Using Appreciative Inquiry to Engage and Motivate Adult English Language Learners

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Good language learners employ strategies to acquire a second or foreign language. Individual factors such as learner motivation, tolerance of ambiguity, or learning styles influence students' choice of learning strategies. It is up to us, as second or foreign language instructors, to find out what works for students and help them continue on their language-learning journey. How can we do that?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) uses the "power of the positive question" to create new outcomes through a four-step process. The four-step process consists of the following: Discovering (what works well), Dreaming (of what might be), Designing (what could be) and Destiny (of what will be). In other words, by applying AI principles to the classroom, we can engage students by finding out what they do well by building upon their strengths and create a more student-centered classroom, one where we build on our students' strengths.

The presenters will reveal the results of and what they have learned from the process of their two semester study using AI in the classroom in an advanced-level ESL class at a community college in the northeast region of the United States.