

Ai Practitioner

The international newsletter of Ai best practice

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Ai Practitioner is published 4 times a year in November, February, May and August. To subscribe go to www.aipractitioner.com



Editorial - Why I Care about Schools

The question raised in this Issue is: How we can partner and support schools with Appreciative Inquiry? My own determination to find answers began on September 11, 2001. I was standing in front of 70 hotel executives in New York City presenting Appreciative Inquiry as a concept and philosophy. As I looked at these top executives, I realized that their skill in problem solving was a large element of

why they were there. To stimulate their re-framing of what change is and how to find it I asked a question I had never asked before- “Is then the same as now?” Those of you who have read “The Story of B” may recognize this as the key question about change asked by author Daniel Quinn.

While we began to talk about what is different in the world, the news broke that the world trade centers had been bombed. The executive’s crisis team went into action. One of the secretaries went to get her little daughter Rachel from day care and I ended up “babysitting” because others were busy and it was the most useful thing I could think to do. As Rachel (age 3) and I walked around the office, people kept on telling me how important it was to them to hear Rachel’s voice and see her happy little face. I learned then that my images of hope are in the voices of children. Until 9/11 I had always worked in Corporations and with large agencies I had never worked with kids or in schools. Now that is what I do. I can think of no more important work. My dream is that within 3 years we will have 50 AI school initiatives around the world and 50 more in the USA.

This issue of *Ai Practitioner* provides some clues. Read about strategic planning in Pennsylvania and California schools in the USA, hear the voice of a committed school superintendent, get to know about Heathside school and the marvelous work of headmaster Glyn Willoughby and the team in the U.K.. Be introduced to a profound intervention with at risk kids in Cleveland, Ohio and the dramatic difference the work of Charley Pratt has made in the GLEAMS program. Mergers are most threatening and acquisition of schools can be very difficult. Read about how a Principal and his staff used AI to bring three schools together. You can



find out about how a French School board in Ontario Canada used AI and what they learned. A Parochial school under the direction of Sister Marilyn ran an AI School Summit and a charter school in Ohio tells their story about the work titled WOW! Miriam Ricketts and Jim Willis share their experience of integrating Ai with Experiential Education. We also invite you to respond to Jackie Stavros’ call for cases to be included in an upcoming AI and Schools book. If you have AI training and a passion for learning, education and children join the Positive Change Corps. Join us in working with schools, teachers, children, parents and communities to find the positive core of education; to re-form our positive images of schools into positive actions.

Ai Practitioner Guest Editor **Marjorie Schiller, Ph.D.** is an organizational consultant , teacher, speaker and writer with international experience. She is the founder of the Positive Change Corps and the co author and editor of “Appreciative Leaders:in the eye of the Beholder”. She lives in Hingham, Massachusetts and Hillsboro Beach, Florida USA.