

# The Appreciative Inquiry Curriculum Retreat: Encouraging Positive Change

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# Goals

- Describe the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) retreat method
- Review the benefits of AI for use in faculty-directed curriculum retreats
- Give examples of activities used to promote team-building and creativity
- Discuss the benefits of engaging students in curriculum retreats

# Appreciative Inquiry

- Primarily an organizational development method
  - » Focuses on increasing what an organization does well rather than eliminating what it does badly
- Through an *inquiry* which *appreciates* the positive
  - » Seeks to renew, develop and build on this



# The Basis of the AI Approach

- An “asset-based approach”
- Every organization, every person in that organization, has positive aspects than can be built upon
- “What is working well?” “What is good about what you are doing currently?”

# Other Approaches

- May be based on a *deficiency* model
- Questions are couched in terms of challenges
  - » Assumes that something is wrong or that something needs to be fixed
- “What are the problems?” “What is wrong?” or “What needs to be fixed?”



# What Distinguishes AI?

## PROBLEM SOLVING

- Identification of a problem(s)
- Analysis of a cause
- Analysis of possible solutions
- Action planning (treatment)

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

- Appreciating the best of what is
- Envisioning what might be
- Engaging in dialogue about what should be
- Innovating, what will be

# Goals of AI

- A way of asking questions and envisioning the future in order to foster positive relationships
- Build on the present potential of a person, organization or situation
- Enhance internal capacity for collaboration and change

# Use of AI for Curriculum Retreats

- Make a move away from the classic “SWOT” analysis
  
- Get people generating new, positive images that are shared by the group
  - » Use of phrases, metaphors and stories that have shared meaning for group
  - » Capture your wildest dream
  - » Develop a group identity



# The 4 Processes of the AI Cycle

- Discover – identify processes that work well
- Dream – envision processes that work well in the future
- Design – plan and prioritize processes that work well
- Destiny (or Deliver) – implement the proposed design



# Benefits of the AI Approach

- Build or re-build a curriculum around what works as opposed to fixing what doesn't
- Take a positive focus on how to increase exceptional performance instead of improving poor skills and practices
- Motivational – leads to continuous improvement

# Curriculum Preparation

- Faculty given information about AI process
- Asked to ponder the following:
  - » Expectations for retreat? Goals?
  - » Individual strengths, as well as the strengths of the faculty, program, institution and graduates



# Retreat Format

- Invited an outside facilitator to lead the 2-day session
  - » Off-campus
- Started with establishing ground rules
- Led into faculty expectations, followed by goals
  - » Reviewed purpose of choosing AI as the format for the retreat



# Phase I – “Discovery”

- Strengths
  - » Vision of the “most excellent” PA graduate
  - » Individual faculty strengths
  - » Campus strengths
  - » Program strengths
  - » Curriculum strengths
- Shared stories or favorite memories illustrating areas of strength

# Make it Interesting...

- Taking breaks to get to know each other
- Faculty submitted the name of a favorite song, movie and a bit of information no other faculty knew about him/her
  - » Played music videos and movie clips at breaks
  - » Gussed which music and movie belonged to which faculty member
  - » Did the same with the information



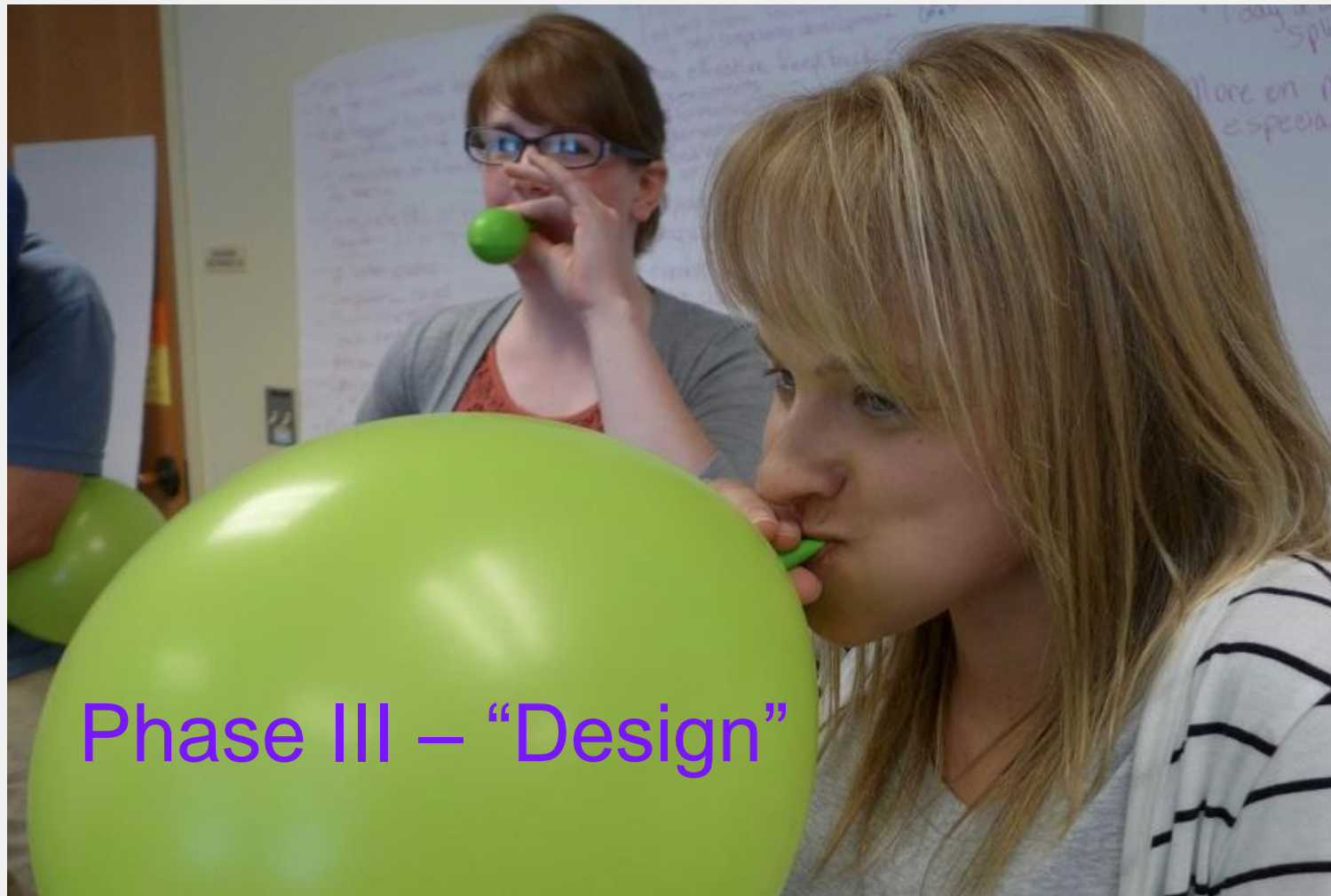
## Phase II – “Dream”

- Consider strengths in order to build an image of a dream curriculum
- Team-building used to help stimulate creative thought
  - » Shown to increase the effectiveness of relationships
  - » Also creates a more cohesive environment
- Break-up the more mentally taxing activities

# Team-Building and Creativity







Phase III – “Design”

# Stimulating Creativity

- Appeal to different learning styles
  - » Tactile, auditory, visual
- Physical creativity shown to promote creative thinking
- Maintain a relaxed environment
  - » Eases tension when you have a task
- Candy
  - » It's just good



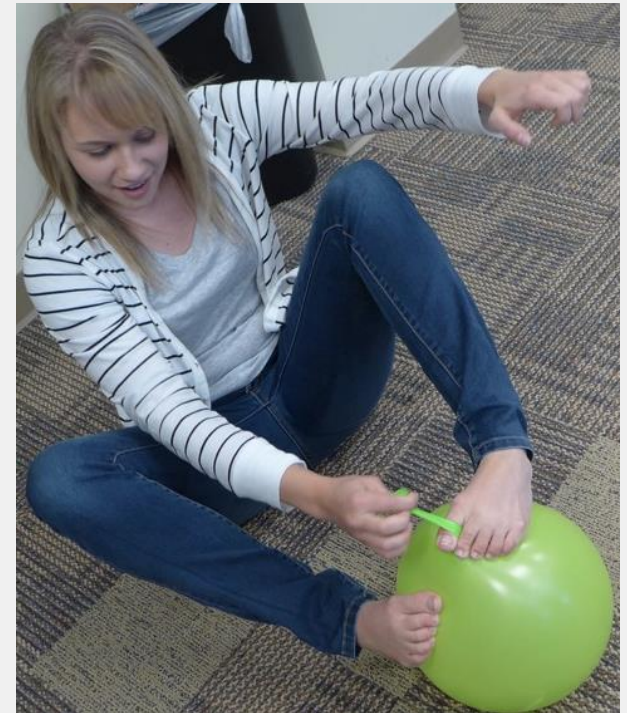
# Identifying a Shared Vision

- Although largely part of the “Discovery” phase, this occurs throughout the AI process
- Group members are reminded that they have the same goals
  - » We hoped the faculty had a shared vision, but did not truly know that until going through this process



# Students and Curriculum Retreats

- Recreated the process with the students
- Somewhat abbreviated but the questions were the same
- Outcome - students shared the same vision
  - » (even though they may have taken a different path to get there...)



## THE “MOST EXCELLENT” PA GRADUATE

# Sharing the Vision with Students

- Knowledgeable clinician
- Life-long learners
- Adaptable/resilient
- Professional/invested
- Systems-oriented
- Passionate
- Clinically competent
- Self-directed learning
- Flexible
- Gives back to profession
- Aware of resources
- Happy/fulfilled



# The “Dream” Curriculum

- Clinically focused
- Learner-centered
- Competency-based
- Integrated
- Creative
- A source of scholarship



# Phase IV – “Destiny”

- A curriculum that will encompass all the components of the faculty and students’ shared vision
- Creative ways in which to deliver clinical and didactic curricula
- Keep the momentum



# Summary

- Appreciative Inquiry method enhances capacity for collaboration and change
- Novel approach that encourages positive, creative thinking
- Having students and faculty with a shared vision allows for continued momentum



# Resources

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