Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry
in Conversation and in Action

Edited by
Marge Schiller
Matthew Moehle
Peter Whitehouse

Sponsored by
Appreciating People
Welcome to May 2015 issue of Al Practitioner

Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry in Conversation and in Action celebrates the diversity and generativity of intergenerational conversations. Business, education and communities show what they can achieve by reaching out and connecting with different age groups. They share their successful methods to 'go between in order to create the beyond'.

In her Feature Choice, Jacqueline Wong develops a model for engaged governance in reviewing the momentous citizen engagement process in Singapore that involved 660 dialogues, 47,000 who met in face-to-face meetings and 4,000 more who engaged online.

In Research Review & Notes, Gail Simon at the University of Bedfordshire in the UK highlights cases on collaborative or reflexive inquiry from social services.

AI Resources includes a variety of resources related to intergenerational efforts that celebrate diversity.

We would like to thank Appreciating People for sponsoring this issue.

Anne Radford
Editor, Al Practitioner
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Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry in Conversation and in Action

This issue of AI Practitioner focuses on the connection between intergenerational interactions and Appreciative Inquiry, and how this connection can be reflected in conversations, in actions and in the stance we take in everyday situations.

This issue of AI Practitioner celebrates the diversity of human experience and the intergenerational power of sharing and learning from our different perspectives and experiences. We highlight how Appreciative Inquiry has been a source of inspiration for people to turn multigenerational efforts into intergenerational efforts. We are excited about Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry. Like the difference between multi and interdisciplinary the prefix “inter” draws attention to importance of deeper, more powerful connecting relationships.

It has become popular to categorize individuals by age and generation. References to “millennials” circulate in the press and social media seemingly constantly. Other labels include Gen X, Baby Boomers, Teenages, Seniors, Gen Y, The Greatest Generation, iGen, Traditionalis, War Children and more. We categorize individuals by age as soon as they start formal school, when we divide individuals by grade levels based almost exclusively on age. Because this categorization is so prevalent, seeing beyond socially constructed walls between age groups can be just as difficult as seeing alternatives to traditional deficit-based problem-solving approaches to change!

This is not to say that there are not benefits to understanding the differences between an infant and a toddler, a first grader and a fifth grader, and recognizing that someone in their 20s holds a different reality of the world than someone in their 50s. Indeed, there is theoretical and practical value in understanding developmental stages.
In multigenerational settings, differences in ages and the resulting differing perspectives based on generational perspectives are not fully valued ... intergenerational interactions happen when generational diversity is celebrated and leveraged.

However, when age and generational differences are treated as problems, such labels can bring about biases and limitations much as labels of religion, gender and race can.

In intergenerational interactions – engaging with people of different ages and stages of life – is an opportunity to go beyond what would otherwise be possible, to maximize innovative potential and realize new levels of generativity. We coined the word “intergenerative” to call attention to the creative energy that occurs when fields of knowledge, theories and practices as well as generations, disciplines, professionals, nations and faiths come into dynamic tension with each other.

This issue focuses on the connection between Intergenerational interactions and Appreciative Inquiry and how this connection can be reflected in conversations, in actions, and in the stance we take to everyday situations.

**What do we mean by intergenerational?**

Intergenerational interactions happen through multi-age conversations and actions. Generativity is maximized when the limitations created by socially constructed labels based on people’s age are minimized. When generational differences are leveraged as strengths rather than treated as barriers to understanding, transformative conversations emerge and our capacity for positive possibilities expands.

Intergenerational interactions are a specific type of multigenerational interaction. In both, people from different generations come together in conversation and action. However, in multigenerational interactions, the strengths inherent in such diversity are not being leveraged. In the workplace, multigenerational workforces have been characterized as something that needs to be managed and overcome.

In contrast, intergenerational interactions happen when we leverage generational diversity. In intergenerational interactions, engaging with people of different generations is seen as opportunity. We can go beyond what would otherwise be possible. Instead of allowing socially constructed labels based on people’s ages to be barriers, they are seen as a means to something greater. By embracing intergenerational interactions, we open ourselves up to transformative conversations and actions with those of another generation.

By moving from multigenerational interactions to intergenerational interactions, we expand our mutual capacity for the positive. In intergenerational settings, having different ages together creates a maximum mix that is magic.

This May 2015 issue of *AI Practitioner* focuses on theoretical and practical aspects of intergenerational interactions – cases and stories when multiple ages of individuals come together to increases opportunity, possibility and generativity. This issue highlights theoretical concepts and practical examples from individuals, businesses, schools, communities, families and other organizations that flourish through the maximum mix of ages and perspectives. We see this maximum mix as intergenerational magic.
For most people, our most fundamental intergenerational experiences are those with our families.

**Intergenerational AI Methods**

*Film Portraits: Their Potential for Appreciative Intergenerational Conversations* (De Jong)

*I Have a Dream*: Intergenerational AI and Communities A Call for Intergenerational Dreaming (Wright)

*Appreciating All Generations: Intergenerational Dialogue* (Stratton-Berkessel)

**Intergenerational AI and Business**

*Mentorship is Ageless: It is About Gratitude, Reciprocity and Appreciation* (McKenna and Pascoe)

*Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry Helps Managers Move Beyond Generational Misconceptions in the Workplace* (Steele Flippin)

**Intergenerational AI and Communities**

*Appreciative Intergenerational Community Building: A Strengths-Based Approach in Uganda* (Bodiford and Araali)

*Intergenerational Community Building: Generations Coming Together to Make a Change in Their Community* (Bodiford)

*Generations United: Because We are Stronger Together* (Butts)

*Girls About Political Participation (GAPP)* (Schiller and Marshall)

**Intergenerational AI and Education**

*Beyond Intergenerational to Intergenerative: Going Between to Imagine Beyond* (Whitehouse)

*Appreciating Young People: Conversations that Matter* (James)

*Young People in a School Setting Making a Positive Difference to Senior Citizens in their Community* (Knight and Willoughby)

*The First Appreciative Education Conference: A Story of Intergenerational Ingenuity* (Bloom, Suarez, Wooten, Waldroup, Kirk, Baskerville and Smith)

**Intergenerational AI and Thriving Families**

*Lessons from Ancestors: My Historical Intergenerational Appreciative Inquiry* (Myers)

*Appreciative Intergenerational Conversations: A Place to Flourish* (Alexandra Stavros)

*Intergenerational Conversations Toward End of Life: Structure for Storytelling, Inquiry and Dialogue* (Silbert and Vargas)

For most people, our most fundamental intergenerational experiences are those with our families. In this world where children have a promise of greater longevity and elders the possibility of enhanced legacy, intergenerational relationships and experiences are an imperative for human flourishing. Thus, we share photos of each of our families to highlight the importance of connecting with, celebrating and learning from our most fundamental intergenerational experiences. As you read the articles in this issue, we invite you to connect with and celebrate your foundational intergenerational experiences as well.

Marge Schiller, Matthew Moehle and Peter Whitehouse, May, 2015
Marge’s family, including three generations: sister and spouse, sons, Simon, Marge and grandchildren. This photo was taken at a lifetime achievement ceremony that was Marge’s honor. The occasion also marked the launch of the GAPP project Marge discusses in her article in this issue.

Matt’s family, including his parents, brothers, and his family’s youngest generation on the occasion of his parents’ 40th wedding anniversary.

Peter with his wife Cathy, co-creator of their three creative daughters and three intergenerational schools in Cleveland (with more to come around the world).
Results
Results are expected from any client engagement, and one of the most frequently asked questions regarding an engagement using Appreciative Inquiry. We, the practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry, know that using AI methodology and practices delivers results yet find ourselves challenged at times to be able to quantify them. It is the ability to quantify results that lends credibility to a process and also encourages those of us using the process to think of the engagement in new ways. How do we quantify results, what questions do we need to ask at the beginning of an engagement, do we need to change our processes or do we need to think about our application of the Appreciative Inquiry process from a new perspective? These are questions that will be answered through the articles in this issue and ought to be discussed among practitioners using Appreciative Inquiry.

Clients
It is the client who ultimately decides the result of an engagement using Appreciative Inquiry. The articles in this issue will be co-authored by practitioners and their respective clients in regard to an engagement, giving voice to the client and their perspective. The articles review engagements in the areas of business, education, government and the non-profit sector, while also providing a review on the literature regarding results through Appreciative Inquiry, and discussion between two of the thought leaders in the field of AI and positive emotions. The issue will closes with a section of tools that facilitate the delivery of results, taken from the articles in the issue.
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Purpose of AI Practitioner
This publication is for people interested in making the world a better place using positive relational approaches to change such as Appreciative Inquiry. The publication is distributed quarterly: February, May, August and November.

AI Practitioner Editor/Publisher
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