EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO ENHANCE PEDAGOGY: AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY CASE STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' HIGH POINT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

A Dissertation by

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I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership.

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DEDICATION

To Lázaro, the love of my life, for his loving support; Marcos, my icon of I Can, for his relentless pursuit of excellence and for his daily inspiration and persistence in staying true to the course as he pursued his own doctorate degree; and Lucas, my comic adviser, for keeping life in perspective with his subtle wit and humorous contributions that kept me motivated throughout my educational journey.

In memory of my grandfather, Addison Van "Doc" Ely, who has been my greatest inspiration. His advice has always been dear to my heart: Love God first, then Diversify your life. Live the city life with cattle out west and money in the bank, but always remember education is the greatest gift you can give yourself to understanding others and the world around you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe how Complete High School Maize (CHSM) students describe their high point learning experiences. The study also described how CHSM students describe their dreams for effective learning. A qualitative case study research design was used to facilitate an AI Learning Team in the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle—Discovery and Dream. Eight CHSM students, four males and four females, were purposively selected as the AI Learning Team (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003; Ludema, Whitney, Mohr, & Griffin, 2003). Data collection methods included: participant group discussions, semi-structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators. Data were analyzed using several techniques: content analysis, open coding, axial coding, text analysis software, and pattern matching with the use of a content analysis matrix.

Careful attention was made to ensure that the quality of the research addressed trustworthiness in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability throughout my study. Four salient findings emerged: (1) CHSM students believe that they need other experiences built into their class work, (2) CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers, and people help each other, (3) CHSM students want to create a better learning environment that mixes fun with academics, and (4) CHSM students believe that the students and teachers are a family and common activities are important.

The findings from this study suggest that further research with AI in educational settings may have important implications to inspire educators to think in new ways about learning. AI as an action research methodology can be used to inform teacher practice and impact the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. As well, the use of AI as a theoretical

perspective with its positive approach can contribute to best practices in teaching where changes in a teacher's own pedagogical practice leads to excellence in education.

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CHAPTER 1

Applications of alternative ways for learning became known as Dewey's progressive educational movement during the 1900s, where learning became student-centered and addressed the needs of the student (Dewey, 1900). Since Dewey's progressive educational movement, alternative schools have impacted the United States educational system with experimental or laboratory schools. The progressive educational movement faded in the decades between the 1930s through the 1950s as the public focused on Thorndike's scientific ways of measuring academic achievement (Cremin, 1961).

Alternative schools reappeared in the United States during the counterculture movement of the 1960s and 1970s decades (Neumann, 2003). The cultural context of the 1960s decade encouraged the growth of free or alternative schools (Swidler, 1979). Neill's (1959) *Summerhill*, a book detailing the alternative school and radical student-centered approach to learning in England, became a bestseller throughout the 1960s. Simultaneously, the influence of humanistic psychology emerged concerning the individual learner (Neumann, 1994). Since the Sixties era, school districts continue to consider alternative schools as an option. There were more than 10,900 public alternative schools in the United States during the 2000-2001 school year. Of this number, 48% of school districts reported having alternative schools for secondary students in 2000-2001 (Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002).

Raywid (1994) maintains that there are three major classifications of alternative schools: (a) popular innovations—innovative alternative schools designed with a non-conventional approach for student learning that include magnet and charter schools; (b)

last-chance programs—labeled "correctional" and are often the last chance for the student's educational learning after the student has been expelled from school; and (c) remedial-focused programs—attentive to modifying student behavior and remediation of academic, social, and emotional skills. Some alternative schools are a mix of the three classifications.

The mission of the alternative school is conveyed through the values and attitudes of those who support and financially sponsor the local alternative school choice. In turn, the alternative school is designed to meet the needs of a specific student population.

Background of the Study

The background of alternative education and transformations that education has undergone during the past century began with Dewey's (1900) discontent with the passivity of students due to the teaching methods and the uniformity of textbook driven curriculum. His educational reform theory called for a more student-centered approach to learning with students actively involved in the community (Dewey, 1900). He wanted to broaden the scope of topics studied in the curriculum with emphasis on projects integrating several content areas (Dewey, 1916; Wuenstel, 2002). Dewey's progressive views and educational philosophy were widely applied throughout the United States during the early 20th Century (Wuenstel, 2002).

Noteworthy efforts to reorganize education using Dewey's ideas included the Gary Plan (Cohen, 2002), the Winnetka Plan (Washburne & Marland Jr, 1963), and the Denver Program (Gamson, 2003). The Gary Plan divided the school into classroom spaces for practical and vocational work. The Winnetka Plan called for the mastery of basic skills where students worked at their own pace, balanced with group activities. The

Denver program focused on revision of the curriculum. Teachers created instructional materials based upon curriculum learning objectives for students (Cremin, 1961). Alternatives for implementing the tenets of progressive education involved people seeking ways to reform the educational system by changing the structure of education, broadening or modifying the curriculum content, or focusing on the delivery of instructional methods during the early 20th Century. The progressive education movement faded during the 1930s. Managing the school and students for effectiveness and efficiency overshadowed the progressive's student-centered intent, and the negative connotation attached to the word progressive was being associated with socialism at the time (Wuenstel, 2002).

The alternative school movement emerged with renewed popularity in the United States during the counterculture movement of the 1960s (Neumann, 2003) that encouraged the growth of free or alternative schools (Swidler, 1979). Discontent with the public schools, alternative schools appeared as a choice different from the traditional, authoritative controlled school with the focus on the student and the experiences of students and their connections with the community. Neill's (1959) *Summerhill* featured an alternative school with a radical student-centered approach. It focused on the student in a more holistic, humanized, and individualized approach (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1974). Maslow (1968b) emphasized individual needs to examine the hidden inner self; while his humanistic psychology colleague, Carl Rogers (1969) supported person-centered learning and development that focused on interpersonal skills. The concentration on the individual during this period raised the consciousness of the public toward issues of social justice.

Minority groups and college-level student activists were participating in rebellious-type reform activities fighting for social justice. Protest movements that focused on social injustices such as the Civil Rights Movement (Morris, 1984), the feminist movement (Friedan, 1963), and the free speech movement (Byrne, 1965) occurred during the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement was a reform effort to abolish racism. Students protested with sit-ins, marches, and demonstrations (Lee, 2006). Protests to bring about public school reform and the dissatisfaction with the public school often led to the abandonment of the public school (Ravitch, 1983). Freedom schools became the alternatives to the public schools in protest to the discrimination and inequalities evident in public schools (Emery, 2004).

The purpose of free schools varied depending on the origin and supporters of the school (Duke, 1978). Advocates for free schools were split over the purpose of the free school. One group thought the free school should be student focused; another group thought the free school should be focused on social reform efforts improving societal conditions. The free school movement disappeared during the 1970s, and public alternative schools emerged (Neumann, 2003). The public alternative school may vary on purpose, however, certain characteristics are common among successful alternative schools. Successful alternative schools have been found to have three characteristics: (a) a sense of community has been created (Raywid, 2001; Whelage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989), (b) students are involved and engaged in the learning process (Raywid, 2001; Whelage et al., 1989), and (c) the program is organized and a structure is established so the first two can occur (Mottaz, 2002). The alternative school has a sense of community and is characterized as inclusive with a personalized and caring

environment (Raywid). The school is viewed as family (Kellmayer, 1998) and addresses the social and emotional needs of the student (Franklin, 1992).

Another characteristic of the successful alternative school is based on the student's level of involvement and engagement. Finn and Voelkl (1993) view participation in school and class activities as one of the educational outcomes. In successful alternative schools, students report having more positive experiences as they interact with staff (Saunders & Saunders, 2001). An important feature for the success of the alternative school is evidence of supportive and caring relationships between staff and students. Noddings (1992) posits that an alternative approach to education is to foster the strengths of the individual in a caring environment.

An alternative school that has an organized program and structure is defined as having clarity in procedures and policy, the restricted size of the school, the existence of a clear, focused mission statement, high expectations for students, and program goals with individualized instruction (Mottaz, 2002). The successful alternative school is smaller and has smaller class sizes when compared to the traditional public school (Foley & Pang, 2006). The structure and organization of the alternative school includes an individualized curriculum, with student learning plans that are relevant, engaging, and creative where community connections are provided and the student has opportunities for internships and job shadowing experiences (Dugger & Dugger, 1998). Another important component of the alternative school's structure and organization is for the alternative school's staff to have a role in the curriculum design, delivery, and governance of the school (Aron, 2006). The characteristics describing a successful alternative school are the underlying factors that contribute to maximizing student potential for being successful.

This study is to be conducted in an alternative school in Unified School District (USD) 266, Maize, Kansas, with alternative high school students.

The vision for an alternative high school in USD 266 began with a planning committee called the Lucky 13 in 1997. The committee addressed the needs of students who were dropping out of high school. The alternative high school, named Complete High School Maize (CHSM), opened in August, 1999. CHSM consisted of 3 portable classrooms, 34 students, 3 teachers, 1 counselor/administrator, and 1 secretary. Students who had dropped out of high school or who were not experiencing success with the traditional Maize High School in USD 266 applied for admission.

Unified School District 266 has continued to support CHSM. A new facility for CHSM was built in 2004. The alternative high school opened with five classrooms, a gymnasium, a multi-purpose room, library, kitchen, and administrative offices. The mission statement for CHSM is "celebrating individuality and maximizing untapped abilities and talents" (Complete High School Maize, 2007). Each CHSM student has an individualized learning plan based on course curriculum contracts. The curriculum is enhanced with an emphasis on technology usage, collaboration, and development of communication skills. A wireless laptop computer is assigned to each student for use throughout the school day. Each student has the opportunity to earn credit through community connected learning activities outside the school day. The community connected learning activities were created to help each student earn credit by interacting and engaging in real life experiences as service to the community.

Complete High School Maize has 55 students enrolled for the 2007-2008 school year with 8 staff members. Data for students attending CHSM indicate that 85.5% of the

students are White, 7.2% are Hispanic, 3.6% are African American and 3.6% are American Indian/Alaskan Native. In addition, 12.7% of the students are considered to be from an economically disadvantaged background. In addition, students attending CHSM have dropped out of high school or were not experiencing success at the traditional high school. These students were considered by the administrators and counseling staff at Maize High School as being at-risk of educational failure.

Problem Statement

As an educator, teacher, and administrator, I am aware of the wasted potential when students drop out of high school. I anguish over students who have experienced little or no success at the high school—who have learned silence and seem to become invisible. My passion for helping young people succeed in school came through my discovery of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as both a theoretical perspective and research methodology. Too often, the student and the educational process have been viewed within a deficit based or negative context, focused on fixing problems. The impetus for my research is to help alleviate conditions that cause the student to dropout of high school or help the student who has experienced little or no success with the traditional high school setting. My goal is to help students overcome the conditions that have forced them to learn silence. Lincoln (1995) posits that the student is a stakeholder in his/her learning, so why not listen to the student? She notes that from a social context, the student is inheritor of the future.

Central to this study is the idea of listening to the student. Storytelling has been used to listen to students who have learned silence and gives those who have become disenfranchised or marginalized an opportunity to share (Gitlin & Myers, 1993;

LeCompte, 1993). An AI methodology has rarely been explored as a process for research in education. AI is focused on positive inquiry and as a methodology is framed in the AI 4-D Cycle: discovery, dream, design, and destiny (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

My study was conducted by applying the AI 4-D Cycle. During the discovery stage, CHSM students shared their best stories based on their past, best learning experiences. During the dream stage, CHSM students envisioned the possibilities for learning. The use of AI to elicit student responses is limited in the literature. Researchers (Fullan, 2001; Mitra, 2004, 2005) involved with educational change believe that reformers rarely listen to the student.

My study is an avenue for CHSM alternative high school students to describe their high point learning experiences that include the best and most enjoyable ways of learning, and their dreams for learning through their involvement in the first two stages of an AI 4-D Cycle.

An AI Learning Team is a form of engagement that involves a small group of students (Ludema et al, 2003) participating in an AI 4-D Cycle over a period of two to four days (Cooperrider et al., 2003). Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) describe the AI Learning Team as having common characteristics of large group participation with one-to-one interviews and small and large group activities. My study described how an AI Learning Team—CHSM students—describe their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences. My study also described how CHSM students describe their dreams for effective learning.

Overview of Methodology

The study was grounded in social constructionism (Gergen, 1999) and filtered through an AI theoretical perspective. Social constructionists view people as continuously generating meaning within the context and culture of their setting by interacting with others (Gergen). AI was chosen as the theoretical framework because of its affirmative approach and capacity for interaction and collaboration with others (Cooperrider et al., 2003). The focus is on the generative aspects of alternative high school students attending CHSM. AI is both a theoretical perspective and a research methodology. A qualitative case study design was used for my study. Students were engaged in dialogue drawing from their experiences on best learning practice and collaborated to construct a common vision for their learning environment. I used an emergent design and followed the line of inquiry as new directions of discovery emerged.

My study took place at CHSM with the alternative high school students. An AI methodology was used to facilitate alternative high school student conversations as they described how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning.

Appreciative Inquiry was selected as the methodology because of its affirmative approach and the generative capacity for interaction and collaboration with others (Cooperrider, 1990). An AI methodology involves a 4-D Cycle: discovery, dream,

design, and destiny. The first stage is discovery that allows for the sharing of what is considered the best of an organization, in this case, the best learning experiences. The second stage is the dream stage where students can imagine the possibilities for future learning experiences. The third stage is the design phase where students take the best from the past and the descriptions of the possibilities for the future so students can design a model that illustrates how they envision learning at its best. The fourth stage is the destiny stage where the shared vision becomes reality. For the purposes of my study, the alternative high school students participated in the first two stages of AI: discovery and dream stages.

Students participated in a variety of data gathering methods embedded within the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. The data gathering methods included whole group discussion activities with semi-structured participant paired interviews and collaborative small and whole group events. I recorded each session of the AI Learning Team. In addition, I kept field notes and an audit journal throughout the AI Learning Team's experiences over the two days. The stories and data collected in the discovery stage were used to map the next stage, dream stage of the 4-D Cycle (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cherney, & Fry, 2004).

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for my study was eight CHSM students, four males and four females. The CHSM students were purposively selected based on (a) completion of at least three semesters at CHSM, (b) attainment of senior status, and (c) recommendation by CHSM staff as having the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the study. The most current data for 2007-2008 reports that there are 10 males and 11 females who

have completed at least three semesters of study at CHSM. I used the following methods to collect data: participant group discussions, semi structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators.

I held a meeting with the administrators at CHSM and potential CHSM student participants prior to the study to explain the purpose of the study and to provide an introduction to AI. Parents were called or contacted by mail about the study. Parents and student participants were informed of their rights, and then invited to volunteer to sign the consent form and an assent form for minors (Appendices 3 and 4). The eight CHSM students who voluntarily chose to participate in my study obtained the appropriate parental consent forms that allowed them to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using content analysis, open coding, axial coding, text analysis software, and pattern matching with the use of a content analysis matrix. I analyzed data by becoming familiar with all data as a set and by reflecting to get a general sense of the data as a whole as they related to the research questions. Categories and themes were identified through coding and the use of text analysis software.

Research Questions

My overarching question asked: What are the ways that student learning can be enhanced by asking students how they learn? As a result, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe the high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning?

2. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their dreams for learning?

Objectives

The study involved eight CHSM alternative high school students from USD 266 in the first two stages of an AI 4-D Cycle focusing on achieving the following two objectives:

1. To understand how CHSM alternative high school students describe their most enjoyable learning experiences.
2. To provide CHSM teachers with data from students as to the students' perception of how they best learn.

Limitations

This study has the following limitations:

1. The study was limited to the time constraints of one academic school year.
2. The study was limited by the use of two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle: discovery and dream.

Delimitations

This study has the following delimitation:

1. This study was delimited to alternative high school students in USD 266 who had completed at least three semesters of study at CHSM.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding this study:

1. CHSM students have meaningful contributions regarding the way they learn and are taught.

2. CHSM students have had high point learning experiences and that they can recall the most enjoyable ways that they learn.
3. CHSM students can describe how they best learn.
4. CHSM students can describe the types of content knowledge from their perspectives about what they want to learn based on previous experiences that can inspire educators to think in new ways about learning.

Definition of Key Terms

Alternative High School

An alternative high school is a public high school that provides a non-traditional education for students who have not experienced success, are at-risk of dropping out, or have become dissatisfied with the traditional school setting. Special education centers and vocational training schools are not considered alternative schools (U. S. Department of Education, 2006).

At-Risk Students

At-risk students are defined as students who have a history of performing below others, not meeting course requirements, and are considered a prospective dropout. Family background characteristics such as truancy or pregnancy are also considered risk factors that impede the learning process (Kansas State Board of Education, 2005).

Significance of the Study

My study provides a positive model for empowering alternative high school students to enhance pedagogical practices. The study also provides a contribution to the field of theoretical knowledge by implementing the first two stages of an AI 4-D Cycle to empower CHSM students as they describe their high point learning experiences,

including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning. From such an experience, students may be able to gain voice about their learning situation while I gain deeper insights about the power of high point learning experiences.

Empirical research describes the use of focus groups to listen to students at the high school level (Fallis & Opotow, 2003; Patterson, Beltyukova, Berman, & Francis, 2007). Some of the questions that were used in focus groups with alternative high school students were framed within an AI context (de la Ossa, 2005); an AI Learning Team involving students, parents, school staff, and community members was conducted for school-wide reform efforts (Ryan, Soven, Smither, Sullivan, & Vanbuskirk, 1999).

My research will extend AI methodology to alternative high school students where they can participate in the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. My study may inform regular classroom teachers and special education teachers, as well as, teachers working in alternative schools regarding their pedagogical practices. In addition, the use of AI as a research methodology in schools may contribute to an alternative to the traditional, deficit-based problem solving methods by changing the way problems are approached in education.

Summary

Chapter 1 provides an introduction, rationale, and background to my study. Chapter 1 also includes the context of the study, the problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, overview of the methodology, and definitions of key terms. Chapter 2 explains the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and how they apply to the study. In addition, I provide a review of the literature that includes a synthesis of the empirical research found to be related to the study. Chapter 3 of my

dissertation details the research design and methodology, my role as researcher, data collection methods, data analysis, and how the quality of the research was addressed. Chapter 4 details the data analysis and summarizes the findings from the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, implications for future research, recommendations for praxis, relationship of findings to relevant theory, significance of the study, and summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2 is a review of the relevant literature related to my study. The review is comprised of the (a) conceptual framework that includes a discussion of my epistemology, professional educational experiences, and theoretical framework, (b) discussion of a competing perspective, (c) methodology for searching the selection of empirical research, (d) synthesis of the reviewed literature as it relates to AI, alternative high schools, and student learning experiences, and (e) summary of this chapter.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for my study is built around my epistemology, professional educational experiences, and the theoretical perspective appreciative inquiry. This section provides the basis of how I view and approach my study where CHSM students have the opportunity to describe their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning.

Epistemology

My study is grounded in the epistemology of social constructionism. Social constructionism is the lens where meaning is constructed by the interactions of people as they try to understand and make sense of the world (Crotty, 1998). A social constructionist epistemology views reality as consisting of (a) multiple viewpoints where none are superior to the other, (b) language as deriving its meaning through relationships within cultural and historical settings, (c) relationships as being formed with others and in a constant state of change that creates a continuous state of meaning making, and (d) human interactions as creating the potential to recognize the past, take the good, and

construct a better future (Gergen, 1999). I integrate the social constructionist epistemology to my beliefs and experiences in the next section.

Professional Educational Experiences

My professional educational experiences are grounded in a social constructionist epistemology and influence the methodology I have chosen for my study. I have been an educator for 28 years. I was a teacher for 11 years, and have been a school/district administrator for 17 years. I also directed the district's at-risk summer school for 13 years.

My initial experience as district level administrator focused on working with PK-12 regular education teachers and special education teachers. Since that time, I have been directly involved with alternative high school teachers at CHSM. My role requires that I continuously apprise teachers and administrators of the best practices for the delivery of research-based classroom instructional strategies and opportunities for students. My pedagogical views for best teaching and learning practices emerged by working with teachers on curriculum alignment, implementing curriculum and assessment design, delivery of instruction through various technologies, advising building administrators, and teaching college classes for adult learners.

My experience has led me to form core beliefs regarding students. I believe there are multiple perspectives and multiple routes for students to take to be academically successful. The route for academic success for the student who chooses the alternative high school is developed within the context of the alternative school's existing culture. The purpose and structure for the alternative high school acquires its meaning based on the student/teacher relationships formed within the learning context (Gergen, 1999).

Since relationships and the meaning derived from the conversations in those relationships are constantly changing, the meaning construed from the conversations is constantly evolving. I believe that best teaching and learning reflect Dewey's (1916) thinking and that of current research-based practices that suggest students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process and have ownership and some control over what they learn (Kellough & Kellough, 2007). As a result, I promote project-based learning for active, engaged student learning.

My epistemology and professional educational experience are the basis for my core beliefs in relation to the capabilities of students and learning. Students have the capacity to (a) make meaningful contributions based on their past learning, (b) recall positive learning experiences and can describe how they best learn to inspire educators to think in new ways about learning, and (c) do something well. These beliefs are aligned with the AI theoretical research perspective. AI will serve as my theoretical perspective and research methodology.

Theoretical Perspective

Appreciative inquiry is my theoretical research perspective and refers to the lens that was intentionally employed in my study. It served as a theoretical research perspective and research methodology (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). There are five underlying AI principles: (a) The constructionist principle—social interactions create the organization; (b) the principle of simultaneity—inquiry propagates change; (c) the poetic principle—stakeholders interacting with organizations are the co-authors who determine the story that perpetually transforms the organization; (d) the anticipatory principle—

collective images and discourse dictate the future for the organization; and (e) the positivist principle—positive images cultivate positive results (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

I chose AI as my theoretical perspective for the following reasons (a) it is generative in nature, (b) it is heliotropic in nature, (c) it has capacity for individual growth and organizational transformation, (d) it is a narrative-based research methodology, and (e) its orientation from the traditional problem solving methods to one that is appreciative and affirming. AI is a theoretical research perspective and research methodology used to initiate organizational change through a positive inquiry approach. Through discovery, AI takes the best from the past and present, providing the basis for constructing a future image of what could be. This narrative creation becomes the collectively co-constructed design for the organization. The delivery or implementation of the collective images empower the efforts of the stakeholders, so they can sustain the organization's destiny (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Origins of Appreciative Inquiry

The AI research methodology was first developed in the 1980's by Cooperrider (1986) a doctoral student at Case Western Reserve University with the chair of his dissertation committee, Srivastva. Cooperrider was working with a private, non-profit medical practice, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, in Cleveland, Ohio, that had once been a physician run, self-regulated organization. Weaknesses and conflict in leadership and decision making between professional responsibilities and administrative affairs led to a partnership with Case Western Reserve University and the Organizational Behavior Department's doctoral program under the direction of Srivastva. Cooperrider experimented with alternative processes and structures deviating from traditional

organization development. The first publications on AI articulated the egalitarian ideology, the collective wisdom found within the organization, and the importance of life-giving forces of an organization. The outcome of this experience produced the AI methodology (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1986).

Appreciative inquiry derives much of its direction from research on positive thinking, optimism, the power of visualization, and the Pygmalion effect. It is also rooted in humanistic psychology. Cooperrider was influenced by work that focused on empowering people and high performing, energized organizations (Ludema et al., 2003). Cooperrider (1986) considered AI as a way of living and being. He was influenced by readings based on a person's complete fulfillment through reverence for life (Schweitzer, 1969). The AI research methodology takes the best from the past and present to create the future. AI generates hope and possibilities in the life of the organization as participants learn to value, trust, and appreciate each other (Ludema, Wilmot, & Srivastva, 1997). Through the AI method, the energies of the organization's participants are guided toward the positive potential or positive core.

The way we think is shaped by images we create and our expectations. Organizations that believe positive images cultivate positive actions operate heliotropically. AI enables organizations to create shared positive images so they are equipped with the tools to achieve the co-constructed, desired future, through discourse and anticipation. The heliotropic nature of AI is a result of the anticipation of the goals established in the design stage and the anticipation of achieving them (Elliott, 1999). Movement toward the positive is found in human conversations and the stories they share. Changing the inner dialogue or voice in organizations means changing how people

in the organization work and what stories they share (Bushe, 1998b). Positive stories produce positive action. The basis for the heliotropic principle has been stated in the research on positive thinking, optimism, the power of the visualization, and the Pygmalion effect.

Humanistic psychology is focused more on issues of understanding the person—self-actualization, consciousness, hope, joy, and a healthy orientation for the individual (Maslow, 1968a; May, 1965; Rogers, 1969). The legacy of humanistic psychology is drawn from and recognized by the emphasis on the strengths and values of the inner self. Segliman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) believe amplifying a person's strengths through positive changes based on values and virtues such as hope, optimism, and future orientation is a science needed to help people realize their potential. The discovery stage of AI focuses on similar values. It identifies what people value about themselves as well as those factors that give life to the organization when it functions at its best. As Barrett and Fry (2002) posit, the appreciative mindset of faith in believing in the goodness of people is what generates positive change.

At its core, AI operates from a belief that constructing positive images direct positive action, similar to the placebo effect (Beecher, 1955), the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968), and athletic mental practice and imagery (Kirschenbaum, Ordman, Tomarken, & Ordman, 1982); yet, the difference in AI from these other applications is in the amount and depth of human interaction in constructing a positive future. Establishing mental images or anticipating the future guides our actions and affects our relationships, thus creating a variety of emotions, attitudes, and feelings resulting in different behaviors (Fitzgerald, Murrell, & Miller, 2003).

Understanding of the self, what one values, self-concept, and having a healthy mental disposition are reflected in the assumptions of humanistic psychology. The positive core identified through an AI methodology reflects the greatest achievements and innovations that an organization or person experiences. Every organization and human being has the capacity for moments of inspiration, opportunity, and images of the future (Greelman, 2005). The positive core is discovered by the participants in the AI process as they appreciate the best in each other and in their organization, and then begin to imagine and express the possibilities of what the organization's future could bring (Barrett & Fry, 2005).

Appreciative inquiry is a form of action research (Bushe, 1998a). AI contrasts with traditional action research problem solving methodological approaches. Action research is detailed by Lewin (1946) as a spiraling of problem solving steps that are cyclic in nature through the planning, taking action, and evaluating or fact finding. In action research, researchers focus on problem solving models, identify or define problems, provide problem analysis, brainstorm solutions, analyze data, and provide solutions (Hammond, 1998). Traditionally, organizations focus on fixing problems. These organizations later discover that their problems reappear because they focused on symptoms and not causes (Pullen, 2001; Senge, 1994). Many times exploring and discussing the organizational problems instigate more failures and weaknesses (George & McLean, 2002). The approach taken for change through problem solving brings about more divisiveness and blame, limiting the possibilities for change (Barrett, 1995). The problem-solving, deficit-based approach leaves people in the organization feeling hopeless (Whitney, 1998).

Appreciative inquiry differs from the traditional problem solving models by encouraging participants to reflect on and share their personal past experiences of achievement within the organization. Most notably, participants are engaged in a change-oriented process that is conducted in real time, in an actual social system that includes action and reflective thought (Egan & Lancaster, 2005). AI extends traditional action research through the engagement of narratives or storytelling focused on sharing the best from the past with the goal of seeking a collective desired future for the organization.

Appreciative inquiry has multiple applications. AI is used for sustainable, whole system change. AI, for example, is used as the research methodology for the annual strategic planning process for universities and colleges (Finegold, Holland, & Lingham, 2002; Heelan & Transue, 2005). A non-profit organization, Imagine Chicago, used AI to bring city and community residents together to form partnerships to make a difference for Chicago (Browne, 1999; Browne, 1998). The city of Dubuque, Iowa, used AI as a change process to plan for housing and economic development by interviewing 300 people and actively engaging 80 people in the AI process to create common understanding for affordable housing and future city development needs (Finegold et al.).

Appreciative inquiry is used as a renewal process. AI was used with university student affairs personnel so they could learn how to focus on positive dialogue and opening up communication barriers, resulting in a more positive work climate. Both student affairs personnel and students were beneficiaries of the AI process (Lehner & Hight, 2006). Medical employees were energized when participating in an AI process. These employees were creative and identified possibilities to facilitate team development at their clinic (Newman & Fitzgerald, 2001). AI opened avenues for an exploratory

research methodology that allowed organizations to take shared best experiences and stories and envision new possibilities through collaborative dialogue. Conversations and interviews were used to guide participants toward the positive where common discourse was transformed (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990).

The power of appreciating and valuing others in AI builds relational capital and minimizes the gap on cultural differences (Miller, Fitzgerald, Murrell, Preston, & Ambekar, 2005). AI was used specifically in a school district so educators could be involved in positive discussions regarding student learning experiences in order to initiate systemic change from the teacher's perspective (Filleul & Rowland, 2006). Moreover, the application of AI was used as a training tool to teach fieldworkers who in turn used AI to build capacity with local Indians and learned to appreciate and value the local people while assisting with community-based projects in India (Ashford & Patkar, 2001).

Appreciative inquiry as a theoretical perspective examines what people value about themselves and their organization. As a research methodology, AI provides the structure or basis for constructing whole organizational systemic changes. AI emphasizes the generation of ideas and construction of meaning with others in the organization. The next section details an alternative way to view the study.

Learning Process Theory as a Competing Theory

Another way of approaching my study would be from a learning process theoretical perspective. This theory can be used to describe alternative high school students' high point learning experiences and their dreams for learning. The learning process theory as noted by Handy (1990) and Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, and Smith (1994) is cyclic in nature where organizational members tap into the rhythm of the

organization's learning and changing processes, individually and collectively (Kloppenborg & Petrick, 1999). The "wheel of learning" is the model used for the learning process (Handy, 1990; Senge et al., 1994). The model has four phases with an inner circle that pertains to the individual and an outer circle that represents the team or collective group (a) deciding (joint planning)—choosing a plan of action, (b) doing (coordinated action)—implementing the plan, (c) reflecting (public reflection)—dialogue about thoughts and feelings, and (d) connecting (shared meaning)—consider new understandings (Senge et al.). The wheel is used as the metaphor to demonstrate motion and continuous learning (Handy, 1990). I did not choose learning process theory as a theoretical perspective for my study because this perspective does not begin the process with an appreciative, strengths-based inception. The next section details the search process and presents a synthesis of the empirical research.

Search Criteria

The purpose of the literature review was to identify empirical research associated with my study. The empirical research that I included in my study met the following criteria: (a) empirical research with a well-defined qualitative, quantitative, or of mixed methods methodology from 1990—present, (b) empirical research published in peer-reviewed journals, and (c) empirical research available in full text from online databases.

I sought empirical research that met my search criteria in the following databases: Google Scholar; ERIC-CSA; ERIC First Search; ABI/Inform; Wilson Web: Business, Education, and Social Sciences; Dissertation Abstracts Online: WorldCatDissertations; and Sage. Google Scholar was perused first since it yielded the widest assortment of files. ERIC FirstSearch and ERIC-CSA databases were chosen because these databases are

supported by the United States Department of Education. These databases also provide access to 1000 professional journals and ERIC documents.

Appreciate inquiry has been used most frequently in the business and medical fields with organizational development; therefore, ABI/Inform and Wilson Web were chosen because of the focus on business. Wilson Web Business allowed access to more than 850 full text publications ranging in topic from accounting and health care to tourism and transportation. Wilson Web Education full text provided an additional 79 journals that were not included in ERIC. The third Wilson Web database searched was Wilson Social Sciences. The journals in the Wilson Web social sciences database covered methods and theoretical aspects. The Dissertation Abstracts Online database was also a part of the review. The WorldCatDissertations included dissertations, books, and computer files world-wide. Sage Full Text Collection (via CSA) Education discipline was used, as well, in the search.

The overarching question in my search of empirical research related to my study asked: How is AI applied in educational settings? The following specific search questions guided my search strategy:

1. What empirical research exists on adolescents who attend an alternative or public charter high school where AI has been used as the theoretical perspective or methodology?
2. What empirical research using AI as the theoretical perspective or methodology has been conducted with alternative high school students that address how they best learn?

I used a series of keywords and keyword combinations from the databases to conduct my search. My search provided evidence that empirical research related to AI and student learning experiences with alternative high school students is scarce. Given the scarcity of empirical research, I included similar phrases and phrases recommended from the various databases to expand my search. I also expanded my research in the area of AI to include completed dissertations due to the emerging nature of this line of inquiry in education. My expanded search yielded little additional evidence. I found, however, the following themes in my search of the related empirical research:

1. Alternative high schools are characterized in several ways: innovative charter schools or some form of behavioral or academic assistance schools for high risk students.
2. AI increases the cooperative efforts among people and improves the relationships with each other.
3. Organizations use AI to create transformative change and to form partnerships with other organizations.
4. AI generates organization renewal, affirming the strengths of people and builds leadership capacity.

The presentation of the search results are reflected in a synthesis of the empirical research.

Synthesis of the Empirical Research

I organized my discussion of the empirical research around four central themes: (a) characterization of alternative high schools, (b) AI increases cooperative efforts and improves relationships, (c) AI creates transformative change, and (d) AI generates

organization renewal and builds leadership capacity. I first address how alternative high schools are characterized in the literature review.

Characterization of Alternative High Schools

Alternative high schools are characterized as innovative charter schools or some form of behavioral or academic assistance schools for high risk students. The charter school is classified as an innovative, alternative school (Raywid, 1994). The charter school is an independently sponsored school that is publicly funded based on an agreement between the school district and the sponsor for the school (May, 2006) and is typically under contract with the state and are exempt from some of the traditional school policies and regulations (WestEd, 2007).

The charter school as an alternative choice to the traditional public school has lured students from the traditional school setting more than other alternative educational settings (May). The Center for Education Reform (2007) reports that there are 40 states and the District of Columbia with charter schools. There are more than one million students attending charter schools in the United States. Parents' main reason for having their children attend charter schools was to seek improved quality in educational programs and curriculum (May). Parents identified one-to-one attention, smaller class sizes, more control over discipline, and safer school environments as top reasons for sending their children to charter school.

In contrast to charter schools, behavioral or academic assistance schools for high risk students are sometimes called last-chance programs and remedial focus programs (Raywid, 1994). The last chance for the student's educational learning after expulsion from school usually involves some type of behavior modification. These programs are

attentive to modifying student behavior and remediation of academic, social, and emotional skills. Another form of these types of schools is the alternative high school. It is a blending of the last chance and the remedial focused program.

The alternative high school is known as a non-traditional educational setting for students who have been labeled at-risk of dropping out of school due to violation of school policies including violence, weapons, truancy, and lack of school credits (Foley & Pang, 2006; Kelly, 1993). In urban settings where school violence has become a concern for the community last chance alternative schools have been created to improve the perception of the traditional high schools (Tallerico & Burstyn, 2004). The alternative high school was intended to be an additional opportunity for students at-risk of educational failure that promoted academic and social success (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996; Hall, 2000).

The alternative high school curriculum is structured with practical, student engaged learning activities and community projects that provide choice to the student's learning (Maloney, 1999). Many school administrators believe that alternative high school students need a different set of expectations from the traditional high school student (Bazemore, 2003). Students who are not successful in these settings have few alternatives: expulsion, homebound learning, or adult education studies (Kelly, 1993; Tallerico & Burstyn, 2004).

The research related to students attending alternative high schools is centered on the health needs and the high risk behaviors exhibited by the students attending the alternative high schools. Students attending alternative high schools typically engage in risky behaviors more frequently than students attending traditional high schools (Center

for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999). Risky behaviors can range from substance and alcohol abuse, sexual behaviors, and violence to unhealthy dietary behaviors and physical inactivity. The alternative high school student is more likely to have sexual intercourse, more sexual partners, less likely to use condoms, and more likely to have been pregnant than the traditional high school student (Grunbaum et al., 2000). Data show that the alternative high school administrative staff were open to 1) improving the health needs of alternative students through intervention programs to 2) promoting healthy, eating habits, and 3) seeing advantages to physical activity. Yet, they recognized that the physical environment was not conducive to the practices of offering healthy meals or promoting onsite opportunities for physical fitness (Kubik, Lytle, & Fulkerson, 2004).

Role-playing risk interventions have been practiced in alternative high schools. Role-playing as an intervention strategy was used with alternative high school students to address anger management skills and AIDS prevention behaviors (Hovell et al., 2001). Service learning has been used as an intervention to help alternative high school students avoid risky behaviors (Foley & Pang, 2006). Denner, Coyle, Robin, and Banspach's (2005) data showed only one-third of the students could see the connection between their role in the service learning projects and some of their sexual behaviors toward pregnancy and caring for children or growing old versus dying young with AIDS.

The need for prevention and intervention programs are necessary in alternative high schools where the data reveals a population of students who have higher risky behavior (Grunbaum et al., 2000). Data also reveal that adolescents with higher risk behaviors have benefited from intervention programs (Robertson, David, & Rao, 2003;

Sussman, Dent, & Stacy, 2002). Social development models have been used as prevention and interventions to deter substance abuse and risky sexual activity. Embedding the Street Smart and Reconnecting Youth intervention/prevention programs within the curriculum for juvenile offenders who attend alternative high schools has brought about personal change in the lives of at-risk students (Watson, Biesi, & Tanamly, 2004).

Students attending alternative high schools have a high prevalence of substance abuse in relation to those attending a traditional high school (Grunbaum et al., 2000). Binge drinking is significantly related to how an alternative high school adolescent spends his/her time (Isralowitz & Reznik, 2006). The alternative high school student demonstrated that the high prevalence of substance abuse continued after graduation or dropping out of the school; however, drug usage declined and alcohol usage remained stable (Rohrbach, Sussman, Dent, & Sun, 2005). Alternative high school student feedback was valuable; for example, senior exit feedback themes for furthering the educational development of the alternative high school centered on student engaged learning with transitional career and drug abuse counseling and the importance of having a committed, knowledgeable staff (Darling & Price, 2004).

Drug abuse counseling for alternative high schools students transpired through a nursing school training partnership with an alternative high school. The nurses-in-training were mentors and role models for alternative high school students. The nurses-in training provided basic health care, promoted health and wellness lifestyles, deterred unhealthy risk behaviors, and assisted with prevention education and crisis intervention. In turn, alternative high school students were involved with their nurse mentors in community

service learning projects (Scheuring, Hanna, & D'Aquila-Lloyd, 2000). The learning experiences helped students form relationships and find value in their community work. Positive experiences and relationships have also been beneficial among alternative high school peers. The relationships that alternative high school students formed at the alternative high school were stronger and more positive when compared to their experiences at the traditional high school. The alternative high school students encouraged each other to finish school work and stay in school (Coyle, Jones, & Dick, 2004).

The empirical research on alternative high schools described the characteristics of alternative high school students, alternative high schools, prevalence of risky behaviors regarding drug/alcohol use and sexual behaviors, and possible intervention/prevention programs. The research also addressed benefits of peer relationships in the alternative school setting and valuable student feedback for the alternative high school.

The empirical research results from combining the keywords “appreciative inquiry” and “alternative schools” yielded only two studies. Both involved alternative high schools where the AI strengths-based mode of inquiry was used in the formulation of interview and focus group questions. De la Ossa (2005) formed focus groups with 78 alternative high school students from 8 alternative high schools in the Puget Sound area of Washington. Building on the existing strengths of the alternative high school setting, students were asked questions framed within a positive context characteristic of AI. The strengths-based AI approach guided the construction of interview questions for Lind’s (2007) research as students and staff were trained to interview students on the promotion of mental health. Their positive stories raised the energy levels and offered hope to

students. Next, I discuss the theme of AI increasing cooperation and improving relationships.

Appreciative Inquiry Increases Cooperative Efforts and Improves Relationships

Appreciative inquiry increases the cooperative efforts among people. AI also improves their relationships with each other. The generative nature of AI, with the formulation of interview questions within a positive context, shifts the direction of the dialogue; it connects the relationship between the behavior of people and their actions (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Through the AI line of inquiry, Niles (2006) identified the perceptions of high school teachers and students involved in a one-to-one laptop initiative. She conducted AI interviews where students described positive aspects of their one-to-one laptop experiences.

High school students participated in an AI summit with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. Researchers conducted AI interviews with the school community to increase cooperation and improve school community relationships to provide future direction for the high school (Ryan et al., 1999). Eighteen high school teachers were involved in the AI process exploring causes for success in their teacher-advisory groups (TAG). Through formal discussions and conversations, they disclosed that forming relationships during TAG time was key to the group's success (Weber, 2006). Through AI strengths-based questioning, the positive core of teachers and administrators in a middle school and high school were identified. Teachers and administrators recognized that using asset-based language changed their attitudes. and improved their efforts when working with at-risk students (Calabrese, Hummel, & San Martin, 2007).

Teachers, parents, and community members from Northern Ireland participated in AI study and used a narrative approach to school improvement through the use of student created peace poems in the design of a peace education curriculum. The teacher, parent, and community member participants co-constructed provocative propositions for transforming schools toward a more peaceful culture (Smith & Neill, 2005).

Yoder (2005) also used positive questions on the topic of emotional intelligence. Her questions sought to answer how emotionally-intelligent leadership affects the climate of the community college. She explored the competencies of emotional intelligence that might impact the organizational climate of the community college level: developing others, visionary leadership, social responsibility, teamwork and collaboration, empathy, respect, and open communication. Stories were shared about successes people had with the college; visions were created and personal commitments were established in support of the final plan called Commitment to Innovation—Vision 2010 (Heelan & Transue, 2005). The efficacy of AI was found in the strengths-based mode of inquiry where the cooperative efforts of staff were demonstrated in the sharing of positive stories and conversations. The staff was able to discover strengths in people and the possibilities for the future of their organizations.

The generative nature of AI helped teachers form trusting relationships with their school's leadership team. Trust can be built between teachers and school building leadership if the principal demonstrates specific leadership behaviors that are centered on relationship building and communication. Personal interaction and exhibiting character traits such as openness, honesty, reliability, benevolence, and integrity are leadership behaviors that lead to building trust among teachers. Teachers who participated in the

traditional problem solving interview process were pessimistic and critical; the demeanor of teachers treated with the generative questions framed within the AI context were characterized as self-assured, confident, and hopeful (Kulbertis, 2006).

An AI research methodology was used with a rural community city council and school board members from the local school district. Through their cooperative efforts and sharing, they found that a strong school was central to the community's success. The community city council and school board members wanted to extend their strong family ties and values, aspiring to a more diverse community for jobs and churches as a way for growth within the community (Fast, 2005).

The generative assumptions of AI focused on understanding how students view their learning and what helps them learn. Students provided insight on their learning. Their descriptions of effective learning were compared to a collaborative community of learners engaged in shared, teamwork, where opinions are valued (Carnell, 2005).

Higher education used AI in the university setting world-wide to build relationships, increasing the cooperative efforts of employees within the organization. AI was used as the method to improve customer service provided at a South African business school (Schaap, 2006). A Canadian university used AI to establish values-based leadership practices (respect and trust) that are vital to the organization's culture (Wakabayashi, 2005). The strengths-based philosophical orientation found in AI was used as action research to help British African Caribbeans feel empowered to bring about change within their community and to recognize the university as a community resource (Gordon, 2006b). In the United States, the AI approach was used to build trust and create

mutually benefiting social relationships. The result was the formation of a strong partnership with an urban high school staff and university faculty (Calabrese, 2006).

Appreciative inquiry was used to build relationships with a university in managing ethical issues. The AI approach was chosen based on its relational process and affirming basis. Thirty-six participants from a South African university participated in an AI 4-D Cycle to develop a code of ethics (van Vuuren & Crous, 2005).

Appreciative inquiry was used to create a healthy work culture to improve the relationships and cooperative efforts at the college level with a leadership team. Participants co-constructed a provocative proposition that became a daily philosophical commitment. The action plan designed by the cooperative efforts of the leadership team became the accountability tool for performance management and evaluation (Lehner & Hight, 2006). The following section describes how AI was used to cause transformative change in the medical field, business, and non-profit voluntary and community organizations.

Appreciative Inquiry Creates Transformative Change

Organizations used AI to create transformative change and to form partnerships with other organizations. University researchers created change through the use of AI as a methodology. University researchers, as fieldworkers, found using an appreciative lens with social change practitioners helped them understand the paradoxes and dilemmas they experienced in the field (Ospina et al., 2004).

The medical field used AI to build consensus and focus on the positive. Several groups were brought together to build consensus on the expectations for a leadership position at a hospital. Participants had the opportunity to have a voice, individually and

collectively, resulting in changes in their attitudes toward the leadership position because they had a clearer understanding of the role of that position (George, Farrell, & Brukwitzki, 2002). The positive and generative nature of the inquiry brought about positive organizational changes when participants realized they could focus on the positive and get better results (Norum, 2001).

Cowling III (2004) experimented with the dialogical nature inherent in AI by engaging 14 women who had experienced despair in relation to one or more life-altering events. He was able to bring about behavioral changes using AI instead of the traditional diagnostic or symptom-focused approach.

A university partnership was formed with high school teachers through the use of AI to identify teacher attitudes and traits related to effective teaching in an urban high school. AI interviews and focus groups were used with the teachers. Teachers believed they made a difference in the lives of their students. As difference makers, they embraced student diversity, encouraged students and celebrated small successes, developed rapport with students in a caring manner (Calabrese, Goodvin, & Niles, 2005).

Appreciative inquiry was used to redesign the United Kingdom's National Health Network to create a cultural shift from institution thinking to a more client/patient focus (Baker & Wright, 2006). Municipalities have also used AI to build community so transformative change can occur within their organizations and to form partnerships with other organizations in the community (Mantel & Ludema, 2000).

The City of Hampton, VA used an AI summit to reinforce the importance of community with its 246 city employees, celebrating the past 10 years of success. Facilitators guided the city employees through the first three stages of an AI 4-D Cycle.

Success stories were told of the city's history (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). The city employees were able to build upon those successes by generating ideas for the future. An AI research methodology was used with multiple organizations in Chicago, New York, and Seattle. Data revealed that the AI process brought about organizational change, and had the capacity to build community at the individual level, at local levels with multiple entities, as well as, promoting holism on a global level (Mantel & Ludema, 2000).

Appreciative inquiry stems from action research within the context of organizational development (Cooperrider, 1986). The notion of organization development involves the problem solving (self-renewal) processes that bring about change and improvement to the organization and the organization's culture typically through the use of teams (French & Bell, 1990). Peelle III (2006) challenged the problem solving process with an AI process in his business. When AI was used as the intervention approach, the AI teams had more group potency or team cohesiveness and greater identification with the team than did the creative problem solving teams.

Appreciative inquiry was used to help build collaborative, trusting relationships between India and the United States. AI was seen as an effective method or intervention for the two organizations as they created a mutual culture to help build an alliance. Thematic coding and triangulated data sources supported relationship building and collaboration with the AI participants. AI also encouraged the co-creating of projects and energizing the teams. Both groups reported that they had learned about each other's organization. AI seen as being open and adaptable to the needs of the participants is part of the affirmation, trust, and communicating that builds the necessary bridges or relationships (relational capital) for successful organizations (Miller et al., 2005). The

next section describes how AI was successful in generating organization renewal and building leadership capacity within the organization.

Appreciative Inquiry Generates Organization Renewal and Builds Leadership Capacity

Appreciative inquiry generates organization renewal and builds leadership capacity. AI affirms individuals and their organizations and identifies and validates the strengths they bring to the organization. AI was used to find the ideal pathway for quality patient care where hospital stakeholders became re-engaged and re-energized by having the opportunity to have their voices heard (Baker & Wright, 2006).

Balancing the stress, workload, and disposition of care givers are concerns in the medical field. The AI process with reflective, affirming questions played an important role in the methods used in nursing (Baker, 2002). The leadership approach that a nurse takes is important in promoting a healthy environment for patients; therefore, the manner in which a nurse expresses or publicly displays emotion should be considered through inner reflection and AI training. AI is an alternative for individual reflective thinking as a renewal process (Vitello-Cicciu, 2003).

Similar results to those from the medical field were found when using AI in non-profit voluntary organizations, governmental agencies, and municipalities. Results are often tied to the disposition of an employee at the individual leadership level. The same was noted in non-profit, voluntary organizations. Reed, Jones, and Irvine (2005) used AI as a narrative approach to evaluate voluntary organizations in the United Kingdom. Individuals involved were empowered to make choices, have a voice, shape policy, and build social capital. The positive approach to AI brings about an awareness of an individual's leadership abilities. Building leadership capacity among employees with an

AI approach affects the dialogue that takes place within the organization and the culture of the workplace (Picker, 2006).

The United States Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development was involved in a four-day AI summit with approximately 300 people. A leadership team helped organize the summit. The charge was to build leadership capacity in all employees. The goal was to remove some of the bureaucratic barriers so more voices and ideas could be heard and communication could be improved throughout the agency. The efficacy of AI was found in the participatory process of the AI summit where open-ended questions guided the discussions; people in the organization found the AI approach to be a complement to the traditional vertical leadership and the participants had a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to the organization (Bright, Cooperrider, & Galloway, 2006). The AI research methodology was used with another non-profit organization to develop direction and vision; the appreciative climate fostered social relationships and innovation (Wilmot, 2003).

Appreciative inquiry was used to generate organization renewal at a large casino hotel management firm to improve customer service, employee satisfaction, and financial profits. The AI summit brought about new ways of thinking, more energy, and enthusiasm where employees and management co-created a new management philosophy and a new service philosophy. Organizational performances were improved and enhanced through AI (Cwiklik, 2006).

Results from the empirical research have regarded the strengths-based focus on human development and changes that are possible within the organizations. Building leadership capacity and relational capital have helped individuals and organizations find

renewal and future direction. The empirical research indicated a range of organizations that are using AI to build community and form partnerships among all aspects of community life and around the world.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided information describing the conceptual framework including my experiences and beliefs. Also included within the chapter are the lenses of social constructionism, epistemology, and professional educational experiences that are related to my study. AI was described as the theoretical perspective, and the learning process theory was described as a competing theory. The chapter also provided the search criteria, guiding questions for the literature review, and a synthesis of the related empirical literature.

The search for efficacy, that is, the capacity to acquire the desired results, was ascertained by business, non-profit, the medical profession, and by educators and individuals. The empirical research indicated that AI provides direction for educational reform efforts at the local level. The empirical research regarding AI and alternative schools yielded only two studies. A review of the research using AI as the keyword in a broader sense, however, demonstrated that AI was being used in other fields. Conducting a case study through the AI theoretical perspective of CHSM students and their descriptions of their high point learning experiences and dreams for effective learning will be beneficial to my district and profession. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology that I used in this study using AI.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Research Design

Chapter 3 details the research methodology that I used for the qualitative case study in USD 266, where Complete High School Maize served as the case study site. I describe the research design, methodology, and purpose of the study. Next, I restate the research questions and describe the context of the study, units of analysis, role of the researcher, and description of the methods. I then present a discussion of data analysis procedures and efforts to ensure the quality of the research. I conclude Chapter 3 with a summary.

A qualitative case study research design was used to facilitate an AI Learning Team in the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle—Discovery and Dream. My study included CHSM students who participated in an AI learning team process to discover the best and most effective ways they learn (Cooperrider et al., 2003; Ludema et al., 2003). The AI process yielded data based on the results of participant group discussions, semi-structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators.

The data generated and collected were viewed through the lens of social constructionism. CHSM students participated in an AI learning team process to discover the best and most effective ways they learn. Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2003) contend that AI focuses on socially constructed knowledge where participants affirm and appreciate the best in each other, their organization, and their context in which they work. The students used this discovery to focus on what is good and to dream of a future for effective learning in their school. I used an emergent design during the AI process. The

direction of my appreciative inquiry was flexible and captured the learning experiences described by participants that aligned to the inquiry with my emergent design (Cavallo, 2000).

My case study involved alternative high school students from CHSM who were asked to voluntarily participate in an AI learning team process that included the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle: discovery and dream. These stages were the vehicle where the alternative high school students described their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences. My study also described how CHSM students describe their dreams for effective learning.

Research Questions

My overarching question asked: What are the ways that student learning can be enhanced by asking students how they learn? As a result, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe the high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning?
2. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their dreams for effective learning?

Context

The research study was conducted at Complete High School Maize in the USD 266. CHSM is an alternative high school that is a part of USD 266, located in Maize, KS.

USD 266 supports four elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one alternative high school. The total student enrollment for USD 266 was 6,279 students for the 2006-2007 school year (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007a). Student demographics for 2006-2007 showed that USD 266 had primarily Caucasian students with approximately 16% of the students representing several different minority groups, primarily Hispanic, Asian, and African American. In addition, 11.62% of the student population for the 2006-2007 school year came from an economically disadvantaged background (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007b). USD 266, as a district, met AYP during the 2006-2007 school year (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007b). Maize Senior High School was above the state's AYP targeted goals during 2006-2007 with 85.5% of the students proficient and above in reading and 81.9% proficient and above in math (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007b). Even though CHSM is a separate facility, statistical state data for the school is combined with the traditional Maize Senior High School. CHSM data, however, has been tracked by the CHSM alternative high school principal and the traditional Maize Senior High School building principal.

Complete High School Maize opened in August 1999 with 3 portable classrooms, 34 students, 3 teachers, 1 counselor/administrator, and 1 secretary. As an alternative high school, CHSM provides alternatives to learning for students in grades 9 through 12 for Maize, USD 266. In 2004, a new facility was constructed and the alternative high school opened with 5 classrooms, a gymnasium, a multi-purpose room, library, kitchen, and administrative offices.

Complete High School Maize has 55 students enrolled for the 2007-2008 school year with 8 staff members. The 55 students are classified as following: 9 sophomores, 16 juniors, and 30 seniors. There are 27 females and 28 males currently enrolled. Parental ethnicity preferences, based on categories used by USD 266 enrollment, reveal that 85.5% of the students are White, 7.2% are Hispanic, 3.6% are African American, and 3.6% are American Indian/Alaskan Native. In addition, 12.7% of the students are considered to be from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The CHSM students attend school four days per week. Each student has a laptop computer and an individualized learning plan based on course curriculum contracts. The curriculum is enhanced with an emphasis on technology usage, collaboration, and developing communication skills. Students can earn credit through active learning activities outside the school day.

Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis for my study was eight CHSM students, four males and four females. The CHSM students were purposively selected based on (a) completion of at least three semesters at CHSM, (b) attainment of senior status, and (c) recommendation by CHSM staff as having the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the study. The most current data for 2007-2008 reports that there are 10 males and 11 females who have completed at least three semesters of study at CHSM. I used the following methods to collect data: participant group discussions, semi-structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators. I held a meeting with the administrators at CHSM and potential CHSM student participants prior to the study to

explain the purpose of the study and to provide an introduction to AI. Parents were called or contacted by mail about the study. Parents and student participants were informed of their rights, and then invited to volunteer to sign the consent form and an assent form for minors (Appendices 3 and 4). The eight CHSM students who voluntarily chose to participate in my study obtained the appropriate parental consent forms that allowed them to participate in the study. One participant became ill during the first day of the study and had to leave. The participant did not return to school throughout the remainder of the study. As a result, seven of the eight original participants remained throughout the entire study.

Role of Researcher

My primary role as researcher was that of participant-observer. The role of the participant-observer entails participating in the field, developing relationships, observing, and gathering data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). The role of the participant-observer is twofold: engaging in activities and observing (Spradley, 1980). The participant-observer comes to understand the social world through observing and interviewing while having an appreciative awareness for the ordinary (Fox, 2004). As participant-observer, I facilitated participants' activities throughout the discovery and dream stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. Participants described their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning. I worked at establishing rapport, building trust, and communicating with the participants so they felt supported, more engaged in the process, and were able to express a willingness to share and interact with one another (Merriam, 1998).

As a participant-observer and the Director of Elementary Education/District Assessments in USD 266, through careful reflection and analysis, I remained cognizant

of how my beliefs, emotions, and attitudes might have affected this study. I consciously balanced my level of engagement through listening and inquiry in an effort to stay neutral to minimize preconceived notions that could possibly result in the skewing of data. Through an appreciative inquiry, I sought to accurately capture the participants rich descriptions regarding their high point learning experiences (Patton, 2002). In my role as participant-observer, I followed the data collection procedures I established to minimize bringing biases to my study (Yin, 2004). I have attached AI protocols to the Wichita State University IRB as suggested by Patton (2002) remembering that the design of this study is of an emergent and flexible nature.

Participants' privacy will be protected and confidentiality of information guaranteed. Data that I collected from participants in my study was aggregated and only available to me and my major professor. Parents and students were informed of their rights. Assent and consent forms were distributed to parents/guardians and students. In addition, for anonymity purposes, I used pseudonyms—the names of the students do not appear anywhere within my dissertation.

Methods

I next explain the data gathering methods that I used in my study. First, I provide a general overview. Then, I describe the protocols that I used in Day 1 of the AI 4-D Cycle—the Discovery Stage. Next, I explain and describe the protocols that I used in Day 2 of the AI 4-D Cycle—Dream Stage. To finish, I describe how participants generated their documents.

General Overview

An AI methodology has specific protocols that generate data. I used an AI methodology to generate data through whole group discussions, semi-structured participant paired interviews, as well as participant created documents. Data generation and collection were continuous throughout each of the stages. The next section details Day 1, the Discovery Stage.

Methods for Data Collection, Day 1—Discovery Stage

I used semi-structured participant paired interviews and group discussions for Day 1, the Discovery Stage, which is the first stage of the AI 4-D Cycle. In AI, the methodology originates with positive inquiry guided by the facilitator (Ludema et al., 2003). The AI questions were designed to help participants describe their high point learning experiences. An example question was, "How would you describe one high point learning experience at CHSM?" Whole group discussions provided participants the opportunity to tell their stories describing their high point learning experiences and help establish an environment of open dialogue and cooperation, promoting social relationships (Ludema, 1996; Ludema et al., 2003).

Semi-Structured Participant Paired Interviews

The semi-structured participant paired interviews used AI guiding questions. The semi-structured participant paired interview is a method to collect data throughout the AI process. The AI questions for my study followed traditional AI protocols that are widely published and available in the research literature as well as the Internet (Whitney et al., 2004). The AI questions are stated in Appendices 8, 12, and 15 with the corresponding protocols detailed in Appendices 9, 13, and 16.

The semi-structured participant paired interviews occurred between two paired participants who interviewed each other. The interview was flexible with a unique pace and direction (Rogers, 2001). Participants interviewed each other in the discovery stage by (a) sharing a high point learning experience through one-to-one paired interviews, (b) describing a person who has made a difference or who they admire greatly, (c) discussing and determining the core factors that give life to the high point learning experiences, and (d) describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience. The next method used for Day 1 was whole group discussions.

Whole Group Discussions

Whole group discussions were also used as a data collection procedure. The whole group discussion format allows for collective story telling. Whole group discussions generate ideas and gain understanding; learning the values on a topic and how people feel about the topic which, in this case, pertains to high point learning experiences is important to understand what participants' value. The purpose of whole group discussions, collective story telling in the discovery stage, was to create an environment for generative learning. For example, an AI question was, "How would you describe one high point learning experience at CHSM?" This format provided flexibility for whole group discussion and allowed for an array of communication opportunities for participants. Collective story telling provided a venue for participants to describe what they valued in their high point learning experiences. The United States Navy (Nystrom, 2002) followed this format with 260 participants as a part of the discovery stage.

Methods for Data Collection, Day 2—Dream Stage

I facilitated whole group discussions and participant created documents for Day 2, the Dream Stage, which is the second stage of the AI 4-D Cycle. I asked participants to dream—brainstorm and imagine all possibilities for most effective learning experiences in the next five years (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Whole Group Discussions

Participants engaged in whole group discussions that generated ideas of what might be possible. I asked them to envision what the most effective learning experiences could be like and then to construct an image of the type of learning context that would be most effective for them. I followed up by asking each participant to (a) dream about high point learning experiences and (b) how could these dreams lead to more effective learning experiences? Next, they shared their generative thoughts with the whole group. At this point, the whole group described their vision for most effective learning in a whole group participation mode such as picture, skit, song, or poem.

Participant Created Documents

Participant created documents are optional activities where participants create descriptions or images of effective learning (Ludema et al., 2003). In my study, participant created documents linked the semi-structured participant paired interviews from Day 1 to their dream in Day 2.

An example of a participant created document is to generate data for data collection through the co-construction of a story of the future. Participants co-constructed a narrative about the future possibilities for the ideal learning experiences to help teachers reflect on improving teaching and learning. Initially the study was to include the use of an

online wiki to co-construct the digital story; however, not all participants had e-mail accounts. Understanding the importance of applying an emerging design to my study, I improvised and guided them to use an overhead projection system and laptop for co-constructing the digital story. Their story gradually developed as a co-constructed entity.

All AI activities and participant created documents from Day 1—Discovery Stage and Day 2—Dream Stage were used to answer the research questions as participants described their high point learning experiences and described their dream for effective learning. In the following section I describe how I conducted my data analysis.

Data Analysis

All activities for Day 1 and Day 2 of this study were recorded and transcribed verbatim. All participant documents created such as the digitally co-constructed story, the representation of the dream statement, and the metaphors were collected and analyzed. I used several techniques to analyze the data: content analysis, open coding, axial coding, text analysis software, and pattern matching with the use of a content analysis matrix. The process for analyzing data began with me becoming familiar with the set of data, reflecting to get a general sense of the information as a whole as it related to the research questions.

Through content analysis, I was able to make sense of the data by looking for patterns or themes that emerged from the data (Patton, 2002). I coded the data through an open coding process by reading the data line by line, grouping the data into several categories or topics that I identified (Emerson et al., 1995). I then checked the identified categories for alignment to the research questions to determine if they reflected the

answers to the research questions (Merriam, 1998). I used axial coding for linking categories to each other where I felt relationships existed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In addition, the text analysis software, CATPAC (Woelfel, 1998), was used to identify words that were positively related. The CATPAC software has three dimensional capabilities to visualize how words are clustered in relation to each other. Using the text analysis software and the open and axial coding process helped me identify themes. The last step of the data analysis was to prepare to tell the CHSM participants' story, as I have come to understand and interpret the data. The goal in data analysis is to be able to make sense of the data through validation of accuracy, as well as the credibility of the findings, therefore the participants' narrative texts are used to support the themes and findings that emerged from the data (Creswell, 2003).

Research Quality

Data were gathered for this study throughout the AI 4-D Cycle stages of discovery and dream, and through the interactions of participants as they participated in the AI activities. Careful attention was made to ensure that quality of the research addresses trustworthiness in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Trustworthiness

Researchers (Erlandson, Skipper, & Harris, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) relate the quality of research to the concepts that build or establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The terms that Lincoln and Guba (1985) used to determine trustworthiness for the social sciences naturalistic paradigm

were used for the purposes of this study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility refers to having the participants verify the intended meaning from the interactions by confirming for accuracy. This technique is referred to as member checking and is considered one of the best ways to determine credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was used in all of the discovery and dream stage activities throughout the study as a way of determining credibility. Credibility was also attained through the triangulation of data through various data collection methods including the data generated from the semi structured participant paired interviews, whole group discussions, and the participant created documents. The AI activities were validated through the member checking technique (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Transferability refers to whether the findings are applicable to other cases and situations (Merriam, 1998). My goal in this qualitative research was to make sure data were accurately reported; to make sense of the data through understanding and interpretation of the reality that existed at the time of the study within the context of the study from the participants' perceptions and experiences (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). I will leave it to the reader to decide whether the findings can be transferred or applied to his/her situation.

Dependability refers to the consistency between findings and the data collected. The dependability of this study was recognized in the planning design of my study where I developed protocols regarding data collection procedures throughout the AI discovery and dream stages. I also triangulated the data as a further assurance of dependability (Merriam, 1998).

Data were gathered from digital recordings of the AI activities for greater accuracy. To strengthen the process even further, I kept a journal, much like an audit trail, delineating exactly what occurred throughout my study. My study included an emergent design that allowed for flexibility as I analyzed data from the participant/observer perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This journal also contains my observations and reflective thoughts.

Confirmability was also ensured through the audit trail that accounted for every piece of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, the data and findings were presented to the participants and CHSM administrators for confirmability of the data. I also sought feedback from a peer review team regarding the findings from this study.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the research design and methodology for the study, and the role of the researcher as observer/facilitator of the AI research methodology. The chapter also detailed the data collection methods that I used in the qualitative case study and the methods for data analysis. Research quality was also addressed in terms of establishing trustworthiness. Chapter 4 addresses how the data were analyzed, and the findings for this study are presented.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is organized first by restating the purpose of my study and describing the theoretical perspective used to guide my study. Then, I present the research design and methodology and restate the research questions. Next, I detail the data analysis and summarize the findings from my study. I then, include a report of findings with two sections. The first section addresses the findings by detailing the two days of the AI learning team process. The second section presents the results of the each of the four findings where the participants' narrative texts are used to support the findings that emerged from the data. I conclude Chapter 4 with a summary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to describe how CHSM students described their high point learning experiences. My study also described how CHSM students described their dreams for effective learning.

Theoretical Perspective

Appreciative inquiry served as both the theoretical perspective and research methodology for my study. Through a positive inquiry approach of discovery, AI takes the best from the past and present and provides the basis for constructing a future image of what could be. This narrative creation becomes the collectively co-constructed design for the organization. The delivery or implementation of the collective images empower the efforts of the stakeholders, so they can sustain the organization's destiny (Cooperrider et al., 2003). The AI perspective guided the direction of inquiry toward the discovery of the high point learning experiences and the student's dreams for learning. The intent of

AI as a theoretical perspective was to focus on the high point learning experiences and affirmation of the student's learning experiences.

Methodology and Research Design

A qualitative case study research design was used to facilitate an AI Learning Team in the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle—Discovery and Dream. My study included CHSM students who participated in an AI learning team process to discover the best and most effective ways they learn (Cooperrider et al., 2003; Ludema et al., 2003). The AI process yielded data based on the results of participant group discussions, semi structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators. The data generated and collected were viewed through the lens of social constructionism. Participants used the AI process to focus on what is good and to dream of a future for their school, and be able to create a destiny through collective efforts. I used an emergent design during the AI process. Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2003) contend that AI focuses on socially constructed knowledge where participants affirm and appreciate the best in each other, their organization, and their context in which they work. The direction of my appreciative inquiry was flexible and captured the learning experiences described by the participants that aligned to the inquiry with my emergent design (Cavallo, 2000).

My case study involved CHSM alternative high school students who voluntarily participated in the first two stages an AI 4-D Cycle: discovery and dream. These stages were the vehicle where participants described their high point learning experiences and dreams for effective learning.

Research Questions

My overarching question for this study asked: What are the ways that student learning can be enhanced by asking students how they learn? As a result, my study answered the following research questions:

3. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe the high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning?
4. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their dreams for effective learning?

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in my study using several techniques: content analysis, open coding, axial coding, text analysis software, and pattern matching with the use of a content analysis matrix. Through content analysis, I looked for patterns or themes that emerge from the data (Patton, 2002). Open coding was used to compare and categorize the data (Emerson et al., 1995). Next, I checked the identified categories for alignment to the research questions to determine if they reflected the answers to the research questions (Merriam, 1998). I used axial coding to develop themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Content analysis was conducted and a pattern matching analysis matrix was created.

In addition, data were analyzed in my study using the text analysis software CATPAC. CATPAC (Woelfel, 1998) was used to identify words that were positively related as well as clustered. The clustering of related words was enhanced by the three dimensional capabilities of CATPAC to visualize the proximity of the words in relation to each other. Using the text analysis software, the open and axial coding processes, and

the content analysis through pattern matching analysis matrices triangulated the data, helping to confirm the identified themes.

Careful attention was made to ensure that the quality of the research addressed trustworthiness in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Member checking was used in all of the discovery and dream stage activities throughout my study as a way of determining credibility. Credibility and dependability were both attained through the validation of the triangulation of data through various data collection methods including the data generated from the semi structured participant paired interviews, whole group discussions, the digital recordings, and the participant created documents. To strengthen the process even further, confirmability was ensured as I kept a journal, much like an audit trail, delineating exactly what occurred throughout my proposed study. Moreover, the data and findings were presented to the participants and CHSM administrators for confirmability of the data. I sought feedback from a peer review team regarding the findings from this study.

Summary of Findings

The data analysis from my study revealed four salient findings. Each of the four findings will be reported separately with rich descriptive quotes from participants that exemplify the finding.

Finding 1: CHSM students believe they need other experiences built into their class work.

Finding 2: CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers, and all people help each other in a competent learning environment.

Finding 3: CHSM students want to create a better learning environment that mixes fun with academics.

Finding 4: CHSM students believe that students and teachers are a family and common activities are important.

Report of Findings

The report of findings is divided into two major sections: The first section describes the two days of the AI learning team process; the second section presents the results of each of the four findings. Quotations from the participants are used to enrich my description and provide support for the findings. Pseudonyms are employed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

AI Learning Team Process Day 1: Discovery

Getting Started

Appreciative Inquiry was used as both the theoretical research perspective and research methodology to initiate organizational change through a positive inquiry approach. Through discovery, AI takes the best from the past and present, providing the basis for constructing positive images of the future. I used the following methods to collect data: participant group discussions, semi structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators.

Eight CHSM students, four females and four males, chose to participate in the AI learning team process to describe their high point learning experiences and to describe their dreams for learning. I purposely sought to minimize researcher bias by limiting

and/or seeking access to the participants' background. As participant/observer, I sought to view these participants through the same lens that I would view traditional students.

The descriptive data that I present was gathered through my visual observation or information the participants freely shared. Reggie, a Hispanic male, was currently working as an apprentice for a tattooing shop. He was proud of the tattoo he designed and wore on his left forearm. He is fluent in English and Spanish, and hopes to be an art teacher. Luke, a white male, decided he needs a high school diploma. He aspires to join the Air Force. He carried his skateboard with him wherever he went. When he was tired of sitting, he would stand on his skateboard and rock quietly back and forth on the carpet. Matt, a white male, works at a local pizza shop and finds it to be hard work. John, a white male, was excited about his internship with the Kansas Child Services League. Amanda, a white female, works many hours in her after school job; she likes fixing meals for her boyfriend. She has plans to become a nurse. Becky, a white female, is in her sixth semester at CHSM. She has a social anxiety disorder. Alicia, a white female, plans to go to college and major in psychology. She is on probation.

Pre-learning Team Activity

Participants met me in the alternative high school's library for the two-day AI learning team process at the beginning of each school day. We met from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. in the library that was a rectangular room approximately 15 by 20 feet. Shelves of books stood approximately four feet high on the east and west walls. There were three rectangular tables and one round table in the room with a sofa and coffee table located on the south wall.

A white board covered most of the north wall. Car racing with NASCAR memorabilia was the theme for the room with black and white checkered curtains hanging over the east windows. The rectangular table near the door was used for morning snacks consisting of bagels, fresh fruit, and fruit juice. A timeline was posted across the north wall with the past four semesters of school divided into monthly increments. As participants arrived, they worked on a timeline based on their thoughts about what constituted high point learning events and experiences at CHSM.

Reggie was the first to enter the room. He and I greeted each other. He said he was looking forward to participating in the study. I pointed to the timeline on the north wall of the room and asked him to write down events that had happened while attending CHSM that were most memorable for him—ones that were high point learning events. He asked if it could be a trip that they had taken. I said yes, so he picked up a marker and wrote the Corn Maze fieldtrip, Making Saw 5, the Christmas Party, and the Halloween Party. Then he began telling me that the whole experience at CHSM had been good for him because "CHSM had given him another opportunity to learn, another chance, and hopefully graduate." Then he walked over to the table with breakfast treats where he got a plate and filled it with fresh fruit and a bagel. He commented that he "loved apple juice" and filled up a Styrofoam cup of apple juice. He sat down at the round table in the room that had enough chairs for eight.

Kelli came in the room, sat across the table from him, and put her feet up on another chair nearby. As Reggie was eating, he began to explain the timeline. He asked me to add Grizzly Adventures to the timeline under August 2007, so I wrote it on the timeline. Kelli and I exchanged introductions, and I encouraged her to place high point

learning events up on the timeline. She asked where to put "some of the monthly events like the service days and graduations." Then, the three of us decided they should be written out to the side. If there was one graduation or service day that stood out as more memorable as a high point learning event or experience than others, then it should be placed by the month and year. Kelli chose to put Deb's graduation on May 2007. Next, she added Crown Uptown Theatre. As other participants entered the room, Kelli and Reggie (Reggie got up from eating to join them) explained what they were doing with the timeline. The timeline discussion continued until all participants had entered the room.

Next, we convened around a circular table, where we began the two-day AI learning team process with more formal introductions. The eight CHSM participants were asked to introduce themselves and share a bit about themselves. They talked about when they attended the traditional high school in the district; however, they had gotten in trouble, were expelled, or dropped out of school.

Next, I pointed to a large flipchart paper that had two columns entitled My Rights and My Responsibilities. I asked the participants to help set the ground rules that they felt the group should use when sharing. Kelli said, "The big idea is to show respect." The other participants agreed. I put Be Respectful on the chart. The other two items that participants felt were important were "Listen to others" and "Do not talk while others talk." I added these to the chart. So, the ground rules were: be respectful, listen to others, and do not talk while others are talking.

The participants again talked about their participant created timeline document. They were enjoying this activity and seeing their document come to life. They reviewed the timeline and continued to add to the high point events at CHSM. Their conversations

went from one high point event to the next. They reminisced of their past experiences. I reminded them to remember why each event on their list was a high point learning experience.

Participants began to share stories about competitions such as those related to the Halloween Party with pumpkin bowling, pumpkin carvings, and dress-up costume competitions. Becky explained the Corn Maze as a scavenger hunt where teachers and students formed groups, "with a teacher [in the group] you go around and answer these questions like in a scavenger hunt and you try to see who can get back the fastest so you can win."

Participants talked about the monthly service days as a high point event at CHSM. Luke said the best thing about service days is, ". . . the Red Cross and giving blood, then they give you food." Alicia interrupted, "The best part is that you really are helping others." Amanda said, "At the elder care facility we talk with the old people and play games." Reggie said, "We play games and do things for them." Amanda, added to Reggie's remark, "We make cards for their birthdays and take things to those who have a birthday for that month, and it is the greatest thing ever. They really enjoy our company." Becky said, "This one lady came and she was so sweet. She asked if she could hold on to me."

The reminiscing continued as participants addressed each of the events on the timeline, sharing stories—and the room was filled with laughter. I observed them —they were engaging and listening to each other, sharing laughter and taking turns talking with each other. They seemed to be comfortable with each other while exchanging stories about their high point learning events/experiences.

Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

I briefly described AI. AI was the approach they would be using as an AI Learning Team. They would discover and appreciate the stories of high point learning experiences. I gave specific examples of businesses such as John Deere and Wendy's who had used the AI approach to improve their business operations. Luke and Amanda both agreed that it was good that businesses were using AI. Amanda said, "AI is probably good, because most people look at everything in a negative way." At this time, John, one of the participants, withdrew from the study because he was sick with the flu and had to go home. He did not return to school throughout the duration of the study.

I reminded the participants that we would be using tape recorders to capture their stories. I gave an introduction to the semi-structured participant paired interview, and provided directions for conducting the interview. Participants were asked to work in pairs so there would be two groups of two and one group of three because John had to leave the study due to illness. The girls were asked to work in pairs. The boys worked as a triad.

Semi-structured Participant Paired Interviews

The goal of the first semi-structured participant paired interview was to discover and exchange a best example of a high point learning experience. Participants were asked to remember a time when their partner was most excited about learning. A best example was explained as being one that they felt their partner shared as "having the most important characteristics that exhibited a high point learning experience." Twenty minutes was allotted per person to conduct the interview. Specific instructions for conducting the interview with guiding questions were given so each participant could

take notes on the stories heard, and learn to ask who, what, when, why and how questions that would provide richer details when describing their partner's high point learning experience. The guiding questions included where were you, how were you involved, what were you doing, what made the learning experience exciting (a high point), whether others were involved, how they felt, and what they valued most about the high point learning experience. I encouraged them to ask additional questions that might help them understand more fully the story being shared.

After they had the opportunity to share their partner's best example of a high point learning experience, I had them review the notes that I had been taking on the large flipchart paper for accuracy. A role of the participant-observer is to be engaged in activities (Spradley, 1980). As the participants shared, I took notes on large flipchart paper that stood on a tall easel near the round table so everyone could see and read my notes.

Participants recognized that their learning experiences were exciting because they were either learning something new, felt they accomplished something, or interacting and learning from a person who they admired. Alicia was learning to play the violin. Amanda was learning new dance steps. Becky was learning to shoot a gun. Kelli was learning how to be a better writer. The male participants were interacting with people who made them feel special: Matt felt special being allowed to feed the zoo animals; Reggie was excited to be with his favorite singer. He said, "It felt amazing. I got to look eye to eye with my idol as he talked about his life experiences." Luke was intrigued by the interaction he had with a knowledgeable teacher.

The second discovery activity involved another semi-structured participant paired interview where participants shared stories about a person who had made a difference in the student's life or about a person who they greatly admired. The guiding questions asked: how did this person make a difference in your life, describe a particular event that exemplified what this person did for you, why this person took an interest in you, and what characteristics or qualities about this person did they admire the most.

Amanda said she admired her mother.

> My mom is my hero, because she was married to an abusive alcoholic who use to beat her really bad, and she got away from him because she didn't want anything to happen to me. She didn't want me to grow up in that type of environment. The characteristics and qualities that I admire are my mom's never ending love and…worrying about me.

Kelli was eager to share how her brother made a difference in her writing. He had given her a couple of ideas to improve her writing. She spoke about the advice her brother suggested when she had to write a poem:

> He told me to put this line here and this one right here. Some of the lines had the same first word so [he suggested] try editing so it would go smoother. He didn't criticize it; he just helped me edit it to make it a better poem. It was pretty exciting that he was really trying to help me. He was teaching me different ways of writing. I felt like I got some knowledge to become a better writer, and it really worked out. It is one of my favorite poems. I submitted it to poetry.com. I just wanted to get a rating on it to see if people liked it. About a month later, I got a letter saying that they wanted me to come to Las Vegas to a competition. I got it

published in a book. I went to Las Vegas with my brother and it turned out to be really good.

The person who had made a difference in Reggie's life was an art teacher, whom he greatly admired. The art teacher has since passed away. With tearful eyes, Reggie shared his reasons why this high school art teacher inspired him to be an art teacher:

> The person who made a difference for me was an art teacher at the traditional high school. He made me want to be an art teacher. We both shared a love for art. It was the way he taught. He was friendly. I felt like he taught me everything he knew about art. He made me feel good, and I actually learned something. I could walk in his room anytime and just talk with him and just hang out there. I loved that dude. Some teachers are real critical when you do stuff, but I could talk to him about stuff that most people were not interested in. Before I met him, I did not have any friends that were interested and into art. I wanted to talk to him about how to do certain things with glossing. It was one of the first times that I had a teacher as a friend.

All participants were moved by Reggie's story. His story prompted Luke to share a story about his Grandfather:

> My grandpa showed me what hard work was. One time we were shoveling gravel, and I got tired and quit. He kept on working. He was 68 years old. He continued to work, and I thought he was going to have a [heat] stroke. He just kept on shoveling. It was hot [and he still kept on shoveling]. I admire his honesty and compassion.

Participants shared their partner's story about a person who had made a difference in the partner's life or a story about a person they greatly admired. As the participants shared their stories, I took notes as to the characteristics they described on each person who made a difference. I wrote the characteristics on the large flipchart paper. I listed characteristics such as not critical, friendly, hard work, honesty, and compassion. Participants reviewed the large flipchart paper for accuracy before moving to the next discovery activity.

During the third discovery activity, participants described what they liked most about themselves. The guiding questions for this discovery activity included: describing things that you do well, when are you at your best, when are you feeling best about learning, what's the most important thing that CHSM has contributed to your life, and what are the core factors that would describe your high point learning experiences. As a participant-observer, it seemed as though participants were in touch with their feelings and knew what they liked about themselves, what they did well, when they were at their best, or felt best about learning. Words like kind, creative, respectful, loyal were used to describe what they like most about themselves. Amanda was proud to share what she liked about herself:

> I am not a person who follows what everyone else is doing. I am a good listener. I am always there for my loved ones. I do not judge others. I think I am a respectful person to my elders and peers.

Luke said he liked his abilities on "skateboarding" and "eating", but his real strengths were his "determination and willingness to learn and my respect for others." Becky was proud of her "creativity and imagination." Matt liked the fact that he was

"kind, loyal, and funny." They felt best about their learning when they were interested in the subject or enjoyed the subject matter. Matt said he felt best about learning when "I am learning about something that interests me." Amanda agreed. Kelli shared:

> I am feeling best about learning when I am actually interested in or getting some good advice from someone, so that I could use it [the good advice] to help someone else. CHSM has been an improvement all around in my life. I feel best when I am there for someone, comforting them, and when I am with my friends, and when I am at school. I like representing this school. I have had the opportunity to meet some great people and the school has also taught me some manners.

The participants shared the most important thing that CHSM had contributed to their lives. Becky shared that "CHSM taught me how to respect myself and others." Luke said there were many things that CHSM had contributed to his life, but the most important thing was that the staff "made me want to go to college, made me want to do better for myself and others. They taught me self-respect and respect for others." Matt agreed that the teachers made a difference in his life because, "they are always there for you. It is not like a regular high school where they are just there to teach you; they are there for you." Amanda shared how teachers at CHSM had contributed to her life:

> They [the teachers] teach us how to be our own person and be a better person. They taught us how to value an education and how to be respectful and other life tips that the regular high school would not have bothered teaching us.

My role as a participant observer was to build rapport and communicate with the participants so they felt supported and more engaged in the process. I encouraged them to

express their thoughts, to share, and interact with one another. Then as they confirmed the notes that I had been taking for the discovery activity on the large flipchart paper, I encouraged them to look for patterns and themes, similarities and differences.

Metaphors Created to Visualize Strengths in Self

Alicia had to leave during the final part of Day 1 to visit with her probation officer. During the final part of the day, participants reviewed their strengths and qualities that they liked about themselves to create a visual representation that would illustrate their strengths and qualities. I asked them to choose a personal metaphor that would exhibit some of the characteristics or core factor, key words, that they had described in the third discovery activity. Each participant had access to large flipchart paper, pencils, and colored markers to create their visual representation. Participants were animated and engaged in this activity. Reggie spoke first. His metaphor was a snake. He shared:

> You know when you look at a snake sometimes people are afraid of them, but really they are okay. Well, when people see people with tattoos and with as many as I have, they think you are a mean person, but when you get to know me, I'm not bad.

Kelli added to the strengths of his snake metaphor saying that "Snakes are also very graceful and your [Reggie's] drawings are good."

Amanda described a lock as her metaphor.

> My strengths would be that people tell me things, and I keep them a secret. I'm good at keeping things inside and good at not robbing everyone's personal business by sharing with everyone. They give me things, and I take good care of them.

Matt chose the bird for his metaphor. Even though the bird that he drew looked much like a toucan, he meant for the bird to be an eagle. He described the bird as his metaphor:

> I chose the bird because birds are wise, and I am pretty open-minded about a lot of stuff. It is really an eagle or something. I cannot draw. They [birds] are free mostly. I don't like other people telling me what to do.

Luke described his metaphor through a saying, "I am on top of the world." He drew a map of the world and shared where he was in his life in relation to being on top of the world:

> Here is the world. I am on top of the world, but not all the way. It is kind of like I have an awesome life, but I still have my problems. That is basically what I am trying to say. I just became a senior.

Kelli shared that her life was represented by a shell. She drew a picture, with Reggie's help, of shell for her metaphor:

> My life is mainly a shell. I do not trust people very easily, because of people in the past. People can get to know me but it is kind of hard to really get to know me. I take my sweet time to get to know people, because I am tired of getting screwed over. And also, if someone tells me something personal, I do not go repeat it; it just stays with me. It is just not necessary. I will not waste my time talking about it with someone else. It is not fair to the other person.

Becky drew a picture of a sponge as her metaphor. She said the sponge represents her life because, "I do take a lot of things in. I like to watch people. I am an observer and not a participator. I just keep to myself and keep things inside." The participants were

attentive. They shared their metaphors as a visual representation of their strengths. From my observation, they enjoyed listening to each other's story behind the metaphor. Next, participants compared their strengths to the core factors that were essential in making their high point learning experiences a high point.

Core Factors for High Point Learning Experiences

I guided participants in a discussion that connected their strengths to the core factors that were essential components to their high point learning experiences. As a whole group, they described the core factors of their high point learning experiences. Becky felt teamwork and trust were core factors. Reggie and Luke agreed that friendship should be added to the list. Amanda and Kelli felt helping others should be on the list. Helping others was a two-way effort. Participants also added 'helping others' and 'others helping the students' on the list of core factors. Amanda described helping others in this way:

> Learning how to be a better person, giving back to the community by doing community service, tutoring children at the elementary school, spending time with those who don't get a lot of attention—like old people, and realizing that giving to others who are in need of things are the nicest things you can do.

Participants described teachers helping students as an important core factor, too. Amanda described help from teachers:

> They [teachers] help a lot of us get into college and to be interns. Actually, I got my job through Lisa Stephens, one of the teachers. They really care about our education. They are really trying to help us about real life, so once we leave here, we are okay.

Matt added that, George Johnson, the principal, helped my sister get a job and I got my job through my sister." Matt put fun and trust on the list. A list of the core factors was created on the large flipchart. Participants created a scatter gram to give a visual representation of the core factors/traits that they felt were most important to the students as a whole group. In the AI process, this activity became the basis for the shared images of a preferred future. Each participant had five sticky dots to place next to the core factors/traits that they felt were the most important factors related to their high point learning experiences. Friendship, trust, and getting help and guidance from the teachers regarding the students' futures were the core factors with the highest priority after the students completed the scatter gram.

Summary of Day 1: Discovery

Day 1 involved the participants in the discovery stage of AI. Participants created a timeline with the high point events at CHSM with possible reasons for each event listed being a high point learning experience. Some of the events involved teamwork and hard work such as preparing the Thanksgiving meal for the community or going to the Grizzly Adventures; other high point events were fun and full of competitions such as trips to the state fair or the Corn Maze.

Participants established ground rules for sharing. I introduced them to AI. Then, they participated in semi-structured participant paired interviews where they shared stories. The purpose of the first semi-structured participant paired interview was to discover and exchange a best example of a high point learning experience. In the second semi-structured participant paired interview, participants shared stories about a person who had made a difference in the student's life or about a person who they admired

greatly. The third semi-structured participant paired interview provided participants an opportunity to describe what they liked most about themselves. Personal metaphors were constructed to visualize the strengths that each student wanted to reveal. Participants discussed the core factors for their high point learning experiences. The last activity for Day 1—discovery stage was the participant created scatter gram that represented a prioritized list of the core factors for their high point learning experiences. The core factors included friendship, trust, and getting help and guidance from teachers as the highest priorities.

AI Learning Team Process Day 2: Dream

The second day was devoted to the dream stage of the AI process. I created and shared a visual presentation reviewing all of the work that participants accomplished from Day 1 in the discovery stage. Participants were encouraged to peruse the large flipchart pages displayed around the room to help confirm what was said on Day 1. John and Matt did not attend school for Day 2. John was sick with the flu. The participants were worried whether Matt would even return to school, since his sister had broken up with her boyfriend and they lived with him. They knew he and his sister were looking for a place to live.

After review of the large flip charts from Day 1, the participants agreed that they wanted to add a field trip excursion to Castle Rock and two specific service days, Toys for Tots and their participation in the Christmas Sharing Program to the high point events timeline. Reggie began explaining the high points for the Christmas Sharing Program, "that there were a thousand toys everywhere. It was as if you were in a Toyland, and I felt like a babe in Toyland." Laughter was heard throughout the story sharing. Becky said, "I

got buried in toys literally. I was sitting down, and I had three people tossing [toys] to me at the same time. We were trying to separate the toys, and the toys would just come at you." The review presentation from Day 1 ended with a note for the participants to keep trust, friendship, and helping in mind as they began to dream the possibilities of how to have more of these factors included in future learning experiences.

An AI dream is to construct a positive image of the future. I explained that the dream is their vision for the ideal learning experience. I shared the relationship between positive images and positive action and discussed examples of people in sports who actually try to visualize or see the image of hitting the ball prior to the real action of hitting the ball. I explained that through the AI process, the focus is on appreciating the good and positive happenings. In this way, the energy can be more easily directed toward moving in a positive manner and can bring about positive action. On Day 2, the participants began to focus on their ability to imagine the possibilities of having more of the high point learning experiences that were described in Day 1. I explained that the first dream activity would involve describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience; in the second activity, participants would list their top three wishes for making the learning experiences that they had experienced even better.

Luke, Amanda, and Alicia's conversations revolved around having more activities built into the learning that were hands-on and interactive. Alicia said she wanted "more activities with my contracts to keep from getting bored and we [as students] should have input." Becky said, "It is a big thing for us to have a say in the teachers who come here." Amanda clarified by sharing that "the students can help with the [teacher] interviews . . . for our school, and students . . . [can] also give input as to the students who get to come

here [to CHSM]." Kelli wished that "students would follow the rules and that there were less new students so the new ones [students] can get into the swing of how we do things." Alicia said, "I just knew some of the kids were going to be drama when they came here."

Participants discussed the mentoring program for CHSM. Becky said this about mentoring:

> I kind of like helping the new students out. I want to be able to help them stay in this school because if they want it, they deserve a chance to try it out. It used to be that you could spend all day with them [your mentee] the first week. They were here because that is how long they had to finish the first contract—the orientation contract. Last year it was just the first day that you could visit with your mentee, now you have them only first block.

Reggie also wished for a longer mentor-mentee timeframe, other participants agreed with him. He continued, "I remember they helped me, and I knew what was expected. I think it helps the new ones get into the swing of it faster." The discussion on the ideal mentor-mentee framework turned to the qualities or qualifications necessary for a mentor. Becky stated:

Mentors should be students who have been good mentors [in the past]. They should be friendly and open so students can talk to them, and mentors who do not have a lot to do. For example they do not have job, where they always have to be at work.

Amanda added, "Mentors should be an older, better student. They need to be helpful and help you stay on task, and not be afraid to tell you to get to work and stay on task." Reggie said the mentor "should not be a person who is involved in any of the drama."

Luke, Becky, and Amanda agreed. The participants then reviewed the wishes for creating the ideal learning experience and moved on to the second dream activity.

The Five-year Future Vision

Using the results from the first dream activity where the participants described a future vision for the ideal learning experience, they now worked in pairs for the second dream activity. The second dream activity was centered in a scenario where they imagined that they had graduated and had come back to CHSM to celebrate a 5-year reunion. As they toured CHSM, they were able to look around and see that CHSM staff was functioning as they had dreamed and the students were learning as they had imagined. The paired participants discussed what was happening, what had helped it happen, what was different, how the students were learning, and what the classes looked like. Kelli envisioned the school in this way:

> The students are still friendly and the teachers still obviously care. The teachers have a sense of humor. That is my favorite [attribute] about teachers. You can notice that there are a few changes that have helped. The teachers have made some rules that are stricter. To get the students to respect the school, we had created movies and they show the videos, so the students learned to follow the rules. The kids aren't rowdy. And the mentors are helping their mentees longer. The mentors qualify as mentors based on the qualifications that we established. The teachers ask for some opinions from students that have helped the students learn in a various ways. There are more hands-on activities like small debates in the classrooms and activities that keep the kids focused. More online [activities]

would be okay. Everything is cleaner. The classes, the parking lot, and the school are cleaner.

Luke said, "The students are respectful; not rude to other students or teachers. There are comfortable chairs to hang out in when you are working and the classes are decorated. They have technology on the cutting edge." Reggie defined technology by referring to a movie he had recently seen "where the technology had no screens and you just moved your hands in the air." Reggie also added "everyone was happy about school. Art classes have been added to the curriculum. They are doing their work and attending classes. The students are happy to be here and they love the school. There is no drama." After the participants shared the descriptions of the five year future vision for CHSM, data were used as the basis to collectively create an opportunity/concept map with the ideal future vision learning components.

The Future Ideal Learning Experiences

To further define the imagined future for the ideal learning experiences that the participants wanted to see happen, they co-constructed an opportunity/concept map with the ideal learning components. The goal of the opportunity/concept map was for them to begin to develop a positive guiding image of the future for more effective learning experiences (Ludema et al, 2003). I drew a circle in the middle of the white board that was located on the north wall of the library with the words "Future Ideal Learning Experiences." I asked the participants to draw lines from the circle outward with the most important components for creating ideal learning experiences. Amanda stood at the white board and wrote what they decided were the most important components for future ideal learning experiences. Through participant discussion and consensus, the following

components were added to create the opportunity/concept map: cooperation; student involvement in choosing new students and teachers; quiet classrooms; teachers still care/trust us; students respect the teachers, respect the school and everyone in it; more hands-on activities and more choices especially during Buff-it-up; whole school participation; cutting edge technology; and cleaner school where students pick up their trash.

Constructing the Dream Statements

The next activity was the construction of a dream statement. Participants were guided to create a dream statement that would pave the way for future ideal learning experiences. The basis for the dream statement was the future ideal learning experiences' components from the co-constructed opportunity/concept map. I asked them to write the dream statements that would capture the imagined dream for ideal learning and that it had to be written in the present tense. Then referring to the pre-written large flipchart paper, I read the additional guidelines so they could refer to them while writing. The other guidelines included that the statement reflects the cliché, be careful what you wish for; it may come true, that the statement be bold enough to challenge the status quo, and that the statement be grounded enough with examples so it could really happen.

Participants worked in pairs and were spread throughout the room. Each pair of participants was given large flipchart paper and colored markers so their dream statement could be written and posted. Clarification of writing the future in the present tense occurred during the paired dream statement activity. Becky asked, "Are we writing in the future?" and Reggie told his partner, "I'll tell you what to write. No, you write about the

future." Once the three pairs completed the construction of the dream statements, the statements were shared. Luke and Alicia—Pair 1 shared their dream statement first:

> Old students and teachers are working together to teach the new students how this school works. Old students helping teachers pick new students will help reduce drama, make sure the school and teachers are respected, and keep classes in order. All the students will participate in Buff-it-Up because they will have three choices in activities. Students will stay more interested with hands-on activities.

Next, Kelli read the dream statement for the Kelli and Amanda—Pair 2:

> CHSM in the future will be better and improved because of cooperation between the students, a better environment due to more respect for the school. Teachers will still be the loving, humorous people they are today. Hands-on learning and technology will maximize our ability to learn. More activities will be optional during Buff-it-Up and the whole school will have to participate in order to keep the school going.

Then Pair 3, Reggie and Becky, shared their dream statement. Reggie read:

> The students are able to achieve their many goals through the combination of the caring, loving teachers, and the comfortable environment they are able to work in because of the amazing technology and abundant resources for knowledge and the absence of moronic pre-teen drama that has poisoned this establishment in the past.

After Reggie read the Reggie/Becky dream statement, there was laughter and discussion about the drama of wasted energy and time from the student's learning time. Reggie defended the last statement with "That's just a statement; that's not a punishment. People

should just grow up." Refocusing the group, Luke made the comment when comparing the three dream statements, "I think that the first one [dream statement] and that one [third dream statement] are good, and I kind of like the middle one about the environment and respect in the school." I explained that participants would have the opportunity to take the best from all three dream statements to co-construct the final dream statement.

Next, the six participants merged the two dream statements from Pair 1 and Pair 2. Alicia was declared the recorder since she had the nicest handwriting. Referring to the statement, old students and teachers are working together to achieve a better environment, Amanda began the editing by telling Alicia to "cross off the word old since the statement really involves all of us." The participants were actively engaged in the meaning and the intent of the meaning of every phrase or word that was put in the statement. They discussed and clarified better environment versus comfortable environment. Amanda made several comments about the interpretation of the whole school participation but wanted to move beyond whole school meaning to "I want to say something like . . . in order to keep the school a family." Luke agreed. When the participants were satisfied, Alicia read the dream statement aloud:

> Students and teachers are working together to achieve a better environment. Students at CHSM are working together to achieve a better environment. Students at CHSM are working together to keep the respect for the teachers and the school. We have stricter rules, but the teachers still remain their same caring selves. [There are] more choices for activities during class, and Buff-it-up that the whole school will have to participate in order to keep the school a family.

Next, the merged dream statement from Pair 1 and 2 was then merged with the dream statement from Pair 3. Alicia, tore the large flipchart paper from the easel and posted it next to the dream statement written by Pair 3, Reggie and Becky. Throughout the process, the students were complimentary of each other's work and input. Kelli made the comment, "I like this sentence." Alicia exclaimed, "This is the smartest sentence I have ever heard." When Becky said, "this is the fourth time to re-write," Alicia proclaimed, "the drudgery to rewrite this." Reggie remained encouraging, "You guys are doing a good job." The participants persevered. At completion, they had a six sentence dream statement.

Final Dream Statement

Prior to the dream statement becoming final, I asked the participants to review the opportunity/concept map for the future ideal learning experiences' components and review the guidelines from the large flipchart paper posted, then compare. When Alicia read the final dream statement, she asked each participant if what was written was their "final answer." As Alicia said each participant's name out loud and each participant responded with a yes response in agreement with the dream statement. Then she wrote each participant's name at the bottom of the large flipchart paper under the dream statement. There was consensus on the final dream statement from the six participants:

> Students and teachers are working together to achieve a better environment, where student input is valued in choosing new students and staff. Students at CHSM are working together to keep the respect for the teachers and the school. We have stricter rules, but the teachers still remain their same caring selves. There are more choices for activities during class and Buff-it-Up that the whole school

participates in. The students are working in a comfortable environment because of the amazing technology and abundant resources for knowledge. The absence of moronic pre-teen drama that has poisoned this establishment in the past is necessary in order to keep this school a family.

Creative Presentation and Enactment of the Dream Statement

Returning from break, the presentation of the dream statement began with the discussion of a participants' skit, excluding the idea of a song or drawing representation. Alicia had the assignment of recorder again and wrote the brainstorming ideas and roles for the first scenario on the large flipchart paper. Reggie organized the skit where each sentence in the dream statement would become a scene in the skit. The first topic he said would be, "why student input is important." Reggie said he would play the role of the principal and asked Luke to be the new student. He then asked Amanda to play the part of the old student.

The second scenario would then portray the second sentence in the dream statement. Reggie asked Alicia to put the topic as "Group of students helping and put the word 'respect' in parenthesis." The new student would be played by Amanda. Then, Becky and Kelli volunteered to be the helpful students who would show respect to the teachers and the other students. Reggie said, "the third scenario for the third dream sentence is stricter rules. I'll be the teacher and Luke will be the skater [skateboarder]." After discussing and writing down the first three scenarios to act out for the dream statement, participants then discussed how they were going to have the time to actually create the scenarios. They wanted to present the dream statement in skit format as well as

the dream statement in video format. They wanted to create each scenario as a video that would show the message of respect or stricter rules for all of the CHSM students.

Reggie had just completed a video with a message for the CHSM students that the participants wanted to share with me, so I would have a better idea of what they really wanted to do. They had already seen Reggie's video and were truly excited to share it with me. We took a break so we could set up the projection system and get a copy of Reggie's Saw5 video from the principal. Reggie was the main actor of the Saw5 video. The video captured Reggie bound by physical rope restrictions that represented his limitations. In the video, teachers from CHSM came in the room at different times where Reggie was bound to haunt him about the choices he was making. The teachers and administrators haunting him reminded me of the Ghost of Christmas Past in A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens. The message being portrayed in the Saw5 video was that the education opportunity exists for Reggie; however, he was wasting his opportunity by his excuses, absences, and procrastinations. The participants were excited that I enjoyed the Saw5 video and were satisfied that I had a fuller understanding of what they wanted in the creative presentation and enactment of the dream statement. As a group, we decided to move to the last activity that was the co-constructed story of the dream statement.

Creation of the Future Vision for Ideal Learning through a Co-constructed Story

The participants co-constructed a narrative about the future possibilities for the ideal learning experiences to help teachers reflect on improving teaching and learning. Initially, the study was to include the use of an online wiki to co-construct the digital story; however, not all participants had e-mail accounts; understanding the importance of applying an emerging design to my study, I improvised and guided the participants to use

the overhead projection system and laptop that was set up from viewing the video. After student discussion, they decided that their co-constructed story would be an interpretation or explanation of each of the six sentences in the dream statement.

Kelli began by breaking the dream statement into sentences using black font. Becky felt that participants should go in round-robin style so they had the opportunity to add a comment of interpretation to any sentence or revise someone else's comments using the red font. The excitement and possibilities of sharing their final product grew as they neared completion of the co-constructed story. The participants' final dream statement is broken into six sentences. The co-constructed story is the explanation of each sentence within the dream statement as is represented in italics.

Participants' Co-constructed Story

Students and teachers are working together to achieve a better environment for students where student input is valued in choosing new students and staff.

> *This is important to us as students because we feel like we should have more say in who comes to our school. We want more input in who comes in the school, but the teachers should have final say in the matter.*

Students at CHSM are cooperating together to keep respect that we have for the teachers and the school.

> *This means that old students should be sure to let the new students know how much we respect the teachers here. It is privilege to come here, so the message is, "don't come here to mess around and do as you wish. Try to be a part of the family at CHSM".*

We have stricter rules but the teachers remain their same caring selves.

This is important because the students need to follow the rules, but at the same time the teachers will still be kind to them so that it doesn't alienate them.

More choices for activities during class and Buff It Up are options where the whole school participates.

We think this is very important, because people always complain and talk their way out of doing the activity or are excluded because of health problems. There should be more than one choice for each buff it up activity so that everyone can enjoy it.

The students are able to work in a comfortable environment because of the cutting edge technology and abundant resources for knowledge that are hands-on/interactive to help the student stay more focused.

If the student keeps the environment clean and friendly, then it will make it more comfortable for everyone. With more access to new and better technology, it will help make learning easier. Having hands on and interactive activities will help keep the student more interested and focused. It will also be more fun for the student and create a better learning environment.

The absence of moronic pre-teen drama that has poisoned this establishment in the past is necessary in order to keep this school a family.

We believe that this statement is true because in order to succeed in learning people should not have to struggle because of outside influences due to drama, like the hassles of everyday life. This place is supposed to be like a family so no one should ever feel like they don't belong. There should be stricter punishment

for carrying out drama. We are a family so we should all respect, care, support, and accept each other.

Sharing the Co-constructed Story and Closure to the two-day AI Learning Team Process

The participants completed the discovery and dream stages of the AI 4-D cycle; they were excited to share with the CHSM administrators what they had accomplished over the past two days. They spent 30 minutes reviewing the visual presentation on PowerPoint and looking over the various large flipchart papers, so they could prioritize what they wanted to share with the CHSM administrators. Becky and Kelli took the lead organizing the priorities. I told them that they would have about 20 minutes for sharing time with the two CHSM administrators.

After the two-day AI learning team process, participants shared what they considered important highlights from their experience with the two CHSM administrators in a 20 minute participant created presentation. Participants shared their list of what they liked about themselves and the characteristics and qualities of the people they most admired or who had made a difference in their lives with the two CHSM administrators. Becky began by pointing to the two large flipcharts and asking the CHSM administrators to look for similarities. She said:

> Here are the characteristics and qualities of people we most admire. We just wanted to show you the similarities between the two. This one is what we like most about ourselves and they are pretty similar to what we like in their characteristics of those who we admire.

Becky continued by sharing the things that students do well and the list showing what the students felt they had gained by attending CHSM. There was laughter after Becky added,

"And yes, we have learned some manners." Next, she shared the high point learning experiences, the scatter gram with the priority core factors for high point learning experiences, and the metaphors that participants had chosen to represent some their strengths. Becky then shared the process for creating the dream statement:

> We made a dream statement of what we would like for our school to be. We separated into pairs, and each pair made a statement of a couple of sentences. Then we put all of them together into a big paragraph, so you could read it.

Kelli began explaining that the dream statement was a co-constructed story and that, "we now have separated each sentence to explain everything." Luke read the first sentence in the dream statement and then the explanation for the first sentence. Kelli read the second sentence and explained the meaning. The other participants continued reading the sentences from the dream statement and summarizing the explanations for each sentence in the dream statement.

The last point that the participants wanted to share with the CHSM administrators referred back to the large flipchart paper where participants shared what CHSM had contributed to each of their lives. They explained the second bullet—an education. They felt that creating a movie like Reggie's Saw5 video with a message on the "importance of spending your time at CHSM to get an education is a great way to mix fun with an educational message." Becky explained that something like "Reggie's video, a message mixed with fun, might actually be something that new students might pay attention to. It is a newer way and would be more personal coming from [CHSM] students." Next, are comments made by the two CHSM administrators.

One administrator, George Johnson, said, "I am very impressed with how thorough and deep you have looked at the school. I actually have a couple of things that I can take from it [your presentation] and look at making some change. You guys did a fantastic job." The other administrator, Lisa Stephens, felt that the participants' "presentation should be shared with everybody, definitely the staff, but also to the students during the one-minute lesson after lunch." She also thought the process "validated some things, too. We get so focused on the negative, that you forget about whether we are getting anything right. I really appreciate you [participants] taking the time to think about our school."

In bringing closure to the AI learning team process, Kelli shared what the two day experience meant to her while her building administrators listened:

> I actually enjoyed this and loved how we talked about the school and heard how we felt about the school and we weren't in a debate, but were respectful and didn't interrupt each other, and that we kept it upbeat. This all really worked out. I really enjoyed it. It was a lot of work and it really wore me out, but it was definitely worth it.

Summary of Day 2: Dream

The AI Learning Team participated in the dream stage of the AI process on Day 2. The day began with a review, highlighting what had been shared and accomplished from Day 1. Next, I explained that the dream is their vision for the ideal learning experience. The first dream activity involved participants describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience. Then they listed their top three wishes for making the learning experiences that they had experiences even better. The second dream activity

was centered in a scenario where the participants imagined that they graduated and had come back to CHSM to celebrate a 5-year reunion. As they toured CHSM, they were able to see that the staff and students were functioning as they had imagined. The participants then co-constructed an opportunity/concept map as they further defined the imagined future ideal learning experiences. With consensus on components for creating the future ideal learning experiences from the opportunity/concept map, the participants were paired and asked to construct a dream statement using the components.

The three dream statements were shared and merged into one final dream statement by the participants. They then co-constructed a narrative about the possibilities for the ideal learning experiences to help teachers give thought to improving teaching and learning. The participants created a 20 minute presentation and shared their work with the two CHSM administrators. Next, I discuss the four salient findings that have emerged from my data analysis.

CHSM Students Believe They Need Other Experiences Built into Their Class Work

During the dream stage of the AI learning team process on Day 2, participants had the opportunity to refer to the high point learning experiences that had been described. They imagined what the most effective learning experiences might be by describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience. A part of that challenge, asked them to think about what wishes they had for creating the ideal learning experience. Reggie wished that there would be:

> . . . more choices in classes and activities in Buff-it-Up, and we would have more and better technology. The worksheets should be more interactive like a

> scavenger hunt similar to the ones we completed while we were at the state fair and the Corn Maze fieldtrip events.

Luke agreed, "I think we should just be doing something interactive in the contracts. I don't want to do the fill in the blank stuff." Alicia continued the process of defining what more activities would look like for students. She described how she could learn better through the activities as group projects and hands-on experiments:

> I would like more activities, like group projects. I loved it when we did projects. It's so long and so hard when you have to read the book and answer questions on your own. In history, we have 100 questions to read and answer. I can only do so much of that in a day. That's the only thing I have left to do [that's keeping me from graduating]. I would like to participate in debates during history or do experiments in a science lab. I really love the debates idea. If it is interactive, it should be when you are out having fun at the Corn Maze. I do not learn with worksheets by myself much.

The participants' belief in the need for other experiences to be built into their class work was so strong that having more choices for activities during class and Buff-it-Up became a part of the dream statement: "There should be more choices for activities during class and Buff-it-Up are options where the whole school participates." Kelli's future vision for the ideal learning experience was described as having "more hands-on activities. The hands-on activities can be seen as small debates going on in the classrooms that keep the kids focused." Reggie's future vision for more activities centered on a scenario ". . . we use computers that have no screens. The students' hands are moving through the air" like

he had seen in a movie. Amanda envisioned activities and experiences built into class work:

> The technology is really important. It is the latest, cutting edge stuff. The learning is hands-on. The activities are more than just teachers talking to you; you would be working with sites like YouTube and interacting with other people in other locations. I would like more projects in the contracts to vary the activities. There are no lectures. There would be no more read and answer the questions, filling out the sheet; it is so boring. I might like to create posters about different people. I think we should be able to do some of those things with experiments and hands-on learning in biology, instead of reading about things. I think we would do the experiments first hand and learn from them. Interactive lessons like the State Fair projects where we had a find Waldo [scavenger hunt] and you had to go find all this information was fun.

The participants' belief that there should be more choices for activities during class and Buff-it-Up are options where "the whole school participates" became one of the six sentences that became the final dream statement. One of the dream activities engaged participants in the co-construction of a digital story. The purpose for the dream activity was to share the ideal for effective learning with teachers so they can think about improving teaching and learning. The digital story gradually develops as participants added their portions to the story. As participants contributed to the digital story, they read what was contributed and then built upon the previous student's contribution. The explanation for the purpose in having more choices for activities during class and Buff-it-

Up are options where the whole school participates was explained by Matt. He explained the rationale for more choices for activities:

> We think this is a very important statement because people always complain and talk there way out of doing the activity or are excluded because of health problems. There should be more than one choice for each Buff-it-Up so that everyone can enjoy it.

Finding 1 Summary

The study's data revealed that the students at CHSM believe that they need other experiences built into their class work. Based on the high point learning events and experiences, their discussions related to the need to have other experiences built into their class work. This was evident throughout the dream stage activities that involved imagining what the most effective learning experiences could be as they described a future vision for the ideal learning experiences including their wishes for creating the ideal learning experiences and their future vision. As participants shared their experiences and vision for ideal learning experiences, defining the future vision became more evident with examples. The participants' dream statement and digital story contributed to the types of experiences they felt were needed to improve teaching and learning.

CHSM Students Believe Students and Teachers Respect Rules, Students Talk with Teachers, and All People Help Each Other in a Competent Learning Environment

Through the AI learning team process, participants identified the core factors for high point learning experiences as friendship, trust, and helping others as important. The data revealed that participants believe that in a good learning environment people respect rules, help each other, and students and teachers talk to each other. Amanda described

that some of the high point learning events at CHSM involved time, effort, and teamwork all for the sake of helping others:

> Some events like the Thanksgiving meal and the Grizzly Adventures involve time and effort as a group. We put in a lot of hard work and worked together as a team. I enjoy everything. All of the activities are fun. At the elder care facility, we make cards for the elderly on their birthdays and take things to those who have a birthday for that month. It is the greatest thing ever. They really enjoy our company. For me, the most important factors are learning how to be a better person, giving back to the community by doing community service, tutoring children at the elementary school, spending time with those who do not get a lot of attention like old people, and realizing that giving to other people who are in need are the nicest things you can do.

Students helping others was important, but students receiving help was important, as well.

Amanda appreciates the teachers who have helped her with her future goals. She shared, "The staff at CHSM has helped a lot of us get into college, get jobs, and internships." Matt also agreed how the staff at CHSM helps. He places an emphasis on the dedication of the staff:

> George Johnson [one of the teachers and now an administrator] helped my sister get a job, and I got my job through my sister. The most important thing for me at CHSM has been the staff. They are always there for you. It is not like a regular high school where they are just there to teach you; they are there for you.

The AI learning team process allowed participants to think about high point learning experiences and share stories related to the discovery of someone who had made a difference in their lives as well as a description of the most important thing that CHSM had contributed to their life. Becky referred to her experiences where CHSM had been a good learning environment for helping her with problems by talking with and becoming comfortable with the teachers. Becky believes that Julie Hinson, a CHSM teacher, made a difference in her life:

> I had a lot of problems when I first came here, and she [Julie Hinson] helped me with my obsessive compulsive disorder. Many mornings she helped me get comfortable here at CHSM. She is always there for me when I need to talk to her and [she] helps me with my problems. She helps me smile when I am having a bad day. She is a good person and she likes to help people. The most important contribution that CHSM has given me is that I have learned to respect myself and other people. I have become a lot more independent. And yes, I have learned some manners.

Luke shares that the teachers at CHSM helped him believe in himself. He shares, "CHSM teachers have helped me do better for myself and others. I want to go to college now. I realize that I don't finish high school and go to college for my dad. I do it just for myself." Matt shares that the CHSM building principal believes in helping everybody. He shares this story about the building principal:

> The person I admire is the principal at CHSM. He believes in helping everybody. He always has something good to say, and he always has a positive attitude. He inspired me to go to school, and I probably wouldn't have been in school. And I

don't know, he just made me believe, and I thought it would be tougher than it has been.

The participants were involved in creating an ideal future vision for learning. Kelli said that "The most important factors for me are helping people, being at CHSM, talking to people, and being able to overcome obstacles that have been thrown at me." Her dream for an ideal future vision for learning is to create a better environment for the school:

> One [environment] is where students had respect for the school. We know if the new students are going to be good for our school. The new students would follow the rules, and we would have fewer new students, so the new students can get into the swing of how we do things here. The teachers would be stricter or follow their rules.

The participants began sharing their experiences in the role of mentor as new students came to CHSM. Through the sharing of their stories, they began to define the ideal mentor-mentee program and qualities for the mentor. Reggie shared how he wishes for more time to work with his mentee:

> I wish we had more than one hour to mentor. The new student really does not see how the school works. I remember when I had my [orientation] contract to do, and my mentor helped me. Then, I knew what was expected. I would just take my mentee with a contract into Town Hall and have him work on the contract until he had questions. I think it helps the new students get into the swing of how things work at CHSM faster.

Becky explained her mentoring experiences:

> I like being a mentor. I like helping the new student out. I want to be able to help them stay in this school because if they want it, they deserve a chance. It used to be that you could spend all day with your mentee for the first week that they were here because that is how long they had to finish the first contract—the orientation contract. I wish we could have that much time now to be a mentor. Now, you have them only first block. I had a lot of help on my orientation contract and questions. My mentor helped me do some things on my contract, but when I got finished with an assignment he would explain everything to me so I knew what it was. I still learned, but he helped.

Participants also shared the qualities or characteristics necessary for a quality mentor. Amanda defines the mentor as needing to be an "older, better student. The mentor needs to be helpful and help you stay on task, and not be afraid to tell you to get to work." Becky addresses the mentor role:

> The mentor needs the time to work with others during the school day, and not a lot of other responsibilities to do like a job they always have to go to. They should be friendly and open so you can talk to them and they should not be involved in the drama like the ones that say, "Don't talk to this person because . . ."

The AI learning team process also allowed participants to dream the ideal future vision for learning experiences. Luke describes the ideal future vision for learning to include respect:

> Students are helping each other work. The rules are stricter, but the teachers make you get involved and talk to people. The students get to know the teachers before the students. The students are respectful and not rude to other students or teachers.

Amanda shared her vision for the future ideal learning experiences believing it important that "the students still respect the teachers. Also the schools are cleaner. In fact, all students and teachers are working together to achieve a better school." She shares that she has learned from her experiences at CHSM to be respectful and show appropriate manners when around others:

> The most important thing that CHSM has contributed to my life is valuing an education, how to be respectful, and other life tips that the traditional high school would not have bothered teaching me. An example is when a guest comes to visit CHSM. We learn how to introduce ourselves. They teach us how to be respectful toward others and how to be proper and teach the life traits. I don't think the traditional high school would really care about teaching those things to students.

Finding 2 Summary

The AI learning team process was the vehicle that allowed the participants to share stories about the high point learning events and their high point learning experiences, plus share stories about people that have made a difference in their lives. The sharing of these stories and experiences enabled participants to discover the core factors that are valued in high point learning experiences—the friendship, trust, and importance of helping others. This, in turn, allowed them to share their visions for the future ideal learning experiences and came to realize that in a good learning environment people respect rules, students talk with teachers, and people help each other.

CHSM Students Want to Create a Better Learning Environment that Mixes Fun with Academics

Participants had the opportunity to share their high point learning events while attending CHSM by completing a timeline. They placed events on the timeline such as the Grizzly Adventures, the state fair, the Thanksgiving meal, the Halloween party, the Christmas party, the service days, and going to the Crown Uptown Dinner Theatre. The participants shared stories about the events that revealed that the students at CHSM want to create a fun learning environment. Matt described some of the high point events at CHSM were listed as fun:

> For some of the events like the Grizzly Adventures, you have to trust the other people to catch you so you can fall backwards. The contests were fun. The Corn Maze event was like solving a riddle. Fun, a lot of trust and honesty are important core factors to me for the high point learning experiences.

Kelli shared that, "for some events, you participate in teams in competitions—like a scavenger hunt. We have a lot of competitions." As I listened to the digital recordings of this activity, I could hear participants' laughter as they shared stories. Reggie added, "At the Halloween Party we had a scarecrow competition, and we tried to win. We had a pumpkin carving that was fun, too. At the elder care facility, we play games with the elderly and do things for them." Reggie also shared the details about how much fun it had been to create a movie/video that he had shared with the other students. Reggie said, "I had a blast making a video with a message where you help make people believe that your education is important. Everybody was laughing." Becky explains that "the video with

the message on the importance of spending your time at CHSM to get an education is mixed in with something fun that the new students might actually pay attention to."

According to Becky what made the Christmas party a high point learning event was the fun. There was a spark of excitement as everyone started talking at once. Reggie said, "We got to dress up." Then Kelli shared that they "had an elf." Then the participants let Becky tell the story:

> We had Santa. We started to play a human bingo game. We had to ask questions and they [the game students] had to race to the faucet and Lisa Stephens, one of the teachers, tore a big hole through the thing [Christmas decoration]. It was so much fun since everyone was racing. The students were really polite. The teachers were pulling each other out of the way and tackling each other.

There was laughter from all of the participants as they remembered the scenario that Becky was describing. The AI learning team process allowed participants a level of comfort so they had the opportunity to share what they liked most about their high point learning events at CHSM.

Another AI activity allowed participants to describe how they wanted to create a fun learning environment through the sharing of the vision for the ideal learning experiences. Alicia's vision for future ideal learning experiences included the students doing work that was fun:

> The students are getting along and getting their contracts done on time. They are attending classes. They are actually staying in the classroom and doing their work. Students are doing hands-on work and having fun doing their work, like with the things they have to do like making a card [thank you cards].

Reggie described his vision for creating a fun learning environment in this way:

> The students are learning, having fun, and I see smiles everywhere. By students giving their input about what might help the school, the school has been able to make changes. There is no drama. Everyone is happy about school. They are doing their work. They are happy to be here. They love the school.

Throughout the AI learning team process, participants shared stories that supported the finding that students at CHSM want to create a fun learning environment.

Finding 3 Summary

The AI learning team process allowed participants the opportunity to share stories where the students at CHSM want to build a fun learning environment. The participants enjoyed sharing the fun that they had experienced in each of the high point learning events that had occurred at CHSM. The positive emotions, laughter and excitement in sharing brought a wealth of energy to the AI learning team process.

CHSM Students Believe That Students and Teachers are a Family and Common Activities are Important

Participants referred to teachers as a sister or as friends, the principal as a father-like figure, and the school as family during the AI learning team process. They had an opportunity to share stories about a person who had made a difference in their life or someone who they admired greatly. They referred to teachers as a sister or as friends, the principal as a father-like figure, and the school as family while sharing their stories. Kelli chose to share about Julie Hinson, a teacher at CHSM, who had meant so much to her.

> Julie Hinson is very trusting and the older sister that I never had and she just tires to take care of you. She took care of me and has helped me get through a lot of

> difficult days. We just have similar personalities and have gotten along. She is a lot like me. She has a great personality and at the same time she is caring. She can be fun, but she can also be serious.

The other person that Kelli spoke about was the building principal.

> He is a good teacher and friend. He is kind of like a father figure to me and he always makes me laugh and cheers me up. He is always asking how I'm doing and seems to really care about what I do. They are nonjudgmental.

Not only did the participants feel the teachers were friends, but family. Amanda described the school as family in this manner.

> They [the teachers] teach us how to be our own person and to be a better person. I like how we give back to the community. We do a lot of volunteer work. We feel we are a family and not a school. We are a school, but we are more of a family. Our teachers treat us like their actual kids, not just one of the hundreds of students that they had at the traditional high school.

Reggie shared that "as a school family you feel safe. This school is awesome. I don't want to leave."

One of the participants' goals was to make sure to keep the school as family. They felt whole school participation, where everyone is together for certain activities, was important. Alicia shared the activities she felt were important:

> Once a month we decorate the Town Hall and bring and make food so we can celebrate. We get to enjoy the celebrations like the birthdays, graduations, and Thanksgiving meals, but they are definitely hard work. We all have to work together. On service days, the best part is that you really are helping others. We

> also have an appreciation day for the teachers, and we send them to lunch. The staff does a lot for you here, and we like to do something for them.

Whole school participation became one of the most important components on the opportunity/concept map for ideal learning experiences that would then, later, become a part of the dream statement. Two sentences within the dream statement refer to how the participants valued whole group participation and the school as family. One sentence that they co-constructed states that more choices of activities during class and Buff-It-Up are options where the whole school participates. Matt explained the meaning of the sentence as being "very important because people always complain and talk their way out of doing the activity or are excluded because of health problems. There should be more than one choice for each Buff-it-Up so that everyone can enjoy it." The other sentence in the dream statement refers to the school as family: the absence of moronic pre-teen drama that has poisoned this establishment in the past is necessary in order to keep this school a family. Kelli explained the school as family:

> We believe that this statement is very true because in order to succeed in learning people should not have to struggle because of outside influences due to dram, like the hassles of everyday life. This place is supposed to be like a family so no one should ever feel like they don't belong. There should be stricter punishment for carrying out drama. We are a family so we should all respect, care, support, and accept each other.

One other sentence in the dream statement also refers to the participants' value of 'school as family' where students at CHSM are cooperating to keep respect for the teachers and

the school. Kelli explained the meaning that had been co-constructed in the digital story for the CHSM administrators:

> This means that old students should be sure to let the new students know how much we respect the teachers here. It is a privilege to come here, so don't come here to mess around and do as you wish. Try to be a part of the family at CHSM.

Finding 4 Summary

Participants were engaged in AI activities that revealed the students at CHSM believe that students and teachers are a family and that activities together are important. Teacher as a sister, teacher and principal as friends, principal as a father-like figure, and the school as family were noted throughout the AI learning team process. Whole school participation where everyone is together for certain activities was important to participants. This was one of the most important components on the opportunity/concept map for ideal learning experiences that becomes part of their dream statement. Keeping the school as family becomes a part of the dream statement, as well.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 provided the four salient findings from the data that were collected from my study with CHSM students. The four findings from my study were: (1) CHSM students believe they need other experiences built into their class work; (2) CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers and all people help each other in a competent learning environment; (3) CHSM students want to create a fun learning environment that mixes fun with academics; and (4) CHSM students believe that students and teachers are a family and common activities are important. In Chapter 5, I provide the implications for future research, as well as for practice with

recommendations. The results as related to theory, the limitations of the study, and closure with a summary and a conclusion to the study will also be provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

My study was designed to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences and how CHSM students describe their dreams for effective learning. I organize this chapter by restating the purpose for my study, presenting a summary of the literature review and methodology and research design. I next restate the research questions and follow with a restatement of the four findings in my study. I discuss each of the findings in the order presented. Then, I detail the implications for future research and the implications for praxis with recommendations. I then explain the relationship of the findings relevant to theory, the significance of my study, and I close with a summary and conclusions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences. My study also describes how CHSM students describe their dreams for effective learning.

Summary of the Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review was to identify empirical research associated with my study that was well-defined qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods methodology from 1990-present. I used the following full text online databases to find empirical research: Google Scholar, ERIC-CSA, ERIC First Search, ABI/Inform, Wilson Web, Dissertation Abstracts Online, and Sage. My conceptual framework is grounded in AI and its underlying foundation of a social constructionist epistemology. AI served as both the theoretical research perspective and the research methodology for my study. The

AI research methodology takes the best from the past and present to create a desirable future. AI generates hope and possibilities in the life of the organization as participants learn to value, trust, and appreciate each other (Ludema et al., 1997). Through the AI method, the organization's participants discover their positive potential or positive core. My search provided evidence that empirical research related to AI and student learning experiences with alternative high school students was limited. A review of the research using AI as the keyword in a broader sense, indicated that AI was widely used in other fields such as the medical profession (George et al., 2002; Vitello-Cicciu, 2003), with municipalities and non-profit organizations (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001; Reed et al., 2005), and with business (Cwiklik, 2006; Miller et al., 2005). My review of the empirical research identified four general themes: (a) characterization of alternative high schools, (b) AI increases cooperative efforts and improves relationships, (c) AI creates transformative change, and (d) AI generates organization renewal and builds leadership capacity.

Methodology and Research Design

A qualitative case study research design was used to facilitate an AI Learning Team in the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle—Discovery and Dream. CHSM students described their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning. I used AI as the methodology because of its affirmative approach and its generative capacity for stimulating interaction and collaboration among participants (Cooperrider, 1990). The AI methodology involves a 4-D Cycle: discovery, dream, design, and destiny. For the purposes of my study, CHSM students voluntarily participated in an AI Learning Team that included the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle: discovery and dream. I used the

following methods to collect data: participant group discussions, semi structured participant paired interviews, and participant created documents, participant generated video, and a participant created presentation for district administrators. Eight CHSM alternative high school students, four males and four females, were purposively selected to participate in the two-day AI learning team study. One alternative high school student dropped out during the discovery stage due to illness.

Research Questions

My overarching question for this study asked: What are the ways that student learning can be enhanced by asking students how they learn? As a result, my study answered the following research questions:

1. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe the high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning?
2. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their dreams for effective learning?

Summary of Findings

Findings from this study reveal how CHSM alternative high school students describe an effective learning environment. Four salient findings emerged from my study:

Finding 1: CHSM students believe they need other experiences built into their class work.

Finding 2: CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers, and all people help each other in a competent learning environment.

Finding 3: CHSM students want to create a better learning environment that mixes fun with academics.

Finding 4: CHSM students believe that students and teachers are a family and common activities are important.

Discussion of Findings

Finding 1: CHSM Students Believe They Need Other Experiences Built into their Class Work

Participants shared high point learning events and high point learning experiences at CHSM. Using their stories as the basis, they had the opportunity to imagine what the most effective learning experiences might be by describing a future vision for their ideal learning experience. They shared their wishes for creating the ideal learning experience. They wished for more choices in classes and activities. The phrase, more activities, was also described as including more technology usage—interaction with websites and innovative technology. They also wished for more group projects and more hands-on participation, for example, debates during history or conducting experiments in a science lab.

The CHSM alternative high school's mission statement is "celebrating individuality and maximizing untapped abilities and talents" (Complete High School Maize, 2007). Each student has an individualized learning plan based on course curriculum contracts. The aim and characteristics of alternative high schools is clear in the literature. The alternative high school was intended to be an additional opportunity for students at-risk of educational failure that promoted academic and social success (Fuller & Sabatino, 1996; Hall, 2000). The alternative high school curriculum is structured with practical, student engaged learning activities and community projects that provide choice to the student's learning (Maloney, 1999). Gordon (2006a) posits that the best way for

schools to improve is by raising the engagement levels of students. Metaphorically, engagement may be viewed as a magnet where students are attracted to learning; it is the moment that grabs the student's attention and curiosity (Tomlinson, 1999). Therefore, tapping in to the interests, strengths, talents, and abilities of students is a way for teachers to raise engagement levels in the classroom.

Much of the content learning for CHSM students was described as traditional in the form of textbook readings with worksheets to be completed, similar to traditional high school experiences. Even though the work required is in the form of a contract with choices of readings and assignments, the majority of the learning is individual book work at the student's pace. The act of learning individually was not a favorable instructional practice for students as they described their high point learning experiences. The participants believe that learning is more of a social act, so they have described the future ideal learning experience to include more group-based and project-based learning.

Participants' preference for classroom learning is group-based. They are involved in activities and want to have choices in their learning. Their descriptions of high point learning experiences involved others, where they were engaged in participating in hands-on activities. In terms of instructional practices, participants are not experiencing their ideal future vision for learning. The teachers focus on teaching to the state-tested mandated indicators for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. The contract packets focus student learning on specific state-tested indicators. School reform and school improvement efforts revolve around raising the academic achievement levels of students by focusing on the teaching and learning process (Hopkins, 2005). I believe teachers are caught in the paradox between accountability on test scores and providing

high quality instruction valued by students. One such way to address this paradox is through the development of teaching practices through integration of tested indicators with more hands-on, problem (project) based learning that address the goals valued by the participants. Lightfoot (1986) believes that if schools listen to the students' voices, the schools will have empowered the students. Listening to the student, that is, student voice, is defined as the role a student takes in the school's educational change efforts or in the school's decision making process (Mitra, 2004). A three-year study conducted by Mitra (2005) involved student-focused activities where students worked with teachers and then the teacher-focused activities allowed students to be part of the staff development efforts. Some of her findings included the need for collective understanding, norms, and common language. One lesson from the student-focused and teacher-focused activities learned was that the degree of group accomplishment depends on how well the group works together. Alternative high school students are in a position to effect change at the local level and can provide a voice to better their classroom learning experiences.

Participants envision future ideal learning experiences that include more choices in class activities that consist of hands-on participative group projects that are more interactive with innovative technologies. They want to use technology that is more interactive and cutting edge. Technology usage facilitates engaged learning where students become more actively involved and more intrinsically motivated with authentic learning (Hargis, 2001; Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1999). Researchers suggest that student developed social practices in the usage of new technologies may influence the teaching and learning process (Rheingold, 2002; Roschelle, 2003). The role of educational leaders may need to be to provide guidance to teachers and encourage them

to creatively interact with students through the use of available technologies so students can pursue meaningful and relevant activities in their class work. Robinson, King, and Thompson (2007) found through the teaching of robotics to alternative high school students that both the students and the teachers were engaged in their own learning. The teachers were learning how to teach in a student-centered, active learning environment that was highly technical, and the students were involved in meaningful, project-based learning activities.

Choices and direction in activities are prevalent in project-based learning where students are engaged in topics that are of personal interest. Engaged learning typically involves multidisciplinary, problem (project) based learning with collaborative small group work (Jones, Valdez, Nowakowski, & Rasmussen, 1994). Increase in content knowledge and positive attitudes toward learning are attributed to problem (project) based learning (Sterling, 2007). Listening to students describe their high point learning experiences and describe the ideal future learning experiences may affect current teacher pedagogical practices.

Finding 2: CHSM Students Believe Students and Teachers Respect Rules, Students Talk with Teachers, and All People Help each other in a Competent Learning Environment

Participants reflected on their most memorable events while attending CHSM and discovered common themes that made these times high point learning events. They identified the core factors for their high point learning experiences. Three of the most important core factors were friendship, trust, and helping others. As a result, the data revealed that they believe that in a competent learning environment everyone respects the rules, students talk with teachers, and people help each other.

Participants shared stories about their experiences as newcomers to CHSM. They compared the actions and expectations of new students to what they had learned from their experiences at CHSM over the past three to four semesters. The behavioral differences became evident as participants shared their mentoring experiences. They realized that the newly admitted CHSM students did not come with an attitude or desire for respecting the school, the rules, or other people by the behaviors they were exhibiting. They identified examples of inappropriate behaviors that included leaving trash everywhere especially after lunch and breaking rules such as smoking on the premises or urinating on the walls. The participants felt, in part, that new students should have a greater understanding of the rules, expectations, and the organizational culture at CHSM. Through their descriptions of the ideal future learning experiences, they felt one way of solving the issue was through a culture of mutual respect. Elmore and Burney (1997) found that the educational leaders saw mutual respect as involving a deep and personal commitment to the common goals of the school when the environment was supportive, caring, and nurturing. Students who understood the expectations of the school could help through an extended student-mentoring program; another possible solution was becoming more familiar with the teachers and being able to create bonds of friendship and trust.

Participants realized that new CHSM students came from a learning environment where their personal lives were left out of the teaching and learning formula. The literature explains that students may feel clumsy and confused about making connections with teachers, yet desire to belong, help, and contribute in a meaningful way (Starratt, 2007). Teachers are shunned upon for building close relationships with students in the

traditional high school. In the alternative school, close teacher-student relationships are much more accepted (Wilson, 1976).

Participants described high point learning events at CHSM: preparation for their Thanksgiving meal, the Christmas Party, student graduations, and birthdays. They believed these events helped others; however, they involved a lot of time, effort, and teamwork. Realizing the importance of students making meaningful contributions in the form of helping others assists them in clarifying their role in relation to becoming social beings, contributing members of society, and developing their identity (Starratt, 2007).

Participants shared stories of appreciation where teachers helped guide and advise them with personal matters, as well as, with future goals such as getting a job or applying for college. One way of explaining the reciprocity is through organizational citizenship. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) consider the benefits of students helping the school organization and students getting help as organizational citizenship in schools. Organizational citizenship refers to the personal behaviors that the student chooses to exhibit that help make the school more effective and efficient (Organ, 1988). He describes different dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviors. One dimension of organizational citizenship behavior is described in terms of helping others in the sense of an authentic, selfless way. Another dimension is based on conscientiousness where the students follow the rules and expectations without supervision being imposed (Organ, 1997; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983).

Participants also described how CHSM had contributed to their lives. They shared stories about people who had made a difference to them. Through the sharing of their stories, they discovered that they valued their time with the teachers. The teacher was

seen as a friend, someone who they grew to know on a personal level. They confided in and trusted teachers; and would seek teachers for assistance with everyday matters—even unrelated school issues. A way of explaining the value of identifying with an adult as a trusting friend is in the student's longing to be accepted and understood. Teachers who take a personal interest in students create a caring, supportive learning environment. These are considered effective practices for an engaged school (Committee on Increasing High School Students' Engagement and Motivation to Learn, 2004). Having supportive and trusting relationships increases collaboration, engagement levels, and school improvement efforts (Daly & Chrispeels, 2008; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Participants believed that social connections and relationships were important. Their world is about social connections. They have instant access to social connections through their cell phone text messaging capabilities. In addition, they connect with friends by engaging in online social networks such as MySpace and Facebook**.**

Participation in an online social network allows the student to personalize a profile page, build a network of friends, connect with their friends and connect to their favorite music groups, share photos, and create videos that are shared around the world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Their world is a social event. They do value interacting with teachers and others. The students do want to help others and want others to help them. And, at the same time, they want a learning environment where people respect one another. Nurturing a school culture built around relationships where students are accepted and treated with respect is vital to school reform (Smyth, 2007).

Finding 3: CHSM Students Want to Create a Better Learning Environment that Mixes Fun with Academics

Participants had the opportunity to share high point learning events and experiences. They recalled contests, competitions and fieldtrips as fun. They shared a future vision where they enjoyed staying in class doing their class work and were happy to be at school. Fun is usually a concept not associated with school work. Alternative high school students are typically students at-risk of educational failure. All the participants in this study had been expelled from the traditional high school or left school—dropped out. They experienced little or no success at the traditional high school. When teachers talk about school work, homework, or use the phrase "get to work", parallels are drawn between school and work. School as work in the traditional sense, is not appealing (Kohn, 1997). Consequently, consideration for transforming traditional notions of schoolwork should be a primary consideration in alternative high schools as well as traditional high schools. Obiakor (2001), for example, urges teachers to change instructional practices to make school fun—more enjoyable and pleasurable for students where the teachers place emphasis on learning as fun instead of work. Play, having fun through games, humor, and joyfulness are becoming an important part of work and business, as well as being regarded as a social interaction and a healthy attribute for people (Pink, 2006). Another option for mixing fun and academics is through the use of humor in the classroom. Students appreciate humor in the classroom to make the learning environment more pleasant. Sharing funny stories and funny comments were the most favored forms of humor used in the classroom and contributed to a sense of community

(Torok, McMorris, & Lin, 2004). The future ideal learning experience at alternative high schools is to transform the notion of learning as work to learning as fun.

Finding 4: CHSM Students Believe that Students and Teachers are Family and Common Activities are Important

Participants described a person who made a difference in their life. They shared stories where they felt like the teachers treated them as if they were one of the teachers' children. Creating a sense of the school as family was important to participants. Mintrop and MacLellan (2002) categorized 17 of 46 schools with the philosophical theme of the school is one of family/community. The school as a family concept was noted in the mission and vision statements of school improvement plans where effective schools have a safe and orderly environment or high expectations from all students. The effective school correlates represent factors that affect student learning (Edmonds, 1979; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). The concept of the school as a family contributes to the development of strong social networks and fosters mutual trust (Elmore & Burney, 1997). Many CHSM students face external and personal adversity such as challenges at home, learning to survive on the streets, cooperating with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, dealing with issues involving gangs, poverty, drugs, and racism. All are considered risk factors (Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999). The support structures for students attending alternative high schools focus on promoting social skills and forming positive relationships (Barton, 2005). Beattie (2004) examined the culture and structure of the alternative high school. She noted that success begins with transformation from within each student based on the student's connections and relationships. These interpersonal relationships offer opportunities for students to interact and communicate with others.

Developing positive relationships affects the students' identity, successes, personal growth and maturity, and allows the student to gain a greater sense of responsibility and control over his/her life. Social development, where the student has the opportunity to have his needs of belongingness and interconnectedness be met are a part of the notion of evolving into a family.

Students and teachers develop into a family, a community through common experiences and close interpersonal relationships. Having common experiences and close interpersonal relationships where respect, caring for others, being supportive and being accepted by others is lacking in the students' past experiences. Daly and Chrispeels (2005) propose a model for the development of effective schools using a strengths-based approach where a climate of success includes supportive relationships and the foundations of trust such as understanding and respect and sense of efficacy are present. Efficacy is based on the individual or group's ability to bring about a desired result (Bandura, 2000). Participants shared the belief that whole group participation with common activities helped create a family where students respect, care, support, and accept each other. With this vision for an ideal future learning experience, I believe their shared beliefs and sense of collective efficacy can influence the future direction of the school.

Implications for Future Research

My dissertation tells the story how CHSM student participants described their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning. My study presents multiple opportunities for further research. My study could be extended to include the third and fourth stages of the AI 4-D Cycle: design and destiny. My study

involved alternative high school students. Further research in the AI 4-D Cycle may extend beyond alternative high school students as participants, to include teachers, parents, administrators, and additional alternative school stakeholders.

Another option for future research would be an all inclusive study that brings all alternative high school stakeholders together for an AI Summit. In the AI Summit, all stakeholders would be a part of the study from the onset, and the research would include all four stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. This approach would give researchers the opportunity to explore the potential that AI has with a better alignment in closing the gap between student expectations of the teaching and learning process, particularly—espoused theory versus theory-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1974) as well as the overall improvement of the organizational functionality of schools.

Researchers may consider a similar research scenario with a traditional high school or an elementary school or as a district-wide initiative. Educators could use AI as an action research methodology to inform teacher practice, as well as the use of AI as a theoretical perspective for best practice leading to excellence in education. AI may be used as a research methodology and theoretical perspective to enhance the total school improvement efforts in the district. The use of all four stages of the AI 4-D cycle may include a broader group of people: traditional high school students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community partners. They could celebrate past successes and imagine what might be, then co-construct the desired future image, and deliver it through action teams so an improved organization could exist.

My preference for future research would be to explore the possibilities of using the AI process with various educator groups. From my experience, many of the educator

groups are not experienced in working as fully functioning teams. I suggest applying an AI study with teachers to enhance professional learning communities and department or grade level meetings. The AI process encourages dialogue, helps the teachers to develop shared visions for pedagogical practices, and realize collective desired results for student achievement. More important, future research with AI in educational settings may focus inquiry on the possibilities and implications of instructional transformation.

Recommendations for Praxis

I propose two recommendations for praxis:

1. I recommend teachers and students in alternative high school environments co-construct an effective learning setting.
2. I recommend that teachers explore the positive aspects of students to create deeper levels of appreciation toward the students and their potential.

Recommendation 1

I recommend that teachers and students in alternative high school environments co-construct an effective learning setting. The participants in my study engaged in an AI Learning Team process. They had the opportunity to share their desires for creating a "fun" learning environment; they expressed the need for other experiences built into their class work, and they believed that in a competent learning environment people respect rules, students talk with teachers, and people help each other. In addition, they believe that the students and teachers are a family and that common activities are important. Teachers in alternative high school environments can listen and learn from their students. Listening and learning what students' value and appreciating their input are part of an AI methodology (Preskill & Tzavaras-Catsambas, 2006). AI embraces the success stories of

past and present experiences. The stories reinforce the successes and encourage people to look forward to co-constructing a vision for the future (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). The AI Learning Team process is an invitation to interact through conversations by focusing on the dialogic process. The dialogic process creates social or relational networks. The relational networks, the connections from the conversations and experiences and relationships developed with others, places students and teachers in a position to co-construct the future moving toward instructional transformation.

Recommendation 2

I recommend that teachers explore the positive aspects of their students to create deeper levels of appreciation toward the students and their potential. AI has been used to initiate change through a positive inquiry approach. AI moves away from the traditional problem solving model by encouraging people to focus on the positive core of their past personal experiences and achievements. Through the AI process, people interact and create shared positive images to co-construct a desired future. They connect through the shared stories. AI allows for individual growth as well as improvement at the personal level and at the organizational level. Personal reflexivity is built into the AI process as the best from the past is recalled and shared with others, where values and experiences are discovered as the positive core and lends to the development of mutual appreciation. What is appreciated becomes the basis for co-constructing a desired future. For these reasons, I challenge alternative high school administrators and teachers to discover the positive potential in all students and develop a deeper sense of appreciation of the students' worth.

Relationship of Findings to Relevant Theory

In this section, I describe the relationship of the findings in my study to relevant theory. The AI process can provide future direction for schools where all stakeholders participate and have a voice in the generative growth of their school (Ryan et al., 1999). The generative nature of AI, with the formulation of guiding questions within a positive context, shifts the direction of traditional conversations regarding teaching and learning (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Schneiderman's (1994) seminal work on engagement theory was initially known as education by engagement. Students worked in teams, engaged in a project outside the classroom that was of value to them. More recently, engagement theory has evolved into three components: relate-create-donate (Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1999). Specifically, the three engagement components are (a) social interaction and collaboration; (b) the activation of effective learning or cognitive processes such as activating prior knowledge, visual imagery, enactment, and (c) the concept of flow, where attention is given to an activity outside of the classroom that possibly benefits the community or solves a real world problem (Ingram, 2005; Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1999). Engaged learning typically involves multidisciplinary, problem (project) based learning with collaborative small group work (Jones et al., 1994; Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1999).

Participants in my study envisioned future ideal learning experiences that included more choices in class activities that consist of hands-on participation and group projects that are more interactive with cutting edge technology. Choices and direction in activities are prevalent in project-based learning. School reform and school improvement efforts revolve around raising the academic achievement levels of students by focusing

on the teaching and learning process (Hopkins, 2005). Gordon (2006a) posits that the best way for schools to improve is by raising the engagement levels of students. Tomlinson (1999) metaphorically defines engagement as the magnet. Engagement is the point where students are attracted to learning; it is the moment that grabs the student's attention and curiosity. Tapping in to the interests, strengths, talents, and abilities of students is a way for teachers to raise engagement levels in the classroom.

Bandura (2001) posits in his social cognitive theory that learning is most likely to occur when students perceive they have some control over what they learn and this relates to social interactions with teachers. In addition, the student's level of belief that change is possible is directly related to individual efficacy and collective efficacy (Bandura, 1993). AI was an affirming process for participants as they shared their descriptions of the high point learning experiences, what CHSM had contributed to their lives, and their dream for the ideal future learning experiences with their building administrators. The possibility of implementing some of the participants' ideas and thoughts for future ideal learning became more real as the administrators gave encouraging words that "some of the requests were possible." Efficacy is based on the individual or group's ability to bring about a desired result (Bandura, 2000).

Participants shared the belief that whole group participation with common activities was important for future action. Through their conversations in the discovery and dream stages of AI, they established whole group participation with common activities as a part of their vision. They also valued having input in the decision-making process. I believe their shared beliefs and sense of collective efficacy can and will influence the future direction and decisions made at CHSM.

Significance of the Study

My research extended the AI methodology to alternative high school students where they participated in the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. This study allowed them to describe their high point learning experiences and describe their dreams for effective learning. My study provides a positive model for empowering alternative high school students to enhance pedagogical practices. It also provides a contribution to the field of theoretical knowledge by implementing an AI Learning Team process as a venue for empowering CHSM students as they described their high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning. This type of democratic participation allows students to gain voice about their learning situation while the teacher gains deeper insights about the power of high point learning experiences.

Participants received feedback from their participant created presentation from the administrators. The feedback that they received demonstrated that they had exerted deep thinking and reflective thoughts about CHSM. Through this study, the administrators affirmed that alternative high school students are intelligent thinkers.

Through the AI Learning Team process, participants were able to share successful stories about their learning experiences and were able to identify the core factors for learning as being friendship, trust, and helping others. This study also affirmed that alternative high school students can collaborate with teachers in designing a meaningful learning environment. The students co-constructed their vision for ideal future learning experiences to include the following: (a) CHSM students believe they need other experiences built into their class work,

(b) CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers, and all people help each other in a competent learning environment, (c) CHSM students want to create a better learning environment that mixes fun with academics; and (d) CHSM students believe that students and teachers are a family and common activities are important.

Involving alternative high school students in the decision-making process and valuing their input may result in improved academic achievement, high school completion, elevating student aspirations and job/role satisfaction for the teachers. Their ability to co-construct a future vision for ideal learning experiences sparked a renewed sense of hope and optimism for their learning.

This study was also important because it can inform regular classroom teachers and special education teachers, as well as, teachers working in alternative schools regarding their pedagogical practices. In addition, the use of AI as a research methodology in schools may contribute to an alternative to the traditional, deficit-based problem solving methods by changing the way problems are approached in education. Through the practice of AI, teachers could discover the best and envision a future of what could be. Imagine the possibilities for excellence in education.

Summary and Conclusions

There are four salient findings that have emerged, based on the data analyzed from this study: (1) CHSM students believe they need other experiences built into their class work, (2) CHSM students believe students and teachers respect rules, students talk with teachers, and all people help each other in a competent learning environment; (3) CHSM students want to create a better learning environment that mixes fun with

academics; and (4) CHSM students believe that students and teachers are a family and common activities are important.

The United States educational system has been involved in a century-long debate on how to best address the needs of students from Dewey's progressive movement to the counterculture movement of the sixties free schools to alternatives in education today. My study focused on the student who had dropped out or had been expelled from the traditional high school, and had chosen to re-enter the educational system via the alternative high school. Too often, the student and the educational process have been viewed within a deficit based or negative context, focused on fixing problems. The impetus for my research came through my discovery of AI as both a theoretical perspective and a research methodology. As a strengths-based approach, the focus for AI is to initiate change by recalling past positive experiences, dreaming the possibilities of what might, and co-constructing the future together. AI is the model for building a high functioning, healthy school system. This applies to the traditional school contexts; but more important, it applies to alternative schools. Building high functioning, healthy alternative schools begins by laying a solid foundation with the discovery of student and teacher relationships and the construction of shared visions empowering students to enhance pedagogy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Department of Educational Leadership

Box 142, Wichita, KS 67260-0142

Letter of Participant Invitation

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today. I am here to share the purpose of my study and to extend an opportunity for you to volunteer to participate in the study. The purpose of my study is to describe CHSM students' high point learning experiences that include the best and most enjoyable ways of learning and to also describe CHSM students' dreams for learning through involvement in an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Learning Team.

I am conducting this research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctoral degree from Wichita State University. The information generated from your participation will assist in making a difference to improve teaching and learning for other students, as well as for educators. Benefits to you for participating may include enhanced collaborative working relationships with your peers and an opportunity for fun by participating in activities that allow you to share high point learning experiences and also allow you the opportunity to describe how you think the future for effective learning could be improved for teaching and learning.

Your learning experiences and opinions are highly valued. Your contributions to this study are important, so you can help make a difference for improving teaching and learning. Your participation is completely voluntary and will involve your participation in an AI Learning Team. AI as a research methodology was chosen because it appreciates and values what you bring to the process. I will present an orientation session to participants about their involvement in the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle: discovery and dream stages. The time commitment for the AI learning Team will involve approximately 12 hours over a two day period taking place at CHSM during normal school hours. The contributions made by your involvement will be protected and confidentiality of information guaranteed. Any data collected from you in this study will be aggregated and the confidentiality of all participants will be protected. Once the study is complete, the findings will be made available to you. In addition, the final report of my study will be on file with Wichita State University.

Teresa San Martin, Doctoral Student

APPENDIX 2

IRB No. _____

Expedited?_____
Reviewer's Initials _____
Date to Reviewer _____

Wichita State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Subjects

Application for Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects

Double click gray boxes to enter information. Please check spelling, punctuation, and grammar before submitting.

Name of Principal Investigator(s): Dr. Raymond Calabrese, Professor in Educational Leadership, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS 67260-0142

(For a student project, Principal Investigator **must** be a WSU faculty member; student is listed as Co-Investigator.)

Departmental/Program Affiliation of PI: Educational Leadership Campus Box: 142 Phone: 978-5329 E-mail: raymond.calabrese@wichita.edu

Name(s) of Co-Investigator(s): Teresa L. San Martín

Co-Investigator(s) is/are: □ Faculty Member ■ Graduate Student □ Undergraduate Student □ Other, please specify _____

Type of Project: □ Class Project □ Capstone Project ■ Thesis or Dissertation

□ Funded Research □ Unfunded Research □ Secondary Data Collection/Analysis □Program Evaluation

Title of Project/Proposal: Empowering Students to Enhance Pedagogy: An Appreciative Inquiry Case Study of Alternative High School Students' High Point Learning Experiences

E**xpected Completion Date**: April 15, 2008 **Funding Agency (if applicable)**: Not Applicable

Please attach additional sheets, if necessary, with numbers of responses corresponding to those listed below.

1. Describe the research in non-technical language.

My dissertation proposes to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning. Research will occur during an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 2-day Learning Team during January 2008 at Complete High School Maize in Maize, Kansas. A qualitative case study design will be conducted where AI is both the theoretical perspective and research methodology based on the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle.

My overarching question asks: What are the ways that student learning can be enhanced by asking students how they learn? As a result, this proposal will be guided by the following research questions:

5. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning?

6. How do CHSM alternative high school students describe their dreams for effective learning?

2. Describe the benefits of the research to the human subjects, if any, and of the benefits to human or scientific knowledge.

Findings from my study will provide a positive model for empowering alternative high school students to enhance pedagogical practices. It will also provide a contribution to the field of theoretical knowledge by implementing an AI Learning Team as a venue to empower CHSM students as they describe their high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning for students at CHSM, and their dreams for effective learning while enrolled at CHSM through their involvement in an AI Learning Team.

My research will extend the AI research methodology to alternative high school students where they can participate in the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle. My study may inform regular classroom teachers and special education teachers, as well as, teachers working in alternative schools regarding their pedagogical practices. In addition, the use of AI as a research methodology in schools may contribute to an alternative to the traditional, deficit-based problem solving methods by changing the way problems are approached in education.

3. Describe the subjects, how the subjects are to be selected, how many are to be used, and indicate explicitly whether any are minors (under age 18 per Kansas law) or otherwise members of "vulnerable" populations, including, but not limited to, pregnant women, prisoners, psychiatric patients, etc.

Participants will include eight CHSM students who meet the criteria and volunteer to participate. My units of analysis will be purposively selected based on (a)

completion of three semesters at CHSM, (b) attainment of senior status, and (c) recommendation by CHSM staff as having the ability to make a meaningful contribution to the proposed study. A balance of four females and four males will be sought to participate in the AI learning team, as well.

A. This study will include alternative high school students attending CHSM considered as a "vulnerable" population; some of the eight CHSM students who have attained senior status and choose to volunteer may be under age 18 at the time the study is conducted. I will provide consent and assent forms for all participants and parents/guardians to sign.
B. During the AI Learning Team process, the eight purposively selected students who volunteer will have the opportunity to participate in semi-structured paired participant interviews.
C. During the AI Learning Team process, the eight purposively selected students who volunteer will participate in whole group discussions.
D. During the AI Learning Team process, participant created documents will be created by the eight purposively selected CHSM student volunteers.

4. Describe each procedure step-by-step, including the frequency, duration, and location of each procedure.

All CHSM student activities will be held at the alternative high school. The following step-by-step procedures will occur. The proposed agenda, proposed guiding interview questions, and protocols are detailed in Appendices A-AG attached to this document.

- One invitation meeting attended by students/parent/guardian for approximately 45 minutes.
- One welcome and pre-learning team activity where students use a wall chart to list high point events while in attendance at CHSM and to establish ground rules for approximately 45 minutes.
- One outline for the 2-day AI Learning Team events, introduction to AI, and purpose of the study meeting for approximately 30 minutes.
- Three semi-structured participant paired interviews with 20 minutes allotted for each person per interview.
- Five whole group discussions for discovery not to exceed 90 minutes each.
- One scatter gram activity creating a visual representation of characteristics most important for approximately 15 minutes.
- One metaphor created as a visual representation of the participant's strengths and sharing of the metaphor for approximately 50 minutes in duration.
- One summary of Day 1 Discovery Stage Learning Team activities and preview for Day 2 for approximately 10 minutes.
- One introduction to Day 2—dream stage talking about positive images/positive action setting stage for envisioning the future for effective learning for approximately 30 minutes.

- One individual imagined effective learning description for effective learning and then shared with paired partner for approximately 30 minutes.
- One paired sharing activity using individual imagined effective learning to create a paired vision through a scenario as alumnae of CHSM for approximately 30 minutes.
- One whole group discussion for sharing of imagined, ideal future vision for effective learning and the collective construction of an opportunity/concept map with time to review the opportunity/concept map for approximately 30-40 minutes.
- One participation in a 4-2-1 activity: paired participant creation of a dream statement using the data from the opportunity/concept map, then shared with another pair of participants combining the two dream statements into 1 dream statement, and then bring the eight participants together with the two dream statements combining them into 1 overall dream statement for approximately 50 minutes.
- One representation activity (creation of a skit, song, poem, drawing) of the dream statement by participating with the whole group for approximately 90 minutes.
- One whole group presentation activity of the representation of the dream statement for approximately 20 minutes.
- One whole group co-construction of a story representing the high point learning experiences and dreams for effective learning using an online wiki to create the share story to be available to teachers for approximately 1 hour.
- One whole group discussion that shares the co-constructed story and concluding remarks reviewing the AI discovery and dream process for approximately 40 minutes.

5. Describe any risks or discomforts (physical, psychological, or social) and how they will be minimized.

There are no known risks or discomforts anticipated for any of the participants.

6. Would subjects undergo these or similar procedures (medical, psychological, educational, etc.) if they were not taking part in this research?

■ Yes □ No

7. Describe how the subject's personal privacy is to be protected and confidentiality of information guaranteed (e.g. disposition of questionnaires, interview notes, recorded audio or videotapes, etc.).

Participation is voluntary. I will exactly follow all protocols for data collection. The data will be treated confidentially and none of the data will be personally identifiable. Participation is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time without fear of repercussions. Participants will be assured of complete confidentiality and all data will be protected for confidentiality. The names of participants will not be associated with the

data will not appear in any publication or presentation resulting from my study. Data collected from participants will be aggregated and only available to me (the researcher) and my major professor. Consent and assent forms will be signed by all participants and parents/guardians to document their voluntary participation; this will be completed prior to any involvement in the study.

8. Describe the informed consent process and attach a copy of all consent and/or assent documents. These documents must be retained for three years beyond completion of the study. Any waiver of written informed consent must be justified.

A invitation meeting with parents/guardians and students will occur prior to the proposed study to explain the purpose of the study, provide an introduction to AI, inform the parents and student participants of their rights, and then invite volunteers to sign the consent/assent forms. The signed consent/assent form will serve as documentation for each student's voluntary participation and must be signed prior to any involvement in the study. Eight CHSM alternative high school students meeting the criteria and who have signed consent/assent forms will be the participants engaged in a two-day AI learning team at CHSM.

9. Attach all supporting material, including, but not limited to, questionnaire or survey forms and letters of approval from cooperating institutions.

The Principal Investigator agrees to abide by the federal regulations for the protection of human subjects and to retain consent forms for a minimum of three (3) years beyond the completion of the study. If the data collection or testing of subjects is to be performed by student assistants, the Principal Investigator will assume full responsibility for supervising the students to ensure that human subjects are adequately protected.

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

_____ _____

Signature of Co-Investigator (for student project) Date

APPENDIX 3

Department of Educational Leadership

Box 142, Wichita, KS 67260-0142

Letter of Consent for CHSM Student Participants

January 2008

Purpose: I am here to extend an opportunity for your son or daughter to volunteer to participate in the study where I am conducting research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctoral degree from Wichita State University. The information generated from your child's participation will assist in making a difference to improve teaching and learning for other students, as well as for educators. The purpose of my study is to describe how your son/daughter, as a student at CHSM, describes his/her high point learning experiences and his/her dreams for effective learning.

Participant Selection: You child has been invited to voluntarily participant in this study because he/she has (a) completed at least three semesters at CHSM, (b) attained senior status, and (c) been recommended by CHSM staff as having the ability to make a meaningful contribution to the proposed study. Eight CHSM students will be participating in the study with a balance of males and females.

Explanation of Procedures: If you voluntarily decide to have your child participate, your son/daughter will be asked to participate in a 2-day AI Learning Team going through the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle known as discovery and dream. Your child will describe his/her high point learning experiences and his/her dreams for learning. The learning team activities will take place during school hours at CHSM. Your child will be participating in a variety of activities including semi-structured participant paired interviews, whole group discussions, and participant created documents. The proposed agenda for the 2-day AI learning team is attached with proposed activities, their purposes, and duration.

Discomfort/Risks: There are no known risks, discomforts, or inconveniences connected to this study.

Benefits: The results of my study will provide a positive model for empowering alternative high school students to enhance pedagogical practices. It will also provide a contribution to the field of theoretical knowledge by implementing an AI Learning Team as a venue to empower CHSM students as they describe their high point learning experiences, including the best and most enjoyable ways of learning for students at CHSM, and their dreams for effective learning while enrolled at CHSM through their involvement in the AI Learning team. My research will extend the existing known AI research literature to include alternative high school students participating in the first two stages of the AI 4-D Cycle known as discovery and dream. My study may inform regular classroom teachers and special education teachers, as well as, teachers working in alternative schools regarding their pedagogical practices. In addition, the use of AI as a research methodology in schools may contribute to an alternative to the traditional, deficit-based problem solving methods by changing the way problems are approached in education.

Confidentiality: Participation is voluntary. Your child is under no obligation to participate in this study. In the event that your son or daughter decides not to participate, that decision will not affect your child's future relations with CHSM, Maize USD 266, or Wichita State University. The data will be treated confidentially and none of the data will be personally identifiable. Your child's privacy will be protected and confidentiality of information guaranteed. Any data collected from your child in this study will be aggregated and only available to me (the researcher) and my major professor. Your child's name will not appear in any report, publication, or presentation resulting from this study. Findings from this research may be presented at national conferences or published in scholarly journals. If this is the case, your child's name will not be associated with the data, thus assuring confidentiality. By signing a copy of this form you are granting your permission for your child to participate in this study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and voluntarily agree to allow your child to participate in the study.

Refusal/Withdrawal: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your future relations with Wichita State University, Maize USD 266, and/or Complete High School Maize. If you agree to allow your child the opportunity to participate in this study, you may withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty or fear of reprisal.

Contact: If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at: Teresa San Martin, Maize USD 266 201 S Park, Maize, KS 67101. You can also reach me at my work telephone number: 316-722-0614. If you have questions pertaining to your rights as a research subject, or about research-related injury, you may contact the Office of Research Administration at Wichita State University (WSU), Wichita, KS 67260-0007, telephone (316) 978-3285 or my primary WSU research advisor, Dr. Raymond Calabrese at (316) 978-5329.

Your child is under no obligation to participate in this study. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and your child is one of the eight CHSM alternative high school students who have voluntarily decided to participate.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian (omit for subjects consenting for themselves)	Date
_____	_____
Witness Signature	Date

APPENDIX 4

Department of Educational Leadership

Box 142, Wichita, KS 67260-0142

Assent Form for Minors

January 2008

I have been informed that my parent(s)/legal guardian(s) has/have given permission for me to participate, if I want to, in a study. The purpose of the study is to give me an opportunity to describe my high point learning experiences and my dreams for effective learning. I am one of eight CHSM students participating in this study. My participation in this project is voluntary and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time. If I choose not to participate, it will not affect my grade or treatment at CHSM in any way.

_____

Print Name

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

APPENDIX 5

Appreciative Inquiry Learning Team Agenda for Day 1 and Day 2

Day 1		
Time	**Activity**	**Purpose/Description**
8:30-9:15	Pre-learning team activity	• Extend a warm welcome and create a sense of safety within the AI Learning Team and the environment. • Setting the stage and building relationships: Invite participants to list their high point events at CHSM on a timeline to create a sense of productivity, engagement, and a sense of safety (Appendix 6). • Establish ground rules—Conversation Code (Appendix 6).
9:15-9:45	Introduction to AI	• Overview of the 2-day AI Learning Team activities including introduction to AI, the 4-D Cycle, and purpose of the study (Appendix 7).
9:45-9:55	Break	
	Discovery Stage	
9:55-10:40	Paired interview 1	• Introduction to semi-structured participant paired interviews; assign partners, provide directions for conducting the interview,(Appendix 9) hand out and review the interview guided—Student Discovery Worksheet 1 (Appendix 8). • Students conduct semi-structured participant paired interviews with each other. The goal is to exchange a best example of a high point learning experience (Appendix 8). • Twenty minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
10:40-10:55	Whole Group Discussion 1: Debriefing of the semi-structured one-to-one paired interview	• The eight participants are invited to share their experience with the semi-structured participant paired interview process. The goal is for participants to connect in a whole group discussion and to begin to understand the AI process (Appendix 10).
10:55-11:05	Break	
11:05-12:00	Whole Group Discussion 2: Discovering the Positive Core—high point learning	• Introduce your partner and share the best example of a high point learning experience. A best example is one that you feel your partner shared that has characteristics that you feel are important in exhibiting a high point learning experience

	experiences	(Appendix 11). Participants will be asked to share notes from the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 1 (Appendix 8), allowing each participant time to appreciatively share about his/her partner. • I will list highlights shared from each participant on large flipchart paper as a visual. I will also have participants review to accuracy and confirm (member checking). • After all eight participants have had the time to share, they can volunteer to discuss patterns that they heard that support the best examples of high point learning experiences. Collaboratively, participants will be asked to look for the patterns or possible common themes that support their descriptions of high point learning experiences.
12:00-12:30	Lunch	
12:30-1:10	Paired interview 2	• Hand out and review the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 2 (Appendix 12). • Students conduct semi-structured participant paired interviews with each other. The goal is to exchange stories about a person who made a difference in the participant's life or one that they admire greatly (Appendix 13). • Twenty minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
1:10-1:40	Whole Group Discussion 3: Discovering the Positive Core—person who made a difference or who is greatly admired	• Introduce your partner and share the highlights or best examples of what you have learned from the semi-structured participant paired interviews with the other participants. Participants will share from their notes on the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 2, allowing each participant time to appreciatively share about his/her partner (Appendix 14). • I will list summarized comments shared from each participant on large flipchart paper as a visual and confirm through member checking. Participants will be asked to listen for the common factors that describe the characteristics/qualities of a person who made a difference in their life or of someone they admire greatly.
1:40-1:50	Break	
1:50-2:30	Paired interview 3	• Hand out and review the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15). • Students conduct semi-structured one-to-one

		paired interviews with each other. The goal is to exchange stories about what each other does well and to identify the core factors or traits that they feel exhibit the best examples of high point learning experiences (Appendix 16). • Twenty minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
2:30-3:00	Whole Group Discussion 4: Discovering the Positive Core—What I Do Well and Identify the Core Factors from high point learning experiences	• Participants will be asked to introduce their partner and share their partner's story about some of the things that the partner feels he/she does well and the Core Factors that would describe the partner's high point learning experiences. Participants will share from their notes on the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15) allowing each participant an opportunity to appreciatively share about his/her partner. • I will list on large flipchart paper the things that each participant feels he/she does well and the Core Factors that describe the partner's high point learning experiences as a visual. Participants will be asked to confirm for accuracy as a form of member checking. • Participants will be asked to take the list of Core Factors and the previously created list of characteristics/traits of those who made a difference in the lives of the participants so they can compare/contrast noting similarities and differences in the two lists (Appendix 17). • A scatter gram will be created using orange Avery sticky dots. Each participant will have five orange Avery dots to place next to the core factors/traits that he/she feels are essential or most important. Then, participants will discuss patterns in the placement of dots. The goal is to give a visual representation of what core factors/traits are most important to the participants as a whole (the shared images of a preferred future).
3:00-3:10	Break	
3:10-4:00	Introduction to the metaphor, choosing a metaphor, and creating/drawing the metaphor	• Distribute and review the description of a metaphor worksheet—Student Discovery Worksheet 4 (Appendix 18). • Review of metaphors and look at how metaphors are used in the participants' literature book (Anderson et al., 1993). Referencing the Index of Skills, I will have a couple of examples from the

4:00-4:20	Whole Group Discussion 5: Sharing the metaphor	literature book that participants should be familiar with for review from their previous assignments to spark discussion on metaphors. • Individually, each participant chooses a metaphor that is representative of him/her. Participants may refer to the strengths and things they do well that were listed from the Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15). The goal is to choose a visual representation (metaphor) that illustrates the strengths that each participant feels he/she possesses. • Using the large flipchart paper and coloring supplies, participants will be asked to draw their metaphor (Appendix 19). • Participants will be asked to share the metaphor that they have chosen and explain how it represents their strengths.
4:20-4:30	Summary	The day in review and a preview of Day 2—dream stage.

Day 2		
Time	**Activity**	**Purpose/Description**
8:30-9:00	Reflect on prior day's learning, sharing of notable quotes, and introduce Day 2 with thoughts on positive image-positive action.	• Welcome • Sharing of highlight's from the previous day's work on the Discovery stage (I will create a PowerPoint presentation as the review, based on the previous day's work using the data from the large flipchart paper sheets, digital images of the metaphors the participants created with strengths. The large flipchart paper sheets will still be posted around the room for viewing. Member checking by asking the participants to check once again for accuracy confirming the data will be a part of the process in reviewing the PowerPoint. • I will share some notable quotes from each participant from the previous day's work. • Introduction to the day's work with understanding of positive image-positive action.
	Dream Stage	
9:00-10:00 (9:00-9:30)	Envisioning the future for effective learning	• Using the data from the large flipchart paper sheets as the basis from the Discovery Stage, Day 1, participants will be asked to individually imagine what the most effective learning experiences could be by describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience with the use of

9:30-10:00		Student Dream Worksheet 1 (Appendix 22). The goal is to imagine and define the future for effective learning that you want to see to improve teaching and learning (Appendix 24). • Using the Student Dream Worksheet 1 (Appendix 22), participants will share with a paired partner their future vision for the ideal learning experience. • Next participants will complete Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23) together in pairs imagining that 5 years have since past so they can describe together what CHSM effective learning could look like.
10:00-10:30	Whole Group Discussion—Share the imagined future and co-construct the opportunity/ concept map	• Participants will share with the group their future vision for effective learning. Using the future vision for effective learning ideas that were shared and the 3 wishes students can collectively create an opportunity/concept map (Appendix 25).
10:30-10:40		• Break
10:40-11:30	Capture the vision in a dream statement	• Review opportunity/concept map • In pairs create a dream statement using the most important ideas from the opportunity/concept map so they can capture the dream in one statement (Appendix 26. Paired participants will share dream statements with another pair. The participants will then revise the two dream statements in their small group so there is one dream statement for the 4 students. • The whole group comes together and the two remaining dream statements are shared. Collaboratively the whole group creates one common vision or dream statement for the group of eight.
11:30-12:00; 12:30-1:30	Creative presentation of collective vision of the dream	• As a whole group, participants choose a creative way to represent or present the dream statement as if it were happening now. Examples can include a TV news report, the creation of a song or poem, skit, or an interview (Appendix 27).
12:00-12:30	Lunch	
1:30-1:50	Present the creative presentation of the dream	• Present the common vision or dream statement and then discuss and identify the main ideas or core factors that were reflected by the presentation for the most effective learning (Appendix 28).

		Refine the dream statement if necessary.
1:50-2:00		• Break
2:00-3:00	Create the dream in story form	• Use Student Dream Worksheet 2 scenario and Student Dream Worksheet 3 (Appendix 29) in the construction of a narrative to help teachers understand what effective teaching could be by co-constructing the story to be available online at www.wikispaces.com (Appendix 30).
3:00-3:40	Closing	• Whole group sharing of wiki story and reviewing the AI 4-D Cycle discovery and dream stages (Appendix 31).

APPENDIX 6

Protocol: Pre-learning Team Activity

High Point Events Wall Timeline while Attending CHSM and Conversation Code	
Purpose: To welcome the participants as they arrive engaging them in an activity that requires little conversation, yet activates their prior knowledge creating both a sense of productivity and safety.	**Participants:** All participants **Time:** Fifteen minutes to welcome participants and create the timeline. Thirty minutes to review the timeline and establish ground rules, called Conversation Code Rights and Responsibilities, for talking and working with one another. **Materials:** Name tags; Wall timeline pre-constructed and posted in room; colored markers, large flipchart paper with easel
Instructions:	• Give friendly greeting to participants as they enter the room. • Explain the wall timeline posted in the room and invite participants to list high point events they have been a part of while at CHSM. • Allow participants to pick seating. • Explain to participants that establishing ground rules are essential to the success of our class activities and the goal is to establish a climate where we feel safe in sharing our experiences, opinions, and ideas. • Using the large newsprint draw two columns--Rights and the other Responsibilities. Then allow the participants to help create the list. As facilitator it will be important to add a couple to the list such as everything is written or recorded for the purposes of the study and as a reminder, everything you say will be kept confidential. • Next, review the wall timeline with high point events listed allowing participants to share using the Conversation Code that was created. Once participants have volunteered to share the high point events, the question asked for whole group brainstorming is: What do you suppose made these events a high point for you? While comments are made, ideas will be summarized on the large newsprint for the group to see as a visual.
Summary and Member Check:	• All participants will be asked to sign their name on the large newsprint Conversation Code as part of their personal commitment to each other. • The Conversation Code will be posted throughout the AI

	learning team 2-day process as a reminder of the rules to be followed. • Before moving to the next activity, participants will have the opportunity to review the summarized list of what made the events a high point. The facilitator will be checking for understanding, clarifying, and confirming what was said was reflected on the large flipchart paper.

APPENDIX 7

Protocol: 2-day Overview and AI Introduction

2-day Overview, Purpose, and AI Introduction	
Purpose: To review the purpose of the study with students, present an overview of 2-day learning team activities that will occur and introduce AI and the 4-D Cycle.	**Participants:** All participants—whole group **Time:** Thirty minutes to provide an overview of the 2-day AI Learning Team activities including introduction to AI, and the first two stages of the 4-D Cycle, and purpose of the study.
Instructions:	Review the purpose of the study with the students with an overview of what will be happening over the next two days in the learning teams and introduce AI and the 4-D Cycle. I will say that I am seeking to (a) learn from you by (b) listening to your stories of when you really and truly enjoyed learning, and (c) understand how you believe you can best learn. The AI process is different from the traditional problem solving methodology in that it begins with affirming and looking for the good. You will describe high point learning experiences in the discovery stage of AI. Next you will imagine the possibilities of what learning could be in the dream stage.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and get clarification.

APPENDIX 8

Student Discovery Worksheet 1

Guiding Statement: Rewind your entire lifetime of learning experiences and remember a time when you were most excited about learning. Describe to your partner a best example of a high point learning experience. A best example is the high point learning experience that has characteristics that you feel are the most important for learning.

Where were you?

How were you involved?

Consider what was happening. What were you doing?

What made it exciting (a high point)?

Were others involved?

Describe how you felt.

What did you value most about the high point learning experience?

Were there other factors that contributed to making this a high point learning experience?

APPENDIX 9

Protocol: Participant Paired Interview of High Point Learning Experience

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Paired Interview: High point learning experience</th></tr>
<tr><td>Purpose:
To have pairs of students conduct semi-structured interviews with each other so each participant has an opportunity to share, connecting with another participant and also share a best example of a high point learning experience.</td><td>Participants:
Pairs

Time:
Forty-five minutes (Twenty minutes allotted per person to conduct the interview)

Materials:
Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 1; pens/pencils, a tape recorder per pair</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instructions:</td><td>• Introduction to semi-structured paired interviews; assign partners, provide directions for conducting the interview, hand out and review the interview guide Student Discovery Worksheet 1 (Appendix 8).
o Suggested directions for conducting the paired interviews
▪ Each participant conducts an interview, then gets to be interviewed
▪ The guiding questions on the Student Discovery Worksheet 1 will help provide direction so you can discover what matters most to your partner.
▪ Questions can be skipped if the interviewee has no answer.
▪ You may ask other questions for more details by asking who, what, when, why, and how questions.
▪ Listen and take notes on the stories you hear, so you can introduce your partner and share the stories (Ludema et al., 2003).
• Students conduct semi-structured paired interviews with each other. Students will be taking notes using the Student Discovery Worksheet 1. As well, each interview will be recorded for research purposes. Goal is to exchange a best example of a high point learning experience using the</td></tr>
</table>

	interview guide (student discovery worksheet 1). Twenty minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review and confirm the notes they have taken about their partner's example of a best learning experience, so each participant can be prepared to share.

APPENDIX 10

Protocol: Debriefing of Semi-structured Participant Paired Interview

Debriefing: Semi-structured Participant Paired Interview	
Purpose: To have participants connect in a whole group discussion and to begin to understand the AI process.	**Participants:** Whole group Discussion **Time:** Fifteen minutes **Materials:** Large flipchart paper; markers
Instructions:	• Direct participants attention to the Conversation Code that hangs in the room as a visual reminder of the rights and responsibilities of the participants sharing in the whole group discussion. • The eight participants are invited to share their experience with the semi-structured participant paired interview process. The goal is for participants to connect in a whole group discussion and to begin to understand the AI process. The discussion will be centered on the participants' paired interview experience, the guidelines listed below as helpful suggestions for conducting the paired interview, and the use of the Student Discovery Worksheet 1 as the interview guide. • Suggested directions for conducting the paired interviews o Each participant conducts an interview, then gets to be interviewed o The guiding questions on the Student Discovery Worksheet 1 will help provide direction so you can discover what matters most to your partner. o Questions can be skipped if the interviewee has no answer. o You may ask other questions for more details by asking who, what, when, why, and how questions. o Listen and take notes on the stories you hear, so you can introduce your partner and share the stories (Ludema et al., 2003).
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review the notes they have taken about their partner's example of a best learning experience, so they can be prepared to share.

APPENDIX 11

Protocol: Whole Group Discussion High Point Learning Experience

Whole Group Discussion: High Point Learning Experience	
Purpose: To have participants from the paired interviews introduce their partner and share a best example of a high point learning experience.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Fifty-five minutes **Materials:** Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 1; pens/pencils; large flipchart paper and easel; markers
Instructions:	• Direct participants attention to the Conversation Code that hangs in the room as a visual reminder of the rights and responsibilities of the participants sharing in the whole group discussion. • Give participants two-three minutes to review the interview guide, Student Discovery Worksheet 1. • Have participants introduce their partner and share the best example of a high point learning experience. Explain that a best example is one that you feel your partner shared that has characteristics that you feel are important in exhibiting a high point learning experience. Participants will be asked to share notes from the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 1, allowing each participant an opportunity to appreciatively share about his/her partner. • I will list best examples shared from each participant on large flipchart paper as a visual. I will also review the big sheet for accuracy and ask for confirmation as a form of member checking. • After all eight participants have had the opportunity to share their partner's best example of a high point learning experience, the participants can volunteer to discuss patterns that they heard or see from the large flipchart paper that support the best examples of high point learning experiences. Collaboratively, participants will be asked to look for the patterns or possible common themes that support their descriptions of high point learning experiences.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm the patterns or possible theme words they have heard or see on the large flipchart paper about their partner's best example of a high point learning experience.

APPENDIX 12

Student Discovery Worksheet 2

Guiding Statement: Some people impact our lives more than others. Think about someone who has made a difference in your life. (Note: This person can also be someone you admire or maybe you can identify someone on staff at CHSM who is really special).

How did this person make a difference in your life?

Describe a particular event that exemplifies what this person did for you?

Why do you think this person took an interest in you?

What characteristics/qualities about this person do you admire the most?

APPENDIX 13

Protocol: Participant Paired Interview of a Person Who Made a Difference

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Paired Interview: Person who Made a Difference</th></tr>
<tr><td>Purpose:
To have pairs of students conduct semi-structured interviews with each other so each participant has an opportunity to share, connecting with another participant and also share a story about a person who made a difference in the participant's life or about a person who they admire greatly</td><td>Participants:
Pairs

Time:
Forty minutes (Twenty minutes allotted per person to conduct the interview)

Materials:
Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 2 (Appendix 12); pens/pencils, a tape recorder per pair</td></tr>
<tr><td>Instructions:</td><td>• Assign interview partners, review the directions for conducting the interview, hand out and review the interview guide Student Discovery Worksheet 2 (Appendix 12).
o Suggested directions for conducting the paired interviews
▪ Each participant conducts an interview, then gets to be interviewed
▪ The guiding questions on the Student Discovery Worksheet 1 will help provide direction so you can discover what matters most to your partner.
▪ Questions can be skipped if the interviewee has no answer.
▪ You may ask other questions for more details by asking who, what, when, why, and how questions.
▪ Listen and take notes on the stories you hear, so you can introduce your partner and share the stories (Ludema et al., 2003).
• Students conduct semi-structured paired interviews with each other. Students will be taking notes using the Student Discovery Worksheet 2 as the interview guide. As well, each interview will be recorded for research purposes. The goal is to exchange a best example of a person who made a difference in the participant's life or someone who they admire greatly using</td></tr>
</table>

	the interview guide (student discovery worksheet 2). 20 minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm the notes they have taken about their partner's example of a person who made a difference in the participant's life, so each participant can be prepared to share.

APPENDIX 14

Protocol: Whole Group Discussion of Person Who Made a Difference

Whole Group Discussion: Person Who Made a Difference	
Purpose: To have participants from the paired interviews introduce their partner and share their partner's story about a person who made a different in the participant's life or about someone who they admire greatly.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Thirty minutes **Materials:** Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 2 (Appendix 12); pens/pencils; large flipchart paper and easel; markers
Instructions:	• Direct participants attention to the Conversation Code that hangs in the room as a visual reminder of the rights and responsibilities of the participants sharing in the whole group discussion. • Give participants two-three minutes to review the interview guide, Student Discovery Worksheet 2. • Have participants introduce their partner and share the partner's story about a person who made a difference or someone who they admire greatly. Participants will be asked to share notes from the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 2, allowing each participant an opportunity to appreciatively share about his/her partner. • I will list the examples shared from each participant on large flipchart paper as a visual. I will also review the big sheet for accuracy and ask for confirmation as a form of member checking. • After all eight participants have had the opportunity to share their partner's story about a person who made a difference or someone who they admire greatly, the participants can volunteer to discuss patterns that they heard or see from the large flipchart paper that are characteristic of the person who made a difference or of someone they admire greatly.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm the patterns or possible theme words they have heard or seen on the large flipchart paper that are characteristic about a person who has made a difference or about someone who they admire greatly.

APPENDIX 15

Student Discovery Worksheet 3

Guiding Statement: At the heart of who you are is a wonderful person.
Describe what you like most about yourself.

Describe some things that you do well.

When are you at your best?

When are you feeling best about learning?

What is the most important thing that CHSM has contributed to your life? (You can refer back to this morning's main events lists that we created).

What are the Core Factors that would describe your high point learning experiences?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

APPENDIX 16

Protocol: Participant Paired Interview What I Do Well

Paired Interview: What I Do Well	
Purpose: To have pairs of students conduct semi-structured interviews with each other so each participant has an opportunity to share, connecting with another participant and also share a story about a something that they as the participant do well. The participants are also asked to identify core factors that exhibit the best examples of high point learning experiences.	**Participants:** Pairs **Time:** Forty minutes (Twenty minutes allotted per person to conduct the interview) **Materials:** Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15); pens/pencils, a tape recorder per pair
Instructions:	• Assign interview partners, review the directions for conducting the interview, hand out and review the interview guide Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15). o Suggested directions for conducting the paired interviews ▪ Each participant conducts an interview, then gets to be interviewed ▪ The guiding questions on the Student Discovery Worksheet 1 will help provide direction so you can discover what matters most to your partner. ▪ Questions can be skipped if the interviewee has no answer. ▪ You may ask other questions for more details by asking who, what, when, why, and how questions. ▪ Listen and take notes on the stories you hear, so

	you can introduce your partner and share the stories (Ludema et al., 2003). • Students conduct semi-structured paired interviews with each other. Students will be taking notes using the Student Discovery Worksheet 3 as the interview guide. As well, each interview will be recorded for research purposes. The goal is to exchange stories exploring what each participant does well (Student Discovery Worksheet 2). 20 minutes is allotted per person to conduct the interview.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm the notes they have taken about their partner's exploration and stories of what the partner does well, so each participant can be prepared to share.

APPENDIX 17

Protocol: Whole Group Discussion What I Do Well, Core Factors, and Scatter Gram

Whole Group Discussion: What I Do Well , Core Factors, and Scatter Gram	
Purpose: To have participants from the paired interviews introduce their partner and share their partner's story about some of the things that the partner feels he/she does well and the Core Factors that would describe the partner's high point learning experiences. Next, the purpose in the scatter gram is to give a visual representation of what core factors/traits are most important to the participants as a whole group (the shared images of a preferred future).	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Thirty minutes **Materials:** Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15); pens/pencils; large flipchart paper and easel; markers; 40 orange Avery sticky dots; past large flipchart paper sheets created with high point learning experiences and characteristics of the person that made a difference or of the person the participants' admire greatly themes or commonly identified words for comparison.
Instructions:	• Direct participants' attention to the Conversation Code that hangs in the room as a visual reminder of the rights and responsibilities of the participants sharing in the whole group discussion. • Give participants two-three minutes to review the interview guide, Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15). • Have participants introduce their partner and share the partner's story about what their partner has described as things that they do well and the Core Factors that would describe the partner's high point learning experiences. Participants will be asked to share notes from the interview guide—Student Discovery Worksheet 3, allowing each participant an opportunity to appreciatively share about his/her partner. • I will list the items that are shared from each participant on

	what they have stated that they do well and the Core Factors that would describe the participant's high point learning experiences on large flipchart paper as a visual. I will also review the large flipchart sheet for accuracy and ask for confirmation as a form of member checking. • After all eight participants have had the opportunity to share their partner's story about what their partner has described as things that they do well and the Core Factors that would describe the partner's high point learning experiences., the participants can volunteer to discuss patterns that they heard or see from the large flipchart paper that are characteristic of the person who made a difference or of someone they admire greatly. • Participants will be asked to take the list of core factors and the previous list of characteristics/traits of those who made a difference in their lives so they can compare/contrast noting similarities and differences in the two lists. • A scatter gram will be created using Avery sticky dots. Each participant will have 5 orange Avery dots to place next to the core factors/traits that he/she feels are essential or most important. Then, participants will discuss patterns or themes in the placement of the numbers of dots. The goal is to give a visual representation of what core factors/traits are most important to them as a whole (the shared images of a preferred future).
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm the patterns or theme words they have heard, seen, and marked to create a scatter gram on the large flipchart paper that are characteristic as the most important Core Factors to the participants as a whole group (the shared images of a preferred future).

APPENDIX 18

Student Discovery Worksheet 4

Guiding Statement: Metaphors are an important way of visualizing what I value about myself. Choose a personal metaphor that exhibits some of the characteristics or core factor, key words that you described in the Discovery Sheet 3.

Example metaphors: The sunrise or the ocean.

Using the large flipchart paper and coloring supplies draw a picture of your metaphor.

Why does your metaphor create strength for you?

APPENDIX 19

Protocol: Creation of Metaphor

Whole Group Discussion: Creation of Metaphor	
Purpose: To introduce the metaphor and have participants choose a visual representation (metaphor) that illustrates the strengths that each participant feels he/she possesses and then to create the metaphor using the large flipchart paper and sharing how it represents the participant's strengths.	**Participants:** Whole group sharing and Individual participant created document **Time:** Fifty minutes—Intro to metaphor, individually created metaphors Twenty minutes—Sharing metaphors created and how they represent strengths **Materials:** Handout: Student Discovery Worksheet 4 (Appendix 18) and Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15) available for reference; pens/pencils; large flipchart paper for each participant; 8 multi-colored marker packages with 8-10 washable colors.
Instructions:	• Distribute and review the description of a metaphor and the metaphor worksheet—Student Discovery Worksheet 4 (Appendix 18). • Review metaphors by looking at how metaphors are used in the participants' literature book (Anderson et al., 1993). Referencing the Index of Skills, I will have a couple of examples from the book that participants should be familiar with for review from their previous assignments to spark discussion on metaphors. • Individually, each participant chooses a metaphor that is representative of him/her. Participants may refer to the strengths and things they do well that were listed from the Student Discovery Worksheet 3 (Appendix 15). The goal is to choose a visual representation (metaphor) that illustrates the strengths that each participant feels he/she possesses. • Using the large flipchart paper and coloring supplies, participants will be asked to draw or create the metaphor they have chosen to represent their strengths. Next the participants can share how the metaphor chosen represents their strengths. • As participants share with the whole group, I will list the metaphors chosen and how the metaphor represents the

	participant's strengths. I will also review the big sheet for accuracy and ask for confirmation as a form of member checking.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm what is written on the large flipchart paper to what they have heard as the metaphors and strengths representing each participant.

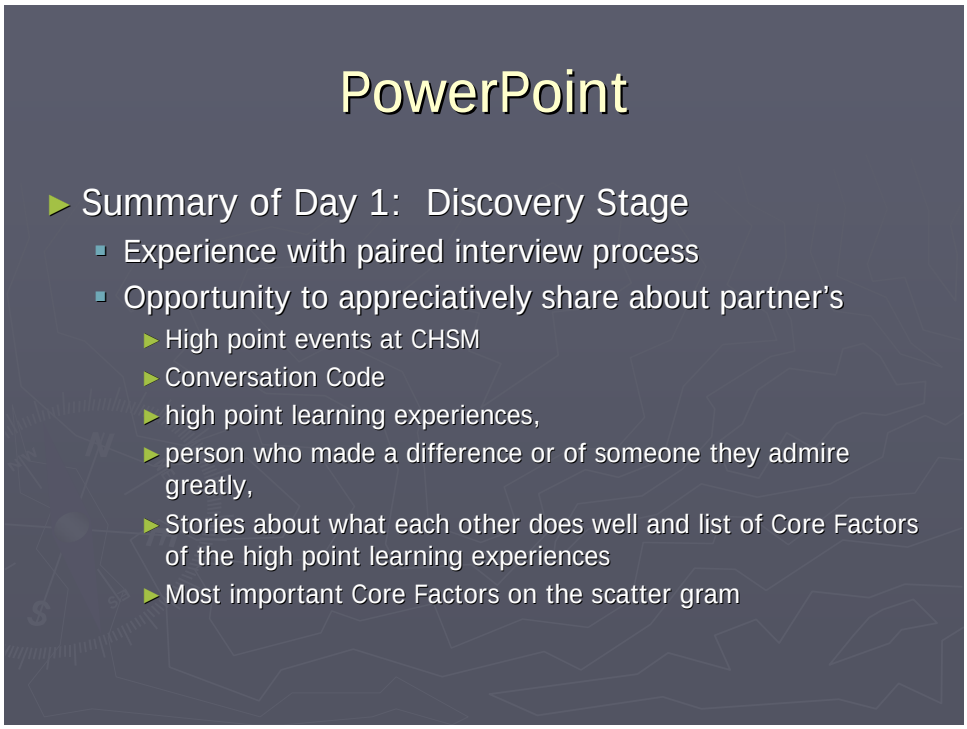
APPENDIX 20

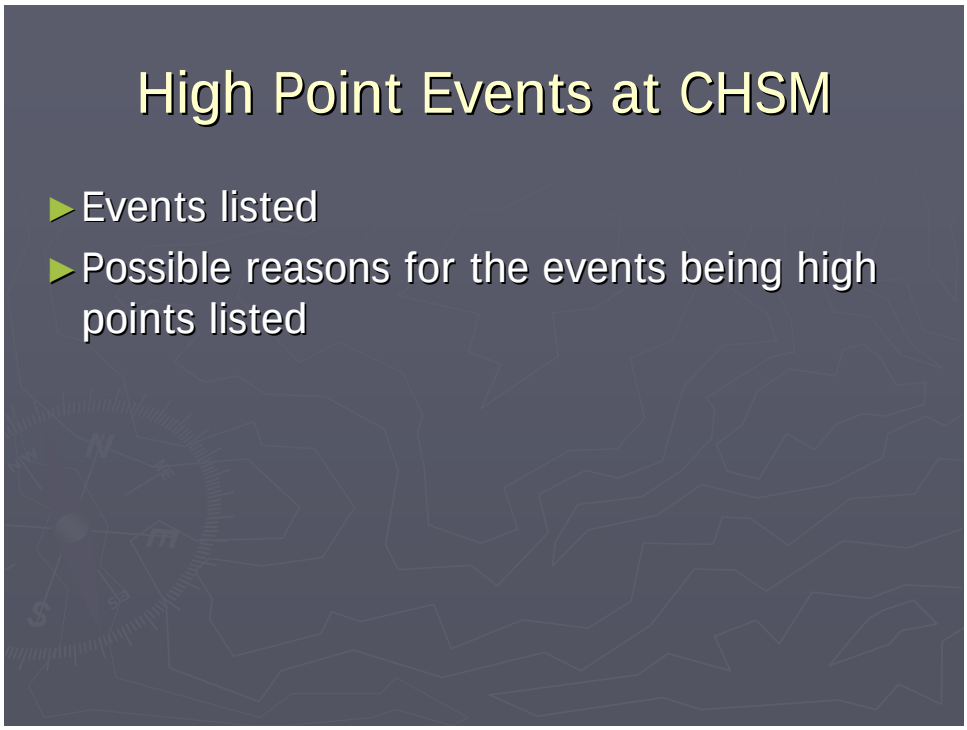
Protocol: Review of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2

Whole Group: Review of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2	
Purpose: To reflect on prior day's learning, sharing of notable quotes, and introducing Day 2 with thoughts on positive image-positive action.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Thirty minutes **Materials:** Large flipchart sheets created on Day 1 posted throughout the room for view; laptop with PowerPoint presentation 2 (Appendix 21) and projection system;
Instructions:	• Welcome • Sharing of highlight's from the previous day's work on the Discovery stage (I will create a PowerPoint presentation as the review, based on the previous day's work using the data from the large flipchart paper, digital images of the metaphors the participants created with strengths. The larger flipchart sheets will be posted around the room for viewing. Member checking by asking the participants to check once again for accuracy confirming the data will be a part of the process while reviewing the PowerPoint. • I will share some notable quotes from each participant from the previous day's work. • Introduction to the day's work with understanding of positive image-positive action.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm what is presented in the PowerPoint to what is written on the large flipchart paper and what the participants had heard from Day 1 in the Discovery Stage.

APPENDIX 21

Protocol: Review of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2 PowerPoint





Conversation Code

- My Rights
- My Responsibilities

High Point Learning Experiences

- Large flipchart data goes here

Person Who Made a Difference
or
Someone You Admire Greatly

- Characteristics from large flipchart listed here:

Things I Do Well

- Lists from the large flipchart goes here:

Core Factors for High Point Learning Experiences

- Large flipchart Core Factors Scatter gram data goes here

Metaphor created by Participant 1

- Image of the metaphor
- Strengths as noted by the participant

The next 7 slides will represent the other participants.

Notable Quotes

- Something noteworthy will be stated that a participant said during the Discovery stage. The goal is to have something written that was said by each participant that they discovered during Day 1.

Day 2 Overview
Dream Stage--Imagine What Might Be

- Imagine the possibilities of what the most effective learning experiences could be.
- Paired imagining scenario 5 years into the future at CHSM.
- Group co-constructs opportunity map
- Dream statements
- Creatively represent the dream statement
- Presentation of dream statement
- Co-construct the dream statement in story form /narrative through online wiki

Relationship Between Positive Images and Positive Action

http://www.pipersdream.com/Sunflowers/sunflower3.jpg

APPENDIX 22

Student Dream Worksheet 1

Guiding principle: Our dreams are our hopes. Our dreams are what propel us toward the future. Today we have the opportunity dream. An AI Dream is to Imagine, "What Might Be." The dream is your vision for more effective learning.

Challenge: Referring to the high point learning experiences you have already described, imagine what the most effective learning experiences could be by describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience.

What 3 wishes do you have for creating the ideal learning experience?
1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX 23

Student Dream Worksheet 2

Guiding principle: Our dreams can come true. What we focus on becomes closer to realizing our dreams.

Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?" I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?" – Robert F. Kennedy

Imagine you have graduated and have come back to CHSM to celebrate a 5-year class reunion. The year is now 2013. As you continue your tour through CHSM, you look around and see that the CHSM staff is functioning as you dreamed and students are learning as you had imagined.

What is happening?

Describe what has helped it happen.

What is different?

How are the students learning?

What do the classes look like?

APPENDIX 24

Protocol: Dream Three Wishes and Five Year Future Vision

Dream Three Wishes and Five Year Future Vision	
Purpose: • To imagine and define the future for effective learning that you want to see to improve teaching and learning.	**Participants:** Individual and paired **Time:** One hour **Materials:** Handout: Student Dream Worksheet 1 and 2 (Appendices 22 and 23);
Instructions:	• Using the data from the large flipchart paper sheets as the basis from the Discovery Stage, Day 1, participants will be asked to individually imagine what the most effective learning experiences could be by describing a future vision for the ideal learning experience with the use of Student Dream Worksheet 1 (Appendix 22). The goal is to imagine and define the future for effective learning that you want to see to improve teaching and learning. Participants will list their 3 wishes for improved teaching and learning. • Using the Student Dream Worksheet 1, participants will share with a paired partner their future vision for the ideal learning experience. • Next participants will complete Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23) together in pairs imagining that 5 years have since past so they can describe together what CHSM effective learning could look like.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review and prepare to share the three wishes for future effective learning and describe the 5 years in the future scenario (Appendix 23) with the whole group.

APPENDIX 25

Protocol: Share Dreams, Five Year Future Vision, and Opportunity/Concept Map

Whole Group: Share Dream with Three Wishes, Five Year Future Vision, and Opportunity/Concept Map	
Purpose: • To share the imagined future for the ideal learning experiences that you want to see happen, co-constructing an opportunity/concept map with the ideal learning components.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Thirty minutes **Materials:** Handouts: Student Dream Worksheets 1 and 2 (Appendices 22 and 23); large flipchart paper and easel; markers; digital recorder; one large 6' x 6' piece of white butcher paper posted on one wall of the room for the whole group opportunity/concept map
Instructions:	• Direct participants attention to the Conversation Code that hangs in the room as a visual reminder of the rights and responsibilities of the participants sharing in the whole group discussion. • Each paired team will have the opportunity to share the three wishes for more improved teaching and learning. Next each team will have the opportunity to share and describe what was happening and what helped make the scenario happen: Imagine you have graduated and have come back to CHSM to celebrate a 5-year class reunion. The year is now 2013. As you continue your tour through CHSM, you look around and see that the CHSM staff is functioning as you dreamed and students are learning as you had imagined (Appendix 23). • I will list the items that are shared from each pair including the participants' three wishes and the descriptions of the scenario on large flipchart paper as a visual. I will also review the large flipchart data for accuracy and ask for confirmation as a form of member checking. • After all four pairs of participants have had the opportunity to share the three wishes for ideal learning and shared the participant's descriptions of the imagined future learning scenario, the participants will be asked to use the data from the large flipchart paper sheets as the basis to collectively create an opportunity/concept map with the ideal future vision learning components. The goal of the opportunity (concept)

	map is to have the participants begin to develop a positive guiding image of the future for more effective learning experiences (Ludema et al., 2003). • Creation of the opportunity/concept map: Using the 6' x 6' butcher paper with a circle in the center that says "future ideal learning experience," students will draw lines out from the center with the opportunity written on the line that defines the ideal learning experience. Participants can refer to the data from the four pairs of participant presentations. When participants are satisfied with the components necessary for future ideal learning experience, then the process is drawn to closure.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and confirm what is presented in the opportunity/concept map.

APPENDIX 26

Protocol: Dream Statements

Dream Statements	
Purpose: • To capture the vision of the ideal in dream statements on paper, then blending the dream statements into one co-constructed dream statement.	**Participants:** Paired/small group/whole group **Time:** Fifty minutes **Materials:** One large 6' x 6' piece of white butcher paper posted on one wall of the room with the whole group's co-constructed opportunity/concept map; markers and large flipchart paper; one flipchart paper prepared with the dream statement guidelines.
Instructions:	• As a whole group, participants will review and discuss the opportunity/concept map to clarify any lines on the map. • I will explain what a dream statement is giving the guidelines (pre-written on the large flipchart paper). The dream statement o captures the imagined dream for ideal learning. o is written in the present tense. o reflects the cliché, be careful what you wish for; it may come true. o is bold enough to challenge the status quo. o is grounded enough with examples so it could really happen. • In pairs create a dream statement using the most important ideas from the opportunity/concept map so the participants can capture the dream in one statement. • Paired participants will share dream statements with another pair. The participants will then revise the two dream statements in their small group so there is one dream statement for the 4 students. • The whole group comes together and the two remaining dream statements are shared. Collaboratively the whole group creates one common vision or dream statement for the group of eight. This type of collaborative inquiry is modeled after Wellman and Lipton's (2004) 5-3-1 activity. The two dream statements are posted on large flipchart paper for the whole group to review. The first participant offers input and begins the writing of the one dream statement; then each participant has the

	opportunity to add to/delete/revise the dream statement in a round robin format until everyone agrees on the one dream statement that follows the dream statement guidelines.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to review for accuracy and come to consensus on the one dream statement.

APPENDIX 27

Protocol: Creative Presentation of the Dream

Creative Presentation of the Dream	
Purpose: • To creatively capture the dream statement in a presentation by the group.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Ninety minutes (time broken up with 30 minute lunch) **Materials:** One flipchart paper prepared with the co-constructed dream statement
Instructions:	• As a whole group, participants choose a creative way to represent or present the dream statement as if it were happening now. Examples can include a TV news report, the creation of a song or poem, skit, or an interview.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to reflect on the image for the future for more effective learning. Discussion is offered.

APPENDIX 28

Protocol: Presentation or Enactment of the Dream Statement

Presentation or Enactment of the Dream Statement	
Purpose: • To present the creative presentation of the dream statement.	**Participants:** Paired/small group/whole group **Time:** Twenty minutes **Materials:** Whatever materials used by the participants to present the dream statement
Instructions:	Participants are asked to have a role in the presentation of the creative presentation of the dream statement.
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the next activity, participants will be asked to reflect on and review their image of the future. Member checking will allow for refining of the future image if necessary.

APPENDIX 29

Student Dream Worksheet 3: Co-constructed Story Using an Online Wiki

To share the ideal for effective learning with teachers so they may give thought to improving teaching and learning, the participants will co-construct a narrative about the future possibilities for effective learning that would include the use of an online wiki (www.wikispaces.com). The digital story will be co-constructed based on Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23). The goal is to generate data for educators through the co-construction of a story of the future for effective learning via an online wiki. Participants will contribute to the wiki to co-construct a narrative about future possibilities for effective learning where they respond to the scenario from Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23). After each contribution, participants will read what was contributed and then add to the previous participant's contribution. The story gradually develops as participants add their portions to the story. All participants contribute to producing a complete story related to the scenario.

What do the imagined high point learning experiences look like?

What does effective learning look like at CHSM?

APPENDIX 30

Protocol: Creation of the Future Vision through an Online Wiki Co-constructed Story

Creation of the Future Vision through an Online Wiki Co-constructed Story	
Purpose: • To create the dream in story form/narrative	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Sixty minutes **Materials:** Laptop and access to the wiki spaces website (www.wikispaces.com) for the creation of the wiki; Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23) and the other constructed large flipcharts as reference material;
Instructions:	• To share the ideal for effective learning with teachers so they may give thought to improving teaching and learning, the participants will co-construct a narrative about the future possibilities for effective learning that would include the use of an online wiki (www.wikispaces.com). The digital story will be co-constructed based on Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23), the participants' co-constructed opportunity/concept map, the co-constructed dream statement and the creative presentation or representation created and presented by participants. The goal is to generate data for educators through the co-construction of a story of the future for effective learning via an online wiki. Participants will contribute to the wiki to co-construct a narrative about future possibilities for effective learning where they respond to the scenario from Student Dream Worksheet 2 (Appendix 23). After each contribution, participants will read what was contributed and then add to the previous participant's contribution. The story gradually develops as participants add their portions to the story. All participants contribute to producing a complete story related to the scenario. What do the imagined high point learning experiences look like? What does effective learning look like at CHSM?
Summary and Member Check:	Before moving to the closing of the 2-day AI learning team, participants will be asked to reflect on and review their image of the future and compare their image to the co-constructed online wiki narrative. Member checking will allow for refining of the online wiki narrative if necessary.

APPENDIX 31

Protocol: Sharing the Online Wiki Co-constructed Story and Closure

Sharing the Online Wiki Cp-constructed Story and Closure to the 2-day AI Learning Team	
Purpose: • To share the final online wiki narrative and bring closure to the 2-day AI Learning Team experience.	**Participants:** Whole group **Time:** Forty minutes **Materials:** Laptop and access to the wiki spaces website for the creation of the online narrative (www.wikispaces.com)
Instructions:	• Whole group sharing of the online wiki story. • I will facilitate the reviewing the AI 4-D Cycle discovery and dream stages summarizing the affirmative process.
Summary and Member Check:	Closing remarks in round-the-room opportunity for comments from each participant regarding the AI 4-D Cycle on the discovery and dream stages.

APPENDIX 32

Consent Letter from Superintendent

Maize Unified School District 266

201 South Park • Maize, Kansas 67101
(316) 722-0614 • FAX (316) 722-8538 • www.usd266.com

November 5, 2007

Dear Members of the Wichita State University Institutional Review Board:

Teresa San Martin has my permission to conduct a study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree from Wichita State University in the Educational Leadership program. I understand that the purpose of her proposed study will be to describe how CHSM students describe their high point learning experiences and their dreams for effective learning. The title of her proposed study is, "Empowering Students to Inform Pedagogy: An Appreciative Inquiry Case Study of Alternative High School Students' High Point Learning Experiences." I am aware that her study involves the collection of data with CHSM students and will be conducted during December 2007 and/or January 2008.

I look forward to the results of her study. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information, or if I can be of service.

Sincerely,

Dr. Milton Pippenger
Interim Superintendent of Schools
Maize, USD 266

"Quality Education for Young People"