in March with the original intention of having the session in June. Their planning retreat was postponed to August.)

ii. Step 2: Reflect Back Information Gathered

I met with the Director and Associate Director to share insights on the core positive topic. I presented them with the insights gathered. We confirmed the core positive topics and focus for the session. I shared a draft of the Interview Questions for their input. We reviewed the process and how it fit into the broader ISA Planning Retreat.

3.2. Overall Objectives

Goals for the team:

- i. shift the perspective from problem focused to possibility focused
- ii. see the strengths that come from team diversity
- iii. recognize own values as well as shared values and vision
- iv. appreciation of diversity of cultures and perspectives
- v. build dynamics of exceptional team spirit, trust, caring
- vi. re-energize passion for the international student advising profession.
- vii. better understanding of Appreciate Inquiry principles and relevance to own field.
- viii. transference of AI principles into daily practice; utilization in their work both with students and amongst team members.

Goals as a facilitator:

- i. design a workshop that meets the needs of the organization and the team and compliments the ISA Annual Retreat objectives.

This included a creation of a AI Workshop powerpoint. (in Drop-Box)
- ii. introduce concepts and exercises/activities that simulate the appreciative approach; providing the team with the tools and knowledge to follow-through on their commitments and vision
- iii. be an effective facilitator which includes being responsive and flexible during the workshop – draw upon the team’s input and group dynamics
- iv. reflect on the session to identify strengths as well as areas to refine. Invite feedback from participants as well as make notes during the session for future improvements.
- v. help to make a sustainable difference to this team and ultimately, the organization – continue to be available to work with the team and its leadership
- vi. notice the potential role and impact of the mentorship potential of AI; the bi-product of working with individuals while advancing the group process.

4.0 Interview questions and guides

The generic interview guide was modified for the topic identified.

Appendix A:

1. ISA Team Interview Guidelines
2. Interviewer Guidelines and Tips
3. Interview Summary Sheet

5.0 Method of interviews used to inquire into exceptionally positive moments.

The team was invited to work in pairs and interview one another using the interview guides. Following the interviews, they met in groups of four to share the key stories, themes and quotable quotes. A note-taker listed these. Then based on the list, they selected three most “life-giving” themes for their group. They listed these on a flip-chart and presented them to the group.

Following the sharing of the life-giving themes from the three groups, each person worked individually to identify the three themes/quotes that resonated with them personally from all listed. They marked these with a star. As a group we reviewed and discussed these as well; reflecting on the relative significance.

6.0 List of Life-Giving Forces

The following is the list of the “Life-Giving Forces” that the group identified in the stories they shared. What they most wanted to create more of. These are listed in the order of most selected/resonated for the majority of the members.

Passion

Make a positive difference

Student-centeredness

Caring for students; the “mom factor”

Thank and compliment a lot; as often as you can

Look for the good in people

Important and interesting work

Treating others in a way you want to be treated

7.0 Provocative Propositions the group created from the life-giving forces.

7.1 Visual Representation: The “illustration of life-giving themes” through metaphor and visuals preceded the development of the provocative proposition exercise. The teams created collages and spoke to the metaphors, themes and overall messages. Although initially hesitant, the teams quickly became fully

engaged in the process. Photos were taken during the session to help capturing the process as well as the results.

A “Smilebox Photo Presentation” was later created (by the facilitator) to illustrate this co-creative process as a reminder as well as a thank you to the team. (In ISA Team AI Drop-Box)

7.2 Provocative Proposition: The concept, criteria and examples of provocative propositions were shared with the group. Each team created a “provocative proposition” representing exceptional team and service. They shared the three provocative statements with one another. The objective was to combine the best ideas represented in these submissions to create one provocative proposition for the team. We worked as a group to bring together the ideas. This was a very effective process. The group particularly appreciated working as a large group to generate the final statement. It generated reflection and in-depth discussion.

ISA Team Provocative Proposition:

“We utilize our full potential and collaborate with the university and the local and global communities to provide personalized, flexible, culturally relevant, mentoring and exemplary service.”

8.0 Strategic Intentions: Realizing the Provocative Proposition

8.1. The Destiny and Delivery phase of the session focused on the actions, commitments, offers or requests. These were undertaken by brainstorming ideas; individually at first. Each commitment/idea was written on a “sticky note” and then put on a collective chart reflected the appropriate category:

- Individual: Task, Commitment, Request
- Team: Task, Commitment Request
- Department/University/Community: Initiative, Enabling Feature
- Structural/Procedural
- Other

Follow-up: I compiled and categorized the ideas and presented these in a chart format that would then contribute to the ability of the team to utilize this chart in prioritizing, committing to actions and tracking initiatives, as well as refining and adding future ideas.

Appendix B: ISA Session Notes: Destiny/Delivery Notes

8.2 Activity: “Transforming One’s Questions to the Generative”

I developed an exercise based on ideas shared in David Rock's resource "Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work". Working with the team in preparation, I recognized that it could be initially difficult to spontaneously shift to a "generative questioning approach". The purpose of this exercise was to provide both practice as well as examples for future reference. Shifting from problem focused (why) to a solution focused (what) approach.

An example was shared; following a discussion and reflection on the impact and differences. Participants were then given an opportunity to practice with one another. The worksheet provided to assist and used for future reference. This exercise was well received; recognizing the challenge of making the shift. It provided participant with a concrete tool they could immediately apply.

This focus was particularly relevant to the team as they had needed a constructive way to bring forward problems without appearing confrontational or critical.

Appendix C: Practice Exercise – Transforming Questions to Generative

8.3 Personalized Strengths Appreciation Sheet

During the latter part of the day, one team member suggested we circulate a sheet for each person to "write what we appreciate about each member of the team". These sheets were circulated during the last hour of the session. It was gratifying that this idea came from the team itself; a demonstration of the commitment to "walking the talk".

At the conclusion of the session, each person received a "gift" of a list of "genuine compliments" about themselves. Before concluding the session, we all took a moment to quietly read over the list of statements – listening to the song "You Look Good". This was a both positive and personal way to conclude the session.

9.0 Impact and Results:

9.1 AI Workshop Session: Immediate Impact and Results

The immediate result was a tangible sense of better understanding and stronger cohesion for the team. They expressed their intention to apply the principles and have a "new beginning". They were inspired by both the co-creative process as well as the comprehensive mission expressed by their provocative proposition. The Destiny/Design component captured concrete ideas for individual and team action.

The session feedback/evaluation form:

Each participant was given an opportunity to fill in a “feedback form”. The immediate feedback was positive from all participants – expressing possibility. The following feedback excerpts is representative.

“The process felt helpful, timely, important and inspirational. The most helpful things now would be friendly reminders and check ups on how we are doing as a team with a commitment to appreciate inquiry.”

“I appreciate the wonderful ideas brought forward for us all to think about and act upon. Considering finding the positive in our daily actions and communications can only become contagious to those we come in contact with.”

“I truly believe this will re-charge the energy of the ISA team and make our working environment a happy home.”

“ This will help our team a lot and we will start with a new beginning, full of new ideas, energy and lots of TLC.”

What was appreciated the most:

- The “peak experiences” interview exercise
- Group brainstorming on the provocative proposition – having a strong mission statement that was developed by the team
- The Exercise in transforming questions into the generative
- That the activities allowed for both personal and team reflection
- Learning about AI ; informative and gave confidence in approach
- Articulating intentions as well as short and long term goals and specific tasks

What they would have liked more of:

- Additional exercises to develop AI skills (similar to “transforming questions)
- Practical tips; exercises for “problem-solving”
- Assistance/check-up in putting it into daily practice – sustainability

Additional comments/insights:

It was valuable to “stop doing” and have the time to remind/reinforce;

- the pride taken in striving for excellence in service.
- the significant impact the international student service profession has on the lives of students and their families – making a difference.
- experience the positive outcome and tone generated by shifting the focus on the solution, the possibilities.
- hear from each member of what they appreciate about one another and the significant impact of remembering to share the positive; build each other up.
- learn new things about team members by taking the time to sit down and ask the right questions and deeply listen. It allowed team members to talk to those with whom they don’t often spend time.

9.2 Results in the workplace – changes made

The key for the organization is the sustained impact of the workshop. The initial response was positive and the team expressed their intentions to apply the AI principles to their work. The Positive Proposition became their mission statement. The Destiny/Delivery component allowed for a collective vision of priorities, change and innovation. The workshop was followed by a period of peak performance as the team prepared for the new semester's student intake. The day to day pressures would not permit attention to be given to the goals outlined in the Destiny/Delivery until the following month. With the time-lag, it was important to embed the intention of follow-up strategies.

Shift in attitude and approach:

- i. There was a perceptible shift in both the group as well as individual attitudes according to the Associate Director and Director.
- ii. Appreciative Inquiry principles began to inform the practices and common assumptions. When there is a "slip", the AI principles are used as a reference point for review and discussion.
- iii. The team became more pro-active in highlighting the positive in their colleagues.
- iv. The team has a custom-designed mission statement; the "provocative proposition"
- v. The practice of "generative based questioning/orientation" is accepted as a preferred practice. Although it may not be used consistently, individuals strive to improve their skill in this area. (The handout has become a useful reference.)
- vi. Specific changes continue to be made to improve procedures and support consistency of practice amongst the team.

Strategic Intentions and Forward Planning

- i. Two months following the workshop, TRU World instituted a special assignment that builds upon the outcomes of the Appreciative Inquiry Workshop and Annual Planning Retreat.

Assignment: To consolidate, update and expand current policies and practices: The creation of a dynamic ISA Operations Manual concept.

The process would be informed by the following:

- The "Provocative Proposition" generated by team – representing their vision of excellence in student services.
- Build upon AI guiding principles.
- Incorporate ideas and goals generated at the AI workshop

- Articulate “issues” in generative terms; creating a vision of “what is possible/desirable”.
- Use of emerging technologies (e.g. DoKu-Wiki) – a tool that will enable a dynamic approach; engaging all in the use, as well as ongoing innovation.
- Support professionalism; knowledge, consistency, accountability
- Draw on individual team member’s strengths and expertise – pro-active engagement of team members in the project.

Refer to Appendix G: “ISA Operational Manual Project: Initial Planning Meeting”

TRU World Approach: Employ AI Consultant (workshop facilitator) to manage the project. Timeframe: 5 months

The intention is to draw upon the AI perspective and expertise. It also provides an opportunity for ongoing mentorship by the AI consultant through modeling new behavior and reinforcing AI guiding principles. Guide the leadership and team with any instances of negativity, hesitation for innovation, old models of leadership and polarities.

Refer to Appendix G: Next Steps: Implementation

Also refer to the following section 10.0 regarding additional follow-up initiatives and possibilities.

Observations on implementation phase:

I am working with a professional and committed group of individuals. A pervasive challenge is the lack of available time; particularly at the management level. Given the ongoing growth in student numbers, senior administrators and team members are perpetually stretched and as such implementation of change and innovation can be postponed despite good intentions. In this context an external mentor/consultant is able to dedicate the time and provide the focus required. As part of the process, I met with each team member to solicit input and insight. This phase of the process has provided team members an opportunity to deepen their understanding of specific issues and objectives as well as reframe these in generative terms. The meetings involved providing input on process and innovation as well as exploring issues/concerns. Reframing has been an important feature of my methodology. It has been an organic and responsive process. There have been a

number of “teachable moments” throughout this process; both for individuals as well as a team.

10.0 What will the facilitator/organization do to ensure that individuals move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition?

Also refer to features outlined in the previous section 9.0.

10.1 . Exercise and reference sheet: “Transforming One’s Questions to the Generative”

During the workshop, the team had the opportunity to practice transforming problem-focused questions to solution-focused. The members commented that this was one of the most useful elements for them. They would have liked more time on this portion of the workshop. They were seeking concrete ideas on specifically how to shift their approach. The worksheet continues to assist them in this skill development. Some individuals posted copies in their offices for quick reference/reminder. Others have referenced it to assist them and others during meetings and discussions. The Associate Director has also found it a useful tool for working with his team; reframing issues to inspire more solution based discussions. All noted that it was sometimes “easier said than done”. It was helpful for us to notice the degree to which we are habituated to being “problem oriented”, dwelling on the “why”, getting to the solution far later in the discussion.

Peer mentoring: Individuals have taken the opportunity to mentor one another on this matter – providing reminders when the questioning is not “generative”.

As a workshop facilitator and ongoing mentor, this chart of examples has assisted me in reframing my questions/perspective into the generative.

Appendix C: Practice Exercise – Transforming Questions to Generative

10.2. Session Reference Notes – Generated During Session

These have become the reference point for ongoing developments. Specific documents from this collection will be included in the ISA Manual.

Key Notes/Intentions generated at the workshop – captured for reference:

1. Appreciative Inquiry Agreement: How do you want to be with one another during the day?
2. Compilation of Themes from Interviews
3. Destiny/Delivery – Chart for Follow-up and Future Planning/Benchmarking

Keeping the Momentum: Next Steps:

- a. Review list of commitments and ideas
- b. Reconfirm relevance, refine and prioritize
- c. Commit to an action(s) or make a request of assistance, offer to assist

Refer to Appendix B

Creation of an Appreciative Inquiry Drop Box

This Drop Box method allows for all the materials from the workshop to be placed in one place for ongoing reference. This drop-box will be a dynamic site where additional ideas, articles, and exercises can be placed, allowing for the full team to have access.

Appendix E: Outline of Contents in Current Drop Box (for ISA Team Access)

10.3 Ideas for Individual Follow-Through

As the team returned to an intense work period following the workshop (semester start), one goal was to provide them with specific ideas for individual follow-through. These ideas are captured in a list of "Follow Through Ideas". The Associate Director is also able draw from these ideas in the upcoming months.

Refer to Appendix D "Follow-Through Ideas"

10.4 Related resources – ongoing exchange of information and ideas

Specific team members were interested in the theoretical aspects of AI. The "Drop Box" venue allows for the ongoing sharing of resources.

- "Managing with the Brain" by David Rock (placed in "AI Drop Box")
- Appreciative Inquiry PowerPoint Presentation (place in "AI Drop Box)
- Team member circulated the book, "The Leader Who Had No Title", Robin Sharma
- Circulating book with administrative team, "The Invisible Employee", Adrian Costick & Chester Elton

10.5 Photo-Presentation of Team AI Session: "Smilebox Format": A Celebration

This presentation illustrates the features and energy of the full day workshop. This was sent to the senior administrators (AVP and Director) to thank them for the

opportunity to work with the team. It also provides them with a quick way to gain an understanding of the essence of the session; giving them an opportunity to follow-up with the team in a more substantive manner. It was also sent to the Associate Director and the team as a memento of the day as well as expression of appreciation. The photo visuals and accompanying music illustrates their engagement, co-creativity and substance of the workshop.

Photo Presentation (Smilebox) – to be sent electronically

10.5 Specific Follow-Through Actions and Commitments

i. One Week Follow-up with Director and Associate Director

They expressed their appreciation for the workshop and follow-up resources. Their immediate impression was there was a change in the tone of the team. Their morale improved with a stronger sense of cohesion. Specific individuals were consciously employing generative questioning. The Associate Director found that he could sleep better; feeling more optimistic and having a stronger sense of possibility. “A load lifted from my shoulders.” In addition, he was able to be self-reflective and recognize the degree to which he had not been focusing on the accomplishments and successes of the team, but on the problems and errors. The team was likely emulating this orientation.

We discussed ways to move forward and utilize the workshop documentation and tools in the AI “Drop Box”.

Ongoing: Their intention is to enhance their own confidence and ability to incorporate the Appreciative approach into their leadership styles. I continue to be available to them for ongoing mentoring and guidance.

International Admissions Appreciative Inquiry Workshop: I was requested to hold an Appreciate Inquiry workshop for the International Admissions Team. They had heard of the session from the ISA team members and felt they could also benefit from such a workshop. They have a strong, positive team spirit and were looking for a process that would reinvigorate their vision, establish common assumptions and adopt a generative, solution based orientation. A half-day session was held with the International Admissions Team in November 2012.

iii. ISA Team Three Week Follow-Up

Given the demands of the beginning of the semester, I met briefly with the team a week following the workshop as a check-in for any immediate questions or issues. I then met with them following their semester intake (four weeks following the workshop). The ISA team remained committed to the AI approach. The workshop provided them with a common reference point for their vision, assumptions and practices. They were aware of the immediate pressures of their day to day roles and the degree to which these diverted them from addressing the specific goals they had set for themselves in their “destiny/delivery” list.

We agreed in the importance of introducing pro-active strategies to continue the momentum and commitment. They would look to the Associate Director to assist with this by leading by example. Note: Two months following, TRU World formalized the follow-up assignment; the ISA Manual initiative to sustain the momentum and follow through.

11.0 Reflections on AI facilitation: What did you wish for in the inquiry?

The AI Workshop

Refer to Appendix F: AI Facilitator Workshop Agenda

This plan provides a detailed overview of the workshop features.

What was my personal best experience related to facilitating the inquiry? What was learned?

I benefitted from my extensive preparations, the workshop delivery as well as the series of follow-up meetings. It deepened my understanding and appreciation for the potential of this approach. I was able to utilize my years of teaching, administrative and workshop facilitation experience. Overall the AI workshop appeared to be successful and met the expectations of the participants and the administration. I made notes on enabling features as well as ideas for improvements for future workshops.

11.1 Atmosphere/venue: I had the good fortune to have the AI Workshop embedded as the first day of the team’s annual retreat. This being the case, the venue was ideal, the Thompson Valley Guest Ranch, Conference Centre. The set up and catering addressed quality and detail. The venue reinforced the importance assigned to the workshop by the organization. The team was able to get away from their workplace, which contributed to the generative atmosphere.

11.2 Technology: Initially there was a challenge with the PowerPoint projector set-up for a Mac . Having arrived a hour in advance we had time to sort out. There was also a back-up plan (another computer; a PC). In the future, I will address the capacity for Mac support in advance. The use of the PowerPoint presentation worked well to reinforce the concepts and guide the workshop.

11.3 Context: The context was ideal. I was given the full day to facilitate the session. It was embedded in their annual planning retreat and as a result was given priority by all involved. Prior to the session, I had full cooperation and engagement of the relevant administrators and team members. This relevance to the organization was important for success and future sustainability.

11.4 Engagement: It was gratifying to see the shift in energy as the day progressed. Given it was a busy time for the team, they had some initial misgivings regarding dedicating a full day to the process. There was a perceptible shift during the peak experience interviews and the momentum continued to build throughout the remainder of the session. The day ended on a high note.

Ideas for improvement of the workshop:

- Theory: I would shorten the background/theoretical information portion and move into the exercises more quickly. In the case of this team, they were particularly interested in the guiding principles and asked good questions. As a result, this portion took longer than I had anticipated. In hindsight, I could offer to share more information for those interested at the break (or provide a supplementary session).
- Interviews: I would allot more time for the peak experience interviews or have fewer questions outlined. The team found the interview exercises and the sharing of stories/results particularly gratifying and illuminating.
- Wishes: I would develop a specific way to capture the “three wishes” from each of the participants for future reference. Perhaps have this listed out on a separate sheet that could then be collected and compiled. We could go back to those wishes in follow-up sessions. This could be incorporated in the “benchmarking” of progress.
- Visual Activity: I would shorten the “creative visual representation” exercise. Although individuals were fully engaged at the time, I learned later that a few team members felt it was the least productive for the time invested. I appreciate that not all enjoy or value a creative exercise. Artwork/collage is only one possibility. I would also better highlight alternative “creative approaches” that draw on other abilities such as skits, etc.

11.5 Practical Skills Development: There was a strong interest in having a greater opportunity for practice exercises – operating in the appreciative mode. The team very much appreciated the “Transforming Questions” exercise. I would devote more time to this activity. In addition, I plan to create or locate additional exercises and

“simulations” that will help individuals to develop specific skills and perceptual shifts.

Follow-up and sustainability

11.6 Compiling Notes: Having the opportunity to capture all the notes and present them to the team in a cohesive and accessible manner has been helpful. Much occurred during the course of the day; rich with ideas. We have been able to use these notes as a common reference point from which to move into the next steps. Many of these are “working documents” will continue to be refined and referenced through the ISA Manual initiative.

11.7 Commitment by TRU World:

Both the Director and Associate Director attended the workshop. They understand and fully support the assumptions and guiding principles and intend to maintain the momentum and move forward with initiatives. The Associate Vice President also endorses the approach and ongoing developments based on feedback from his leadership team. It is this level of longer-term commitment that will assist the team to manifest and sustain the AI outcomes. I also appreciate the level of trust and confidence in my work that my ongoing assignment represents.

As an AI professional, the most gratifying aspect of this journey has been my work as a mentor; applying my 30 years of experience, combined with wisdom of the AI guiding principles and methods. I continue to learn as I mentor my colleagues. Their insights and wisdoms contribute to my understandings, inspire as well as deepen my compassion. In the reality of today’s pressures, individuals are asked to undertake expanding workloads and multifaceted accountabilities: “The “doing more with less” phenomenon. Within this context, human resource management expertise, excellence in authentic leadership, and teamwork are essential for sustained success and innovation. The AI perspective and methods provide individuals and teams with effective guiding principles and methods that does enhance their potential to be successful in a sustained and affirmative fashion.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work within TRU World; with such a committed, talented and progressive group of professionals.

12.0 Permission: I have received permission from the TRU World Director and Associate Director to tell us their story.

13.0 Attachments and Additional Material

- Appendixes A – G - see attached
- Workshop Photos: Smilebox Presentation (To be sent by e-mail separately)

AI Certification Report

APPENDIX A

1. ISA Team Interview Guidelines
2. Interviewer Guidelines and Tips
3. Interview Summary Sheet

1. ISA Team Interview Guide

This is a pivotal time for the ISA team. We are being challenged to respond to changes within the team, department, the university as well as a new generation of students. We want to build on the best of our past, current experiences and talents as we create a common vision for the future of the team.

PART 1

1. BEST EXPERIENCE

a. Tell me a story about the best times that you have had being part of the ISA team. Recall a time when you felt most alive, engaged and excited about what you were doing.

What made it an exciting and positive experience? Who was involved? Describe the experience in detail.

b. The ISA team has been making a difference in the lives of students. Tell of one example when you felt you personally made a difference. What were the key factor(s) that contributed to this success?

Who was involved? Describe the experience in detail.

c. Expectations: Research has shown that the expectations of others can influence our beliefs about what we are capable of doing. Share a time when you encouraged the potential in another who did not think they could do something. (or a time someone did that for you)

What did you value about yourself in this story? What made this experience possible?

PART 2

2. VALUES

Let's talk about some things you value deeply; specifically, the things you value about yourself; about the nature of your work; and about the ISA team.

- a. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a person and as a member of the ISA team?
- b. When you are feeling best about your work, what do you value about it (the task or work itself)? What do you value about the profession?
- c. What do you think is the ISA team's key contribution to the field of International Student Services? To TRU World as a whole?
- d. What is the single most important thing that being a member of the ISA team has contributed to your life?

3. CORE VALUE: What do you experience as the core value of the ISA team? Give some examples of how you experience those values?

4. THREE WISHES: What three wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and mission of the ISA team?

2. Interviewer Guidelines and Tips

1. Read through all the questions and the summary sheet prior to beginning
 - Ask the questions as they are written: Use the interview guide as your script.
 - Approach it as if you were sitting and talking to one another.

2. Interview Tips

As an interviewer, your role is to guide your interviewee through a series of questions that bring out stories of their best experiences.

- Listen carefully
- Dig more deeply into their stories – ask probing questions to find out why it worked or why it was go good.
- Encourage the individual to share specific details
- Be genuinely curious about the best in the person you interview
- If the person cannot answer a question, it is fine, move on to the next
- Enjoy

Some clarifying questions:

- What makes that important/positive?
- How did you feel?
- How did that impact you?
- Tell me more about that.

3. Taking notes and recounting stories

- Capture key words and phrases
- Note key facts and themes that will assist your recall later.
- Try not to focus on your note-taking – look at the interviewee

3. Interview Summary Sheet

- 1. What was the most quotable quote that came out of your interview?**
- 2. What was the most compelling story that came out of your interview? What details and examples did the interviewee share?**
- 3. What is the most “life-giving” moment of the interview for you as a listener?**
- 4. What three themes stood out most for you during the interview?**
- 5. Did a particularly creative or innovative example of topic emerge during the interview? If so, describe what you learned about it?**

APPENDIX B

ISA Session: Destiny/Delivery

ISA Team Provocative Proposition:

“We utilize our full potential and collaborate with the university and the local and global communities to provide personalized, flexible, culturally relevant, mentoring and exemplary service.”

Ways to Make This Happen:

Actions, Commitments, Offers, or Requests Generated

1. Individual Actions/Commitments Identified

<u>Destiny Areas</u>	<u>Delivery Ideas – Specific Commitments</u>	<u>Your Action Opportunity</u>
Positive energy & reinforcement		
	- use AI principles	
	- recognize positive characteristics in ourselves and others	
	- build people up by telling people I appreciate their working and stating when they do a good job.	
	- making it a habit to say good words to my colleagues	
	- show genuine interest in the work of colleagues	
Honesty/Authenticity	- more accepting to	

	constructive, (solution focused) criticism (feedback)	
	- demonstrate patience	
	- show loyalty	
	- give fully at work – exemplary work ethics	
Professional and Personal Growth		
	- participate in more professional development opportunities	
	- are not afraid to try new ideas	
	- have scope and encouragement to be creative and nurture this in others	
	- learn how to better use technology to save time	
	- commit to personal growth	

2. ISA Team Action/Approach/Commitment Identified

<u>Destiny</u>	<u>Delivery – Specific Commitments</u>	<u>Your Action Opportunity</u>
Teamwork Work Environment		
	- have a caring and understanding environment	
	- demonstrate greater collaboration as a team	
	- have positive, open and honest approach with colleagues	
	- embrace change	
	- more accepting of constructive, feedback as a team in general	
Professional Growth		
	- team building events	
	- learn more from fellow ISAs and colleagues	
	- have a professional gathering to share knowledge	
	- ISA's give presentations on different cultures	
	- monthly database training	

	sessions	
	- explore new ideas as a team – new ways of doing things	
	- utilize talents/people more to enable growth	
Approach to students		
	- More opportunities to ask students what they think - Listen/act on the feedback	
	- have the opportunity to see students in their environment; have a coffee with them at Student Street, IB, CAC	
	- greater consistency within the tasks undertaken and messages relayed by team	
Approach to communication and operations		
	- invite more opportunities for team members to contribute ideas on how things can be improved – input having more weight	
	- focus on the solutions	
Structures/Operations		
	- meeting notes are taken at key meetings for the benefit of people who were not present	
	- a structure where the team can have a coordinator/leader role	
	- enhanced structure to the reporting of completed tasks and the assignment of new tasks	
	- ways/time for members to follow through with their suggestions and ideas	

3. TRU World/University Stakeholders Identified

<u>Destiny</u>	<u>Delivery – Specific Commitments</u>	<u>Your Action Opportunity</u>
TRU World		
	highlight the culture of excellence: - gold level standard	

	- articulate in team/unit benchmarks - communicate/celebrate	
	- celebrate successes more	
	- greater inclusive decision-making - fostering broader level, autonomy, initiative and leadership	
	- strong collaboration amongst units	
	- a shared vision developed -- stick to it for 2 - 3 years - revising yearly	
	- more meetings between different units - shared information and innovative ideas	
University		
	- Work more closely with other departments to ensure better student success	
	- create mingling activities to get to know on a personal level	
	- invite individuals from other departments to share information	
	- create opportunities to listen to other stakeholders - ideas/needs	

4. Structural/Operational Identified

<u>Destiny</u>	<u>Delivery - Specific Commitments</u>	<u>Your Action Opportunity</u>
Technology & Innovation		
	- systems responsive to the flow of client needs	
	- greater use of available technologies, streamlining our work environment	
	- more on-line (positive reduction in paperwork)	

Keep the Momentum: Your Next Steps:

- a. Review list of commitments and ideas
- b. Reconfirm relevance, refine and prioritize

c. Commit to an action(s), make a request of assistance, offer

APPENDIX C:

Transforming One's Questions to the Generative

Resource: "Quiet Leadership: Six Steps to Transforming Performance at Work, David Rock

Problem Focus (Why)	Solution Focus (What) "What do you want more of, next time, etc."
Why did you not do the task well?	What do you need to do next time to do the task well?
Why are we not asked for our input?	What can be done to incorporate our input?
Why don't we feel valued?	What can be done to make us feel valued?
Why are we not receiving key information about changes?	What can be done so that key information is shared effectively?
Why did this happen?	What do you want to achieve here?
Where did it all start going wrong?	What do you need to do to move this forward?
Why do you think you are not good at this?	How can you develop strength in this area?
What is wrong with your team? What is wrong with management?	What does your team (manager) need to do to succeed?
Why did you do this?	What do you want to do next time?
Who is responsible?	Who can achieve this?
Why isn't it working?	What do we need to do to make this work?
Share your examples:	
1.	
2.	

APPENDIX D:

Follow-Through Ideas

What you can do as an individual/team member.

1. Utilization of the Appreciative Inquiry principles and approach

- assist one another in retaining this positive and innovative orientation
- follow-through on the ideas generated regarding being appreciative of one another and other members of department.
- develop a practice of sharing and celebrating successes
- strengthening co-creativity and teamwork

2. Interview others – magnify the peak experiences/memories

- interview your colleagues using the “Interview Guide”
- share and celebrate what you have learned about others
- help others to renew their passion; shine a positive light on your colleagues

3. Transform your questions and issues to the “generative”

- use the “Transforming One’s Questions to Generative” worksheet – as an aid to problem-solve, help one another to strive for excellence.
- share this with others – to inspire more in the department to do the same.

4. Periodic Check-up on Appreciative Inquiry follow-through

Re-Read your Provocative Proposition

Review your Destiny/Delivery List

- check in from time to time to see how you are doing? Individually/as a team
- Benchmark your ideal and track your progress along the way – it is a journey
- Are you taking the actions you had identified? How often?
- Ask for feedback, give feedback when asked – positive intention of supporting one another

5. Journal; reflect on your practices and transformations

6. Try it out at home or with friends.

APPENDIX E

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY DROP BOX FOR ISA TEAM

To assist participants in recalling and applying AI principles and building upon the outcomes of the AI Workshop, we have created a Dropbox: **"ISA Team-Appreciative Inquiry"** Using the Dropbox format will assist with placing all related files in one place; those directly related to the AI workshop as well as a repository for future information; a dynamic site for AI for the TRU World department.

Current Contents: Follow-up to ISA AI Workshop Session:

A. Workshop Powerpoint

- file: ISA Team-Appreciative Inquiry.pptx

B. Handouts - file names

- AI Questions ISA Team
- Interview Guidelines
- Interview Summary Sheet
- Follow-Up Exercise (Transforming One's Questions to the Generative)

C. Session Notes - file names

- Appreciative Inquiry Agreement Made at Workshop
- ISA Session: Top Three Themes
- ISA Session: Destiny & Delivery (This includes the Provocative Proposition and the list of the ideas generated)
- ISA Session: Follow-Through Ideas

D. Article

"Managing with the Brain" by David Rock (PDF file)

APPENDIX F

AI Facilitator Detailed Planning/Timing - ISA Team Retreat

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
8:30 – 9:00	Coffee and Gathering Overview of Retreat	CD Player: Music
9:00 – 9:15 (15 min)	AI Objectives	Powerpoint
9:15 – 9:20 (5 min)	AI Agreement	Flipchart – capture ideas
9:20 – 9:40 (20 min)	AI Overview Participant Wishes Session	PowerPoint Colored Cards
9:40 – 10:40	AI: Paired Interviews	Handouts: Interview Guide Guidelines and Tips Summary Sheet
<i>10:40 – 11:00</i>	<i>Break (built into activity)</i>	
11:00 – 11:15 (15 min)	Complete Summary Complete	
11:15 – 11:45 (30 min)	Pairs in Groups of 4: Share stories and list themes, quotes, wishes	Colored note paper Note-taker/timer
<i>12:15 – 1:30 (60 min)</i>	<i>Lunch break</i>	
11:45 – 12:00 (15 min)	Groups select three top themes/quotes to share with whole group. Do Energy-gram: individual top 3	Flip Charts (4) Presenter of selection Individuals – colored marker (*)
<i>12:00 – 1:30</i>	<i>Lunch Break & enjoy resort</i>	
		Energy-gram
1:30 – 2:00 (30 min)	Visual: Select core themes and create a visual image/skit	Creative Resources
2:00 – 2:15 (15 min.)	Share “visual” with whole group	Take photos of each visual with group
2:15 – 2:45 (30 min)	Dream: Groups write a Provocative Proposition 15 minutes – in groups 15 minutes – consolidate	Change Teams/Partners Flip Chart Flip Chart paper for each group

	into one for all	
2:45 – 3:00	Break	
2:45 – 3:00	<i>Break</i>	
3:00 – 3:30 (30 min)	Design: How? What would make it a reality? List Actions	Sticky Notes - many One idea per sticky note 5 Flip Charts for Each Focus Area
3:30 – 4:00 (30 min)	Destiny/Delivery Commit to actions, offer assistance, make a request	As individuals – identify top actions/commitments - review choices and discuss
	Day 2 Note: To continue with “Destiny/Delivery” – specific actions/priorities	
3:30 – 4:20 (concurrent)	“Personalized Appreciative Message Sheet” for each member of the team – each participant contributed one statement	(Inspired by team member (L. Koopmans) - colored sheets - passed around the room during the final activity
4:00 – 4:20 (20 min)	Practice Exercise: Formulating Positive Questions	Handout: Exercise - folded in half
4:20	Personalized Appreciative Message Sheet: Given to each member (private moment)	Concluding with each member reading about the things their colleagues appreciate about them.
4:30	-- Follow-through Suggestions: 1. Interview colleagues 2. Use Positive Questions guide to support ongoing practice. -- Acknowledgements -- Participant Evaluations	Recipe Cards (Evaluation)
Evening	- Bocce Game & Dinner	Opportunity to engage with the team informally

Day 2: ISA Retreat

PLANNING DAY: Facilitated by the Associate Director

This day will build upon the AI Session. The Associate Director will lead the team through their annual forward planning process during the second day.

Having participated in the AI session, he will be able to build upon the outcomes and insights generated and building upon the “provocative proposition”. His intention is to continue to utilize AI questions in his ongoing approach and to have the team members do the same in their reflective process.

APPENDIX G

NEXT STEPS – IMPLEMENTATION PHASE 1

ISA Guidelines, Operations and Training Manual Project

Report excerpt: “In ISA Operations and Training Manual will assist the team in striving for ongoing excellence. The intention is to capitalize on the AI perspective and expertise and build upon the progress made during the AI Workshop and follow-ups. The generative approach is seen to emphasize possibilities, as well as enhance team involvement, innovation and ownership. It also provides an opportunity for ongoing mentorship by the AI consultant.”

ISA Guidelines, Operations and Training Manual

Handout for Initial Planning Meeting – ISA Team

The Provocative Proposition: Centre of Excellence for Student Service

AI Workshop: ISA Team Mission Statement

“We utilize our full potential and collaborate with the university and the local and global communities to provide personalized, flexible, culturally relevant, mentoring and exemplary service.”

Professional expertise: knowledgeable, current, using state of art methodology

Important work: Making a difference, passion for the field, effectiveness

Student-centeredness: Making a positive difference, caring, culturally aware

Teamwork: Recognizing individuals and teams’ strengths, cooperation, enjoyment

Values: Appreciative, treating others in a way you want to be treated, integrity

Strategy: AI: Focusing on the creative potential; what we “want more of”, dream big

A. Building Upon Best Practices and Goals

Selected destiny/delivery goals and strategies generated from workshop:

- i. Consistency within the tasks undertaken and information provided by team.
- ii. Incorporate input from students when evolving service mechanisms.
- iii. Opportunity for team members to contribute ideas for improvement.
- iv. Refinement of internal structures and dissemination of information
- v. Strong collaboration between TRU World units and other departments
- vi. Use of technologies and innovation; client responsiveness, streamlining work, information sharing and consistency

Discussion: Current priorities, practices and needs of ISA team

B. Project: ISA Manual – A Dynamic Resource

- a. Student focus
 - b. Professional focus
 - c. Guiding Principles, Methodology and Approach
1. Who are the key stakeholders? How to best incorporate your/their input?
 2. Status to date and overall vision
 3. Roles: Team Lead: Jamshid M. , Content Experts: AD and ISA Team members
Facilitator: Consultant (V. Wojna)

C. Next Step: In-Depth input

AI facilitator (V.Wojna) met with individuals as well as teams: Input on priorities as well as additional ideas regarding optimization of student services and enhancement of teamwork. During these discussions, there were opportunities to reframe issues into the generative perspective. Information is reflected back to the team and administration in the generative format; possibilities, intentions and outcomes.

1. Example of re-framing to generative during meetings:

Issue as presented by team member:

“We are not given sufficient time to develop and establish a new procedure before it is implemented. Sometimes we are not clear as things are done at the last minute. It is not that I am not willing to change, I am not confident that we’ve thought it through properly. As a result, the implementation was not fully successful.”

Issue Reframed:

Longer time lines for proposing and developing a new procedure would contribute to greater success in implementation. It would also allow for greater clarity and confidence by the team implementing the new procedure.

What would be an ideal time line? What is the improvement made possible by the new procedure? What elements would be helpful to include in the planning process?

2. Invitation to Team Members:

The optional invitation was shared with team members at the end of the one on one meeting. (All were enthusiastic about the challenge.) They were given the following handout:

Take the one week challenge:

Don’t talk about anything you don’t want, don’t need or don’t like.

Talk about what you want, need and like. The best that can happen.

See what happens for you

And those around you.

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