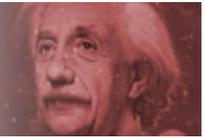


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Definitions of Appreciative Inquiry

 mail to:

The following is a collection of definitions of **Appreciative Inquiry** which have developed over the years. We invite you to quote these definitions or develop your own. Let us know how people respond to these as you share them with clients, students, colleagues, and inquirers.

"Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discover of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an "unconditional positive question' often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people."

Cooperrider, D.L. & Whitney, D., "Appreciative Inquiry: A positive revolution in change." In P. Holman & T. Devane (eds.), *The Change Handbook*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., pages 245-263.

"The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; since we look for problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them. ...Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organization. The tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success."

Hammond, Sue. *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing Company, 1998, pages 6-7.

"Appreciative Inquiry focuses us on the positive aspects of our lives and leverages them to correct the negative. It's the opposite of 'problem-solving.'"

White, T.H. Working in Interesting Times: Employee morale and business success in the information age. *Vital Speeches of the Day*, May 15, 1996, Vol XLII, No. 15.

"Appreciative Inquiry [is] a theory and practice for approaching change from a holistic framework. Based on the belief that human systems are made and imagined by those who live and work within them, AI leads systems to move toward the generative and creative images that reside in their most positive core – their values, visions, achievements, and best practices." "AI is both a world view and a practical process. In theory, AI is a perspective, a set of principles and beliefs about how human systems function, a departure from the past metaphor of human systems as machines. Appreciative Inquiry has an attendant set of core processes, practices, and even 'models' that have emerged. In practice, AI can be used to co-create the transformative processes and practices appropriate to the culture of a particular organization." "Grounded in the theory of 'social constructionism,' AI recognizes that human systems are constructions of the imagination and are, therefore, capable of change at the speed of imagination. Once organization members shift their perspective, they can begin to invent their most desired future."

Watkins, J.M. & Bernard J. Mohr. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*, Jossey-Bass, 2001, pages xxxi - xxxii

"[Appreciative Inquiry] deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties – their essential contributions and achievements. And it is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible. Appreciative Inquiry builds momentum and success because it believes in people. It really is an invitation to a positive revolution. Its goal is to discover in all human beings the exceptional and the essential. Its goal is to create organizations that are in full voice!"

Cooperrider, D.L. et. al. (Eds) , *Lessons from the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*, Thin Book Publishing, 2001, page 12.

"Appreciative Inquiry is a form of organizational study that selectively seeks to highlight what are referred to as "life-giving forces" (LGF's) of the organization's existence. These are " – the unique structure and processes of (an) organization that makes its very existence possible. LGF's may be ideas, beliefs, or values around which the organizing activity takes place."

Srivastva, S., et al. *Wonder and Affirmation*, (undated from *Lessons of the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*, page 42.)

"AI is an exciting way to embrace organizational change. Its assumption is simple: Every organization has something that works right – things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy and vision for change." "...AI recognizes that every organization is an open system that depends on its human capital to bring its vision and purpose to life." "... The outcome of an AI initiative is a long-term positive change in the organization." "... AI is important because it works to bring the whole organization together to build upon its positive core. AI encourages people to work together to promote a better understanding of the human system, the heartbeat of the organization."

Cooperrider, David L; Whitney, Diana; and Stavros, Jacqueline M., *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change*, Lakeshore Communications, 2003, Pages XVII – XIX

AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question, often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. ...AI deliberately, in everything it does, seeks to work from accounts of the "positive change core" – and it assumes that every living system has many untapped and rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized." ...As people are brought together to listen carefully to the innovations and moments of organizational "life," sometimes in storytelling modes and sometimes in interpretive and analytic modes, a convergence zone is created where the future begins to be discerned in the form of visible patterns interwoven into the texture of the actual. ...Images of the future emerge out of grounded examples from an organization's positive past. ... [This convergence zone facilitates] the collective repatterning of human systems."

Cooperrider, David L, et. Al, *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change*, Stipes Publishing, 2000.

"Appreciative Inquiry is a form of action research that attempts to create new theories/ideas /images that aide in the developmental change of a system (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987.) The key data collection innovation of appreciative inquiry is the collection of people's stories of something at its best... These stories are collectively discussed in order to create new, generative ideas or images that aid in the developmental change of the collectivity discussing them."

Bushe, Gervase, "Five Theories of Change Embedded in Appreciative Inquiry," presented at the 18th Annual World Congress of Organization Development, 1998.

"AI is intentional inquiry and directed conversation and story-telling that leads to a place of possibility. Possibility is fresh, new, and sacred. The story is the genesis of all that is human. Societies are stories, as are companies, schools, cities, families and individuals. There are bricks and mortar and flesh and bones, but all of it comes from a story. Even the flesh and bones of one person comes from a story of two people uniting to form another. I can think of a many moments where groups reached a profound spot with Ai and touched a sense of freedom. Usually one person would say something like, "From what we heard in these stories, we could_..." and there follows a collective deep breath and then silence as people consider the new "we could". Possibility sits in the room as a space of silence and then thought fills the space. Where does the thought that enters at that time, which has a feeling of vitality and newness, come from? It does not come from the person who spoke because that person would not have developed that thought without the conversations that led to synapses firing in a certain way. The thought is not merely a product of the collective because an individual must form the thought. The thought comes out of relationship, conversation, and newly created images. This "thing called Ai" is one of the finest ways to experience the power of language and to hone our skills with words, ideas, and stories. There are times when the possibility is so stunning the group has to sit in silence if just for a couple ticks before saying, "well, yes, maybe, why not, let's do it." There must be a gap that arises in the field of the known to entertain the unbridled possibility of novelty. There is a break in the routine story and supporting conversations so something new can creep in. This is the opening where novelty can arise. With no gap, we only have the billiard ball predictability of continuity. The openness to new ideas is not coerced. People don't have to force each other to listen to other's ideas and possibilities: minds are opened because the nature of the stories are so compelling and energetic."

Steinbach, John. Contribution to the AI Listserve, July 2005

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What is Appreciative Inquiry?

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from *A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry* by David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.

Ap-pre'ci-ate, v., 1. *valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us; affirming past and present strengths, successes, and potentials; to perceive those things that give life (health, vitality, excellence) to living systems* 2. *to increase in value, e.g. the economy has appreciated in value. Synonyms: VALUING, PRIZING, ESTEEMING, and HONORING.*

In-quire' (kwir), v., 1. *the act of exploration and discovery.* 2. *To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION, STUDY.*

Appreciative Inquiry is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It centrally involves the mobilization of inquiry through the crafting of the "unconditional positive question" often-involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people. In AI the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design. AI seeks, fundamentally, to build a constructive union between a whole people and the massive entirety of what people talk about as past and present capacities: achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, insights into the deeper corporate spirit or soul-- and visions of valued and possible futures. Taking all of these together as a gestalt, AI deliberately, in everything it does, seeks to work from accounts of this "positive change core"—and it assumes that every living system has many untapped and rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.

Read the complete excerpt from [A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry](#) by David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.

For more definitions and explanations of Appreciative Inquiry [click here](#).

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Appreciative inquiry

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Appreciative Inquiry (sometimes shortened to "AI") is primarily an organisational development method which seeks to engage all levels of an organisation (and often its customers and suppliers) to renew, change and improved performance. Its exponents view it as being applicable to organisations facing rapid change or growth.^[1] David Cooperrider is generally credited with coining the term 'Appreciative Inquiry'.

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- 1 The Basis of the AI approach
- 2 What distinguishes AI
- 3 Implementing AI
- 4 Associations with other approaches
- 5 AI's Uses
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The Basis of the AI approach

The Appreciative Inquiry model is based on the assumption that the questions we ask will tend to focus our attention in a particular direction. Some other methods of assessing and evaluating a situation and then proposing solutions are based on a *deficiency* model. Some other methods ask questions such as “What are the problems?”, “What’s wrong?” or “What needs to be fixed?”.

Instead of asking “What’s the problem?”, some other methods couch the question in terms of challenges, which AI argues maintains a basis of deficiency, the thinking behind the questions assuming that there is something wrong, or that something needs to be fixed or solved.^[2]

Appreciative Inquiry takes an alternative approach. As a self defined "asset-based approach" it starts with the belief that every organisation, and every person in that organisation, has positive aspects that can be built upon. It asks questions like “What’s working well?”, “What’s good about what you are currently doing?”^[3]

Some researchers believe that excessive focus on dysfunctions can actually cause them to become worse or fail to become better^[4]. By contrast, AI argues, when all members of an organisation are motivated to understand and value the most favourable features of its culture, it can make rapid improvements.^[5]

Strength-based methods are used in the creation of organisational development strategy and implementation of organisational effectiveness tactics.^[6] The *appreciative* mode of inquiry often relies on interviews to qualitatively understand the organisation's potential strengths by looking at an organisation's experience and its potential; the objective is to elucidate the assets and personal motivations that are its strengths.

What distinguishes AI

The following table illustrates how AI supporters describe some of the distinctions between Appreciative Inquiry and approaches to organisational development not based on what they call positive potential^[7]:

Problem Solving	Appreciative inquiry
Felt need, identification of problem(s)	Appreciating, valuing the Best of What Is
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning what might be
Analysis of possible solutions	Engaging in dialogue about what should be
Action Planning (treatment)	Innovating, what will be

Appreciative Inquiry attempts to use ways of asking questions and envisioning the future in-order to foster positive relationships and build on the present potential of a given person, organisation or situation. Applied research has demonstrated that this method can enhance an organisation's internal capacity for collaboration and change.^[8] Appreciative Inquiry utilises a cycle of 4 processes, which focuses on what it calls:

1. **DISCOVER:** The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. **DREAM:** The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. **DESIGN:** Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. **DESTINY (or DELIVER):** The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.^[9]

The basic idea is then to build - or rebuild - organisations around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't. AI practitioners endeavour to convey this approach as the opposite of problem-solving, with a positive focus on how to increase exceptional performance instead of reactive remediation of skills and practices. AI assumes that this line of reasoning is motivational because organisational development work does not stop when a particular problem is solved but leads to continuous improvement. The method draws from stories of success in an attempt to create meaning.

Implementing AI

There are a variety of approaches to implementing Appreciative Inquiry, including mass-mobilised interviews and a large, diverse gathering called an Appreciative Inquiry Summit^[10]. Both approaches involve bringing large, diverse groups of people together to study and build upon the best in an organisation or community.

Associations with other approaches

The basic philosophy of AI is also found in other positively oriented approaches to individual change as well as organisational change. The principles behind A.I. are based in the science of Positive Psychology. The idea of building on strength, rather than just focusing on faults and weakness is used in mentoring programs, and in coaching dynamics. It is the basic idea behind teaching "micro-affirmations" as well as teaching about micro-inequities. (See Microinequity^[11])

AI's Uses

AI has been used as an OD and management consultancy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Management_consulting%7C) tool to identify scope for change and create momentum towards this in

businesses, health care bodies, social non-profit organisations, educational institutions, and government operations^[12]. Although originating in the United States, it has also attracted interest in the United Kingdom, for instance recognisably one of the stimuli for the approach used by the public health National Support Teams.

See also

- Brainstorming
- Geoffrey Vickers introduced concept of 'Appreciative Systems'(1968)
- Kenneth J. Gergen instrumental in social constructionism
- David Cooperrider is known for the Appreciative Inquiry Handbook and other works on the topic of AI.

References

1. ^ Theodore Kinni, "The Art of Appreciative Inquiry", The Harvard Business School Working Knowledge for Business Leaders Newsletter, September 22, 2003.
2. ^ Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>
3. ^ Eaton, Sarah Elaine, "Appreciative Inquiry: An Overview" <http://www.scribd.com/doc/56010589/Appreciative-Inquiry-An-Overview>"
4. ^ January 17, 2005, Time Magazine, The Science of Happiness (Cover Story & Special Issue)<http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/images/TimeMagazine/Time-Happiness.pdf>
5. ^ *Background* <http://www.new-paradigm.co.uk/Appreciative.htm>
6. ^ <http://www.mt-online.com/component/content/article/77-february2007/228-building-strength-based-organizations.html>
7. ^ Case Western Reserve University, Appreciative Inquiry Commons; <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>
8. ^ *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry* defines AI (Appreciative Inquiry) as "the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems, at their best" (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003)
9. ^ "Appreciative Inquiry" <http://www.new-paradigm.co.uk/Appreciative.htm>.
10. ^ http://www.positivechange.org/downloads/AI_and_Spiritual_ResonanceV.Final.pdf
11. ^ Rowe Micro-Affirmations and Micro-inequities in the Journal of the International Ombudsman Association, Volume 1, Number 1, March 2008.
12. ^ <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/join/easySubmit.cfm>

External links

- Appreciative Inquiry Commons (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>) at Case Western Reserve University
- Appreciative Inquiry (<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item.jhtml?id=3684&t=innovation>) at Harvard Business School
- Inquérito Apreciativo (<http://inqueritoapreciativo.atspace.com/>) (**Portuguese**)
- Appreciative Inquiry Conference 2007 (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/conference.cfm/>) The Power of Positive Change
- Begeistring Organisations (<http://www.networkplace.eu/>) -The European Network around Appreciative Inquiry and Strength Based Change
- [1] (<http://www.scribd.com/doc/56010589/Appreciative-Inquiry-An-Overview>) Appreciative Inquiry: An Overview
- Cooperrider, D. L. (2007). Business as an agent of world benefit: Awe is what moves us forward. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from [2] (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/executiveDetail.cfm?coid=10419>)

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David Cooperrider

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

David Cooperrider is the Fairmount Minerals Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University, and Faculty Director at the Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit at Case.^[1]

According to *Ode*, "In the field of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, David leads the movement towards a more sustainable future, as manifested in many international forums and gatherings, such as the Global Forum 'Business as an Agent of World Benefit: Management Knowledge Leading Positive Change'".^[2]

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Educational background

Professor Cooperrider completed his undergraduate studies at Augustana College in 1976.^[*citation needed*] He earned a Master's of Science at George Williams University in 1983.^[*citation needed*] His Ph.D. was conferred by Case Western Reserve University in 1985.^[*citation needed*]

Contributions

Cooperrider is best known for his work in the field of appreciative inquiry, and organizational development (OD) methodology for organizational renewal.

His works include:

- Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D., & Stavros, J. M. (2003). *Appreciative inquiry handbook*. Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers.
- Cooperrider, D. L. (2007). *Business as an agent of world benefit: Awe is what moves us forward*. [1] (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/practice/executiveDetail.cfm?coid=10419>)
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (2008). *A positive revolution in change: Appreciative inquiry*. [2] (<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/whatisai.pdf>)

See also

- Weatherhead Collection

References

- [^] <http://weatherhead.case.edu/faculty/David-Cooperrider/>
- [^] http://www.odemagazine.com/blogs/intelligent_optimists/13612/david_cooperrider

External links

- Professor Cooperrider featured in The Weatherhead Collection - Book 1(pg. 16) (http://weatherhead.case.edu/about/media/publications/the_collection_perspective_pages_highres.pdf)
- Presentation from 2008 International Alliance for Learning Conference (<http://www.ialearn.org/index.php>)

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Categories: Organizational studies and human resource management | American academics

| Case Western Reserve University faculty | Living people

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Geoffrey Vickers

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Sir **Charles Geoffrey Vickers** VC (13 October 1894 - 16 March 1982) was an English lawyer, administrator, writer and pioneering systems scientist. He had varied interests with roles at different times with the London Passenger Transport Board, Law Society, Medical Research Council and Mental Health Research Fund.

He also had a distinguished military career, being awarded the Victoria Cross in World War I while serving in The Sherwood Foresters (The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment), and in World War II he was Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in charge of economic intelligence and member of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

He was knighted in 1946. The Sir Geoffrey Vickers Memorial Award has been presented by the International Society for the Systems Sciences every year since 1987 in his memory.

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Biography

Early life

Geoffrey Vickers was born and grew up in Nottingham, where his father Charles Henry Vickers ran a successful lace business, Vickers & Hine Ltd.^[1] He described his first day of school as "school introduced me to the

Sir Charles Geoffrey Vickers



Geoffrey Vickers in 1973

Born	13 October 1894 Nottingham, England
Died	16 March 1982 (aged 87) Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire
Allegiance	 United Kingdom
Service/branch	 British Army
Rank	Colonel
Unit	The Sherwood Foresters
Battles/wars	World War I World War II
Awards	Victoria Cross Croix de Guerre (Belgium)
Other work	Systems scientist

anguish reserved both for the non-conformist who wishes to conform and the awkward who long to excel in dexterity".^[2] He attended Bramcote, a preparatory school near Scarborough and then Oundle School; a public school before entering Merton College, Oxford where he briefly studied Classics from 1913 until the start of war.

He later described his home as "a place of unalloyed happiness. The only stresses of the time came from the external world of school or the internal world of awakening conflict and confusion ... I remember nothing desired that was satisfied by spending money of mine and nothing that was denied for lack of money ... we moved by bicycle and bus, played in each other's gardens and stayed in farmhouses". He described his father as "the best and most lovable man I ever knew; and he seemed to combine the two superlatives without the slightest effort".^[2]

World War I

His education was interrupted by World War I. He and his brother William Burnell Vickers volunteered for service in the army, Charles joining the Sherwood Foresters (7th Robin Hood Battalion) and was in France before the end of 1914^[2] first as a second lieutenant, promoted to temporary Captain in 1915 and then to Major and as Second in Command, 1 Bn, The Lincolnshire Regiment in 1918. Explaining his thoughts about going to war, he later wrote "In August Germany invaded Belgium, we had a treaty with Belgium, so we all stopped what we were doing and went off to war. It was as simple as that".^[2] He was awarded the Victoria Cross for action in 1915 and the Croix de Guerre (Belgium) in 1918.^[3]

He won the Victoria Cross for his actions on the 14 October 1915 when he held a barrier across a trench in the Hohenzollern Redoubt, France against heavy German bomb attacks (the 'bombs' of the citation were early grenades) ordering a second barrier to be built behind him in order to secure the safety of the trench regardless of the fact that his own retreat would be cut off holding back the enemy for long enough for a second barrier to be completed.^[4]

His brother Burnell was killed in action in action in 1917.^[5]

In June 1918 he commanded a battalion in the Second Battle of the Marne for which he was awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre.^[6]

Inter-war years

After the war he returned to Oxford and took a pass degree in French, European history and law in 1919. He qualified as a solicitor in 1923 and by 1926 he was a partner in the leading London law firm of Slaughter and May. He specialised in the legal aspects of large financial operations, many of which has international dimensions. In 1930 he was one of the first to take the five day commercial flight from the UK to India and during the 1930s he was also involved in negotiating the extension of the German debt.^[7]

In 1938 he established and chaired the 'Association for Service and Reconstruction'.^[7] The above initiative put him in touch with a number of people who met regularly in a group called 'The Moot' that also included Joe Oldham, Karl Mannheim, Reinhard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Middleton Murray, T. S. Eliot, Michael Polanyi, Sir



Photo submitted by Martin Hornby - (Gallaher Cigarette Cards)

Walter Moberly and Adolph Lowe. The Moot itself grew out of a conference on Church, Community and State held in Oxford in 1937.^[8]

World War II

Vickers served in World War II; he was re-commissioned as a Colonel, and was seconded as Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in charge of economic intelligence. From 1941 to 1945 he was a member of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Chiefs of Staff.^[9]

He was also a member of the London Passenger Transport Board (1941–46) and of the Council of Law Society (1944–48).^[9]

Afterwards

After the war, Vickers had a successful career in management and administration before becoming a prolific writer and speaker on the subject of social systems analysis and the complex patterns of social organisation. He wrote many books including *The Art of Judgement*, *Freedom in a rocking Boat* and *Human Systems are Different*. He introduced the concept of 'Appreciative Systems' to describe human activity. His work was taken-up by researchers at the Open University in particular.

From 1946 to 1948 he was also first Legal Adviser to the National Coal Board. At the time of creation on the 1st January 1947 when some 750,000 workers from 800 different private companies^[10] became part of the largest employer in the western world^[11] where he worked alongside E. F. Schumacher.^[3] Afterwards he became a member of National Coal Board in charge of manpower, training, education, health and welfare (1948–55).

From 1952 until 1960 he was member of the Medical Research Council and was chairman of the Research Committee of Mental Health Research Fund from 1951-1967.^[9] In 1977 he was president of the Society for General Systems Research, now the International Society for the Systems Sciences.

Between 1955 and 1958 he took part in the 'Round Table on Man and Industry' a project sponsored by the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto, the conclusions of which were published in 'The Undirected society'.^[12] On the inside jacket cover he muses 'The Industrial band-wagon rolls ever faster onwards, remaking the world we live in and with it ourselves. Are we in the driving seat or merely passengers - or even under the wheels? What part does human decision making play in directing or controlling the process?'

His second wife, and close companion died in 1972 and his manuscripts for 'Western Culture and Systems Thinking' and 'Autonomy and Responsibility' were constantly rejected for publication.^[13]

In 1977 he moved to a retirement home, on the same street in Goring on Thames on which he had lived for many years.^[13]

Geoffrey died in 1982, however the influence for his work is still alive. The International Society for the Systems Sciences presents the Sir Geoffrey Vickers Memorial Award each year in his memory.^[14] His military medals were left to the Sherwood Foresters Collection and are on display in Nottingham Castle.^[4]

Systems practice

In the later years Vickers wrote and lectured on the subject of social systems analysis and the complex patterns

of social organisation. His work was taken-up by researchers at the Open University in particular.^[15] Vickers is regarded as a systems practitioner rather than an academic. He introduced the concept of appreciative systems to describe human activity. He recognized that appreciation of systems requires the participation of not only the observer, but also that of the subject.^[16]

Much of his work is devoted to the analysis of judgement in terms of what he called 'appreciative behaviour': this is described most effectively in *The Art of Judgement* (1965). He believed that social institutions are best analysed as systems, and his published work, notably *Human Systems are Different* (1983), made far-reaching contributions to systems thinking in its applications to human society.^[3]

Appreciative System

Appreciative System is a term invented by Vickers in 1968 to refer to "the activity of attaching meaning to communication or the code by which we do so".^[17]

Vickers has stated:

- 'I find it surprising that we have no accepted word to describe the activity of attaching meaning to communication or the code by which we do so, a code which is constantly confirmed, developed or changed by use. I have for many years referred to this mental activity as "appreciation"; and to the code which it uses, as its "**appreciative system**"; and to the state of that code at any time as its "appreciative setting". I call it a system because, although tolerant of ambiguity and even inconsistency, it is sensitive to them and tries to reconcile them'.^[18]
- 'I'm interested in Systems from the personal up to the very large, human, social systems, I'm also interested in systems of concepts and values through which we see all the others which I call appreciative systems'.^[19]

A response by Peter Checkland:

- "Vickers argues that our human experience develops within us 'readiness to notice particular aspects of our situation, to discriminate them in particular ways and to measure them against particular standards of comparison...' These readinesses are organized into an '**appreciative system**' *which creates for all of us, individually and socially, our appreciated world....The appreciative settings condition new experience but are modified by the new experience. Such circular relations Vickers takes to be the common facts of social life, but we fail to see this clearly, he argues, because of the concentration in our science-based culture on linear causal chains and on the notion of goal-seeking.*"
- "Vickers suggests replacing the goal-setting and goal-seeking with feedback models in which personal, institutional or cultural activity consists in maintaining desired relationships and eluding undesired ones. The process is a cyclical one which operates like this: Our previous experiences have created for us certain 'standards' or 'norms', usually 'tacit' (and also, at a more general level, 'values', more general concepts of what is humanly good and bad); the standards, norms and/or values lead to readiness to notice only certain features of our situations, they determine what 'facts' are relevant; the facts noticed are evaluated against the norms, a process which leads to our taking regulatory action and modifies the norms or standards, so that future experiences will be evaluated differently".^[20]

Geoffrey Vickers continued corresponding with Peter Checkland in the years before Vickers' death and discussed the relationship between systems ideas and real-world experience. From those discussions Checkland created the model of the appreciative process, that may be used as a basis for making sense of the world we live

in. Checkland (2004) worked on numerous examples to demonstrate the way in which the model may be applied in very different situations.^[21]

Moral and political philosophy

Geoffrey Vickers' perspectives on moral and political philosophy can be presented through three key terms:^[22]

- Our human capacity to respond aptly to our situation;
- The analysis of modern society in terms of institutions; and
- The moral importance of responsibility to the maintenance of human culture and cooperation

Publications

Geoffrey Vickers wrote several books, articles and papers:

World War II

- 1941, *CURRENT AFFAIRS : issue 7 : December 20, 1941 : A Background Bulletin*^[23]

Later

- 1959, *The Undirected Society*. Essays on the human implications of industrialisation in Canada 1959
- 1965, *The Art of Judgment : A Study of Policy Making* (1965 - Republished December 1995) (In Print)
- 1967, *Towards a sociology of management*. (1967)
- 1968, *Value systems and social process* (1968 - Republished 2001) (In Print)
- 1972, *Freedom in a rocking boat: changing values in an unstable society* (Paperback - April 1972)
- 1973, *Making Institutions Work* (Textbook Binding - January 1973)
- 1980, *Responsibility Its Sources and Limits* (Paperback - June 1980)
- 1984, *Human Systems Are Different* (Paperback - December 1984)
- 1994, *The Vickers Papers*, Edited by the Open Systems Group (Paperback - December 1984)

About Vickers

- 1987, Guy B. Adams, John Forester and Bayard L. Catron (Ed.), *Policymaking, Communication, and Social Learning*, (Hardcover - July 1987)
- 1991, Jeanie Vickers (Ed.), *Rethinking the Future : The Correspondence Between Geoffrey Vickers and Adolph Lowe*, (Hardcover - June 1991)
- 1995, Margaret Blunden and Malcolm Dando (Ed.), *Rethinking Public Policy-Making : Questioning Assumptions, Challenging Beliefs : Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Vickers on His Centenary* (Hardcover - September 1995). (In print)
- 2004, Ray Ison (ed.), "Geoffrey Vickers 2004: Contemporary Applications and Changing Appreciative Settings", Special Issue of *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, Volume 22, Issue 4.

Vickers writings in Adolph Lowe Archive^[24]

- "Purpose and Force; The Bases of Order" (pub), 1940.
- "Incomes and Earnings—A Steady State?" (pub.), circa 1960.
- "The Management of Conflict" (pub.), 1972.
- "Towards a More Stable State" (pub.), 1972.

- Copies of Vickers-Simon Correspondence (unpub. TS), 1973.
- "Whither the Mixed Economy?" (pub.), 1973.
- "Some Implications of Systems Thinking" (unpub. TS), 1978.
- "The Poverty of Problem-Solving" (unpub. TS), 1980.
- "Autonomous Yet Responsible?" (unpub. TS), undated.
- "The Weakness of Western Culture" (unpub. TS), undated.

For children

- "The secret of tarbury tor", Oxford Basil Blackwell, circa 1926.^[25]

Poetry

- "Moods and Tenses, 'Occasional Poems of an Old Man'" (private publication), 1983^[26]

See also

- Monuments to Courage
- The Register of the Victoria Cross
- VCs of the First World War - The Western Front 1915

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- [^] ^a ^b ^c ^d Geoffrey Vickers (1972). *My Family - Memories of four generations before my own*.
- [^] ^a ^b ^c Biographical History (<http://libraryarchive.open.ac.uk/ead/search/?operation=full&recid=gb-2315-gv>) Reprint from the Institute of Internal Studies, University of California Berkeley. Also includes photocopy of the article taken from "Human Relations". Volume 24, number 5, 1971.
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- [^] ^a ^b *Policymaking, Communication, and Social Learning* (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Jv7pAost3hUC&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=%22Association+for+Service+and+Reconstruction%22&source=web&ots=cAL9l3pTwk&sig=IPM9I3F9nmYRRLdj_xel9P19xWg&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=2&ct=result) . http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Jv7pAost3hUC&pg=PA2&lpg=PA2&dq=%22Association+for+Service+and+Reconstruction%22&source=web&ots=cAL9l3pTwk&sig=IPM9I3F9nmYRRLdj_xel9P19xWg&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=2&ct=result. Retrieved 2008-10-10.
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External links

Systems Theory

- Video clips of Sir Geoffrey Vickers (<http://www.open2.net/systems/practice/sir.html>) filmed in 1978 by the BBC for the Open University.
- Geoffrey Vickers Archive at the Open University (<http://library.open.ac.uk/waltonhall/collections/TheGeoffreyVickersCollection.html>)
- Appreciative Systems (<http://www.som.salford.ac.uk/ccru/Documents/APPRECIATIVE%20SYSTEMS.pdf>) A summary of the work of Sir Geoffrey Vickers by Dr Richard Varey
- The Appreciative System of Urban ICT Policies (<http://ideas.repec.org/p/dgr/uvatn/20030022.html>) paper by Galit Cohen and Peter Nijkamp

Military

- Find a grave - Biographical Detail (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=10355150>)
- The Victoria Cross Awards to the Sherwood Foresters (<http://www.jwhalley.freemove.co.uk/Notts%20&%20Derbys/VC's.html>) (*photos, site includes other articles on SF*)
- Location of grave and VC medal (<http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/stewart/oxfordsh.htm>) (*Oxfordshire*)
- Liddle-Hart Centre for Military Archives (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/lhcma/summary/vi50-001.shtml>)
- Additional detail of events of 14 October 1915 (<http://infomotions.com/etexts/gutenberg/dirs/etext02/nicbt10.htm>)

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| Alumni of Merton College, Oxford | Sherwood Foresters officers | British Army personnel of World War I

| British Army personnel of World War II | British World War I recipients of the Victoria Cross

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Kenneth J. Gergen

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Kenneth J. Gergen (born 1935) is an American psychologist and professor at Swarthmore College. He obtained his B.A. at Yale University in 1957 and his Ph.D. at Duke University in 1962.

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Biography

The son of John J. Gergen, the Chair of the Mathematics Department at Duke University, Gergen grew up in Durham, North Carolina. He had three brothers, one of whom is David Gergen, the prominent political analyst. After completing public schooling, he attended Yale University. Graduating in 1957, he subsequently became an officer in the U.S. Navy. He then returned to graduate school at Duke University, where he received his PhD in psychology in 1963. His dissertation advisor was Edward E. Jones. Gergen went on to become an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University, where he also became the Chairman of the Board of Tutors and Advisors for the department and representative to the university's Council on Educational Policy.

In 1967 Gergen took a position as Chair of the Department of Psychology at Swarthmore College, a position he held for ten years. At various intervals he served as visiting professor at the University of Heidelberg, the University of Marburg, the Sorbonne, the University of Rome, Kyoto University, and Adolfo Ibanez University. At Swarthmore he spearheaded the development of the academic concentration in Interpretation Theory. In an attempt to link his academic work to societal practices he collaborated with colleagues to create the Taos Institute in 1996. He is currently a Senior Research Professor at Swarthmore, the Chairman of the Board of the Taos Institute, and an adjunct professor at Tilburg University.

Gergen is married to Mary M. Gergen, Professor Emeritus at Penn State University, and a major contributor to feminist psychology and performance inquiry. She is the author of over 50 articles and is the co-author (with Ken Gergen) of "Social Construction." They publish the Positive Aging Newsletter with a readership of at least 12,000. They have five children.

Contributions

After completing graduate school in experimental social psychology, Gergen had an impact on the field with his 1973 article, "Social Psychology as History". In the article, he argues that the laws and principles of social interaction are variable over time, and that the scientific knowledge generated by social psychologists actually

influences the phenomena it is meant to passively describe. The article proved contentious, receiving both criticism and support from various social psychologists.

Gergen's work is associated with social constructionism. He has been particularly concerned with fostering a "relational" view of the self—where the "traditional emphasis on the individual mind is replaced by a concern with the relational processes from which rationality and morality emerge." He is also known for his comment "I am linked therefore I am" as an answer to Descartes view "I think, therefore I am". Other major interests in his diverse works include analyzing the effects of technology on social life, examining connections between social construction and theology, and promoting a more optimistic model of aging.

From the earliest point in his academic career, Gergen's work was characterized by its catalytic potential. As an experimental social psychologist, his earliest studies challenged the presumption of a unified or coherent self. He then raised questions about the value of altruism, by exploring the ways in which helping others leads to the recipient's resentment and alienation. However, it was his 1973 paper, "Social psychology as history," that precipitated a major shift in his career. Here he argued that most of the behavior patterns studied by social psychologists were historically perishable. Further, because of the implicit values embedded in psychological theory and description, the dissemination of knowledge had the potential to alter patterns of social activity. To study obedience to authority, for example, might reduce the likelihood of obedience. In effect, social psychology was not fundamentally a cumulative science, but was effectively engaged in the recording and transformation of cultural life. These arguments created broad controversy and the article subsequently won an award for the volume of its citations. Also contributing to what was called "the crisis in social psychology" was Gergen's subsequent publication on generative theory. Here he proposed that because theoretical suppositions were not so much recordings of social life as creators, theory should not be judged by their accuracy so much as their potential to open new spaces of action.

Combining these ideas with developments in literary and critical theory, along with the history of science, Gergen went on to develop a radical view of socially constructed knowledge. This view was proposed as a successor project to what Gergen considered an inherently flawed empiricist conception of knowledge. From Gergen's perspective, all human intelligibility (including claims to knowledge) is generated within relationships. It is from relationships that humans derive their conceptions of what is real, rational, and good. From this perspective scientific theories, like all other reality posits, should not be assessed in terms of Truth, but in terms of pragmatic outcomes. Such assessments are inevitably wedded to values, and thus all science is morally and politically weighted in implication. As he saw it, this same form of assessment also applies to social constructionist theory. The question is not its accuracy, but its potentials for humankind.

This latter conclusion informed most of Gergen's subsequent work. In one form or another, this work is concerned with transforming social life. For the most part, the preferred direction of change is toward more collaborative and participatory relationships. Writings in the areas of therapy and counseling, education, organizational change, technology, conflict reduction, civil society, and qualitative inquiry all bear this mark. Dialogues with practitioners have also been facilitated by Gergen's popular volume for public consumption, *The Saturated Self*, and his work with the Taos Institute. Most of these developments are summarized in *Relational Being, Beyond the Individual and Community*. However, this volume opens up new territories both theoretically and practically. It attempts to rewrite psychology, in demonstrating that what are considered mental processes are not so much "in the head" as in relationships. It also attempts to answer charges of moral relativism with a non-foundational morality of collaborative practice. A way is also opened for bringing science together with concerns for the sacred.

Notable concepts

- *Enlightenment effects*. The moral and political effects on cultural behavior of disseminating scientific

knowledge. (“Social psychology as history”)

- *Generative theory*: Theory that unsettles common assumptions, and opens up possibilities or new forms of action. (“Toward generative theory”)
- *Deficit discourse*. By constructing the world, and particularly individuals, in terms of problems, there is an objectification of deficit and a suppression of positive possibilities. (*Realities and Relationships*)
- *Cycle of progressive infirmity*: With the dissemination of information about categories of mental illness, people come to see themselves in these terms. As a result, they seek help from the mental health professions, which are in turn, expanded in numbers. With the expansion of the mental health industry, new diagnostic categories are developed and disseminated. The society becomes progressively infirmed. (*Realities and Relationships*)
- *Multiphrenia*: The condition, largely attributed to technologies that increase social contact, of being simultaneously drawn in multiple and conflicting directions. (*The Saturated Self*)
- *Pregression*. To unsettle the modernist value placed on progress, the proposal that for every change that is effected in societal life, the repercussions will unsettle multiple conditions that people define as positive. (*The Saturated Self*)
- *Positive aging*: As an alternative to the pervasive view of aging as decline (deficit discourse), it is possible to discover and construct myriad ways of crating later life as a period of unparalleled growth and enrichment.
- *First and second order morality*: All collaborative relationships will being about some understanding of the good. With multiple groups proclaiming their own good, the stage is set for interminable conflict. Second order morality is achieved through practices that bring otherwise embattled groups into a condition of positive collaboration. (*Relational Being*)
- *Transformative dialogue*: Forms of dialogic practice that dissolve the barriers of meaning separating otherwise conflicted parties. (*Relational Being*)
- *Co-action*. One’s actions have no meaning in themselves, but come into meaning through another’s collaborative action. At the same time, another’s potentially collaborative actions only become so as they are supplemented. All human intelligibility emerges not from individual actors but through co-action. (*Relational Being*)
- *Multi-being*. What is commonly viewed as the individual subject is the common intersection of multiple relationships. (*Relational Being*)

Awards

Gergen has received research grants from the National Science Foundation, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the Barra Foundation. His work has merited awards from the American Psychological Association, the National Communication Association, the Constructivist Psychology Network, the University of Buenos Aires, and Ibanez University in Santiago. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Alexander Humboldt foundation. He also holds honorary degrees from Tilburg University, Saybrook Graduate School, and the University of Athens.

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External links

- Personal website (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/web/page.phtml?st=home&id=home>)
- Social Construction Therapies Network (<http://www.socialconstructiontherapies.yolasite.com>)

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Brainstorming

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Brainstorming is a group creativity technique by which a group tries to find a solution for a specific problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously contributed by its members. Brainstorming was developed and coined by Alex Faickney Osborn in 1953 through the book *Applied Imagination*. In the book, Osborn not only proposed the brainstorming method but also established effective rules for hosting brainstorming sessions.

Brainstorming has become a popular group technique and has aroused attention in academia. Multiple studies have been conducted to test Osborn's postulation that brainstorming is more effective than individuals working alone in generating ideas. Some researchers have concluded that the statement is false (brainstorming is not effective), while others uncovered flaws in the research and determined that the results are inconclusive. Furthermore, researchers have made modifications or proposed variations of brainstorming in an attempt to improve the productivity of brainstorming. However, there is no empirical evidence to indicate that any variation is more effective than the original technique.

Nonetheless, brainstorming can be of great utility when the group accounts for, and works to minimize the group processes that decrease its effectiveness.



Brainstorming

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Origin

The origin of brainstorming came from Osborn in 1939 as a method for creative problem solving. He was frustrated by employees' inability to develop creative ideas individually for ad campaigns. In response, he began hosting group-thinking sessions and discovered a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of ideas produced by employees. After organizing his discovery, Osborn then published *Applied Imagination* in 1953 in which he systematized his creative problem-solving methods. This book popularized the term brainstorming and received significant response in the industry.^[1]

Osborn's method

Osborn claimed that two principles contribute to "ideative efficacy," these being "1. Defer judgment," and "2. Reach for quantity."^[2] Following these principles were his four general rules of brainstorming, established with intention to reduce social inhibitions among group members, stimulate idea generation, and increase overall creativity of the group.

1. **Focus on quantity:** This rule is a means of enhancing divergent production, aiming to facilitate problem solving through the maxim *quantity breeds quality*. The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.
2. **Withhold criticism:** In brainstorming, criticism of ideas generated should be put 'on hold'. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, reserving criticism for a later 'critical stage' of the process. By suspending judgment, participants will feel free to generate unusual ideas.
3. **Welcome unusual ideas:** To get a good and long list of ideas, unusual ideas are welcomed. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending assumptions. These new ways of thinking may provide better solutions.
4. **Combine and improve ideas:** Good ideas may be combined to form a single better good idea, as suggested by the slogan "1+1=3". It is believed to stimulate the building of ideas by a process of association.^[2]

Applications

Osborn notes that brainstorming should address a specific question; he held that sessions addressing multiple questions were inefficient. Further, the problem must require the generation of ideas rather than judgment; he uses examples such as generating possible names for a product as proper brainstorming material, whereas analytical judgments such as whether or not to marry do not have any need for brainstorming.^[2]

Brainstorming groups

Osborn envisioned groups of around 12 participants, including both experts and novices. Participants are encouraged to provide wild and unexpected answers. Ideas receive no criticism or discussion. The group simply provides ideas that might lead to a solution and apply no analytical judgment as to the feasibility. The judgments are reserved for a later date.^[2]

Research

Sources of brainstorming inadequacy

Diehl and Stroebe identified three processes that derailed brainstorming efforts. These processes were *free riding*, *evaluation apprehension*, and *blocking*. Other processes, such as the *social matching effect* and the *illusion of group productivity*, can also undermine brainstorming efforts.

Free Riding: Individuals may feel that their ideas are less valuable when combined with the ideas of the group at large. Indeed, Diehl and Stroebe demonstrated that even when individuals worked alone, they produced fewer ideas if told that their output would be judged in a group with others than if told that their output would be judged individually. However, experimentation revealed free riding as only a marginal contributor to productivity loss, and type of session (i.e., real vs. nominal group) contributed much more.^[3]

Evaluation Apprehension: Evaluation Apprehension was determined to occur only in instances of personal evaluation. If the assumption of collective assessment were in place, real-time judgment of ideas, ostensibly an induction of evaluation apprehension, failed to induce significant variance.^[3]

Blocking: Blocking describes the reality that only one person may gainfully voice his or her ideas in a group at any given time. Diehl and Stroebe examined the question of whether this effect could reduce idea-generation, as ideas suppressed long enough to listen to another group-member's ideas might be forgotten. Their research confirmed this hypothesis.^[4]

Social Matching Effect The social matching effect is the tendency for individuals in a group to match the level of productivity by others in the group. When one (or a few) group members feel that they are contributing more to the brainstorming process than others, they express a tendency to reduce their contributions to the group's lower standards^[5][[, as overcontribution is more effortful than undercontribution.

Illusion of Group Productivity Members of groups often overestimate their productivity, a tendency known as the *illusion of group productivity*. As groups rarely have objective standards to determine how well they are performing, individual members can only guess at the group's effectiveness. Members of groups working on collective tasks are likely to feel that their group is more productive than most^[6]. Further, individual members overestimate their own contributions to the group. In one research study, members who were asked to generate ideas in a brainstorming session were asked to estimate how many ideas they personally provided. Group members claimed to present 36% of the ideas on average, when they actually only contributed about 25% of the ideas^[7].

Together, these sources of brainstorming inadequacy holds special significance given that Osborn's central hypothesis was that listening to the ideas of others should spur the generation of new ideas. Rather, research indicates that the act of listening to others might stifle creativity.

Benefits

Under proper conditions, brainstorming groups can outperform nominal groups. The adoption of Group Support Systems, wherein individuals submit suggestions on a computer that become instantly (and anonymously) visible to the entire team, removes the effect of blocking as ideas can be communicated immediately upon generation. Using these technologies, brainstorming groups significantly outperformed nominal groups.^[8]

Incentives and brainstorming

Olivier Toubia's research gave strong indications that incentives can augment creative processes. Participants

were divided into three conditions. In Condition I, a flat fee was paid to all participants. In the Condition II, participants were awarded points for every unique idea of their own, and subjects were paid for the points that they earned. In Condition III, subjects were paid based on the impact that their idea had on the group; this was measured by counting the number of group ideas derived from the specific subject's ideas. Condition III outperformed Condition II, and Condition II outperformed Condition I at a statistically significant level for most measures. The results demonstrated that participants were willing to work far longer to achieve unique results in the expectation of compensation.^[9]

Criticism

Research has failed to support Osborn's claim that group brainstorming could produce double the creative output of a group of individuals' collected ideas.^[3] Indeed, research from Michael Diehl and Wolfgang Stroebe demonstrated the opposite effect. They found that, given equal time, "real" groups, those that brainstormed together, produced fewer ideas than "nominal" groups, those wherein individuals provided ideas independently of one another and only existed as a group insofar as their work was considered as a whole by researchers.^[4] Their conclusions were based on a review of 22 other studies, 18 of which corroborated their findings.^[3]

Variations

Nominal group technique

The nominal group technique is a type of brainstorming that encourages all participants to have an equal say in the process. It is also used to generate a ranked list of ideas.

Participants are asked to write their ideas anonymously. Then the moderator collects the ideas and the group votes on each idea. The vote can be as simple as a show of hands in favor of a given idea. This process is called distillation.

After distillation, the top ranked ideas may be sent back to the group or to subgroups for further brainstorming. For example, one group may work on the color required in a product. Another group may work on the size, and so forth. Each group will come back to the whole group for ranking the listed ideas. Sometimes ideas that were previously dropped may be brought forward again once the group has re-evaluated the ideas.

It is important that the facilitator be trained in this process before attempting to facilitate this technique. The group should be primed and encouraged to embrace the process. Like all team efforts, it may take a few practice sessions to train the team in the method before tackling the important ideas.

Group passing technique

Each person in a circular group writes down one idea, and then passes the piece of paper to the next person, who adds some thoughts. This continues until everybody gets his or her original piece of paper back. By this time, it is likely that the group will have extensively elaborated on each idea.

The group may also create an "Idea Book" and post a distribution list or routing slip to the front of the book. On the first page is a description of the problem. The first person to receive the book lists his or her ideas and then routes the book to the next person on the distribution list. The second person can log new ideas or add to the ideas of the previous person. This continues until the distribution list is exhausted. A follow-up "read out" meeting is then held to discuss the ideas logged in the book. This technique takes longer, but it allows individuals time to think deeply about the problem.

Team idea mapping method

This method of brainstorming works by the method of association. It may improve collaboration and increase the quantity of ideas, and is designed so that all attendees participate and no ideas are rejected.

The process begins with a well-defined topic. Each participant brainstorms individually, then all the ideas are merged onto one large idea map. During this consolidation phase, participants may discover a common understanding of the issues as they share the meanings behind their ideas. During this sharing, new ideas may arise by the association, and they are added to the map as well. Once all the ideas are captured, the group can prioritize and/or take action.^[10]

Electronic brainstorming

Electronic brainstorming outperforms both regular brainstorming and nominal group brainstorming.^[8] It is a computerized version of the manual brainstorming technique typically supported by an electronic meeting system (EMS) but simpler forms can also be done via email and may be browser based, or use peer-to-peer software.

With an electronic meeting system, participants share a list of ideas over a network. Ideas are entered independently. Contributions become immediately visible to all and are typically anonymized to encourage openness and reduce personal prejudice. Modern EMS also support asynchronous brainstorming sessions over extended periods of time as well as typical follow-up activities in the creative-problem-solving process such as categorization of ideas, elimination of duplicates, assessment and discussion of prioritized or controversial ideas.

Proponents such as Gallupe, *et al.* argue that electronic brainstorming eliminates many of the problems of standard brainstorming, including production blocking and evaluation apprehension. A perceived advantage of this format is that all ideas can be archived electronically in their original form, and then retrieved later for further thought and discussion. Electronic brainstorming also enables much larger groups to brainstorm on a topic than would normally be productive in a traditional brainstorming session.^[11]

Some web-based brainstorming techniques allow contributors to post their comments anonymously through the use of avatars. This technique also allows users to log on over an extended time period, typically one or two weeks, to allow participants some "soak time" before posting their ideas and feedback. This technique has been used particularly in the field of new product development, but can be applied in any number of areas requiring collection and evaluation of ideas.

Directed brainstorming

Directed brainstorming is a variation of electronic brainstorming (described above). It can be done manually or with computers. Directed brainstorming works when the solution space (that is, the set of criteria for evaluating a good idea) is known prior to the session. If known, those criteria can be used to constrain the ideation process intentionally.

In directed brainstorming, each participant is given one sheet of paper (or electronic form) and told the brainstorming question. They are asked to produce one response and stop, then all of the papers (or forms) are randomly swapped among the participants. The participants are asked to look at the idea they received and to create a new idea that improves on that idea based on the initial criteria. The forms are then swapped again and respondents are asked to improve upon the ideas, and the process is repeated for three or more rounds.

In the laboratory, directed brainstorming has been found to almost triple the productivity of groups over

electronic brainstorming.^[12]

Guided Brainstorming

A guided brainstorming session is time set aside to brainstorm either individually or as a collective group about a particular subject under the constraints of perspective and time. This type of brainstorming removes all cause for conflict and constrains conversations whilst stimulating critical and creative thinking in an all engaging, balanced environment. Innovative ideas consistently emerge.

Participants are asked to adopt different mindsets for pre-defined period of time whilst contributing their ideas to a central mind map drawn by a pre-appointed scribe. Having examined a multi-perspective point of view participant seemingly see the simple solutions that collectively create greater growth. Action is assigned individually. The process best used for this way of working is known as the Whether? Forecast™.

Following a guided brainstorming session participants emerge with ideas ranked for further brainstorming, research and questions remaining unanswered and a prioritized, assigned, actionable list that leaves everyone with a clear understanding of what needs to happen next and the ability to visualize the combined future focus and greater goals of the group.

www.theglobalbrainstorm.com is currently Beta testing the mass use of this way of working and will publish results. 12 months of field trials report a consistent time saving of 75% (reducing 1 hour brainstorming sessions to 15 minutes), increased levels of contribution, productivity and motivation and a frequent emergence of innovative ideas.

Individual brainstorming

"Individual Brainstorming" is the use of brainstorming in solitary. It typically includes such techniques as free writing, free speaking, word association, and drawing a mind map, which is a visual note taking technique in which people diagram their thoughts. Individual brainstorming is a useful method in creative writing and has been shown to be superior to traditional group brainstorming.^[13]

Research has shown individual brainstorming to be more effective in idea-generation than group brainstorming.^[3]

Question brainstorming

This process involves brainstorming the *questions*, rather than trying to come up with immediate answers and short term solutions. Theoretically, this technique should not inhibit participation as there is no need to provide solutions. The answers to the questions form the framework for constructing future action plans. Once the list of questions is set, it may be necessary to prioritize them to reach^[14] the best solution in an orderly way.^[14]

"Questorming" is another phrase for this mode of inquiry.^[15]

Conclusion

Brainstorming is a popular method of group interaction in both educational and business settings. Even though there have been arguments about its productivity, brainstorming is still a widely used method for developing creative solutions. It's an area that is under research and improvements or variations are still developing. Many of these methods claim to be more efficient than the original brainstorming; however, there are too many factors

that can alter the outcome of brainstorming. Therefore, how well these methods work, and whether or not they should be classified as being more effective than brainstorming, are questions that require further research.

See also

- 6-3-5 Brainwriting
- Affinity diagram
- Beginner's mind
- Creativity
- Electronic meeting systems
- Eureka effect
- Free writing
- Idea
- Innovation
- Invention
- Lateral thinking
- List of mind mapping software
- Mind Mapping
- Research and development
- Speed Thinking
- Thinking outside the box
- What? Where? When?

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External links

- Brainstorming Approach (University of North Carolina) (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/brainstorming.html>)
- Brainstorming magazine (<http://www.brainstorming.ba>)

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