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## **Appreciative seminars. Appreciative teaching of Appreciative Inquiry**

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# **Appreciative seminars. Appreciative teaching of Appreciative Inquiry**

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The introduction of appreciative intervention methods at the organizational level as a discipline in the academic curriculum of the masters program "Supervision and Social Planning" is a starting point for the development of this methodology in various areas of social practice (Sandu, 2010).

The experimental educational program "Appreciative Seminars" was implemented within the discipline Appreciative intervention methods at the organizational level in the program noted above. The initiative came from Mr. Dr. Antonio Sandu, of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social and Political Sciences, "Al. I. Cuza" University in Iasi, who has supported in the academic year 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 the mentioned discipline in close collaboration with Mr. Assoc. Professor Ph. D. Stefan Cojocaru, head masters program and at the same time the one who introduced the appreciative methods in the academic curriculum from Romania.

Developing the appreciative methods in all these areas is based on giving up the deficiency paradigm and focus of the students on a successful paradigm centered on the positive, both in social practice and in their own development (Sandu, 2010). To be trained for the purposes of the paradigmatic transformation mentioned, the educational process envisages an innovative teaching methodology which comes from appreciative pedagogy and andragogy and named by Mr. Antonio Sandu "appreciative seminars through collaborative creative strategies." The principles envisaged in the construction of the appreciative seminars through collaborative creativity were:

- Learning as Celebration;
- Research as Celebration;

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- Empowerment through partnership in education (student is seen as the central character of the educational process based on co-creation of excellence in education) (Sandu, 2010). Students and teachers are partners with legal rights in a collaborative creative process with the purpose of generating knowledge and value in the sphere of knowledge.

The idea to archive this volume starts from the need to implement an appreciative assessment of quality and success of the work made by the master program students inside the seminar that we went through together in the spirit of partnership in education”. The student’s seminar task was to achieve a theoretical or practical research focusing on the side of the applied appreciative methodology in the most varied aspects of it.

Students were offered to carry out this research leaving from academic standards, namely: the existence of a methodological design of research for articles with applicative nature, the existence and clear presentation of the critical apparatus and bibliography in a scientific manner based on specific citation standards APA model (this assumes that the authors cited to be written in brackets, immediately after the quotation or paraphrase performed, followed by year of books and page where the reference appears). To provide a scientific contribution students were asked to support public research to the colleagues in the manner expected of a scientific conference having as pattern the academic standards proposed by Thompson ISI (the existence of group of selection and validation of the proposed research binding discussions on papers presented), so each paper must be accompanied by two Peer Reviews from some colleagues who expressed their views (we suggesting it upon all undergraduate as the Peer Review to exercise their appreciative intelligence pointing where applicable the innovations and value addition made by the article) (Sandu, 2010).

The articles of the students regarded:

- Theoretical issues on appreciative inquiry (Baciu, 2010). The author presents the advantages of using appreciative inquiry and the applicability of this model, citing among others the need for discovery and understanding of positive forces, creating opportunities and building new approaches.
- Developing an appreciative methodology of working with vulnerable people (Ponea, 2010). This new method brings a new perspective on the concept of partnership in "self-development" of the organizing team and the group and intervention group clients. Appreciative socialization group proposes a passing through 4D model extended and the identification of success stories of all of the disabled people and then overcome vulnerability and self- vulnerability which was originally intended.

- Appreciative Theology (Nicăi, 2010), analysis of the Biblical text, highlighting the importance of happiness in social transformation theology, and understanding of Christianity as a waiver to vetero Testament retributive paradigm and replace it with affirmative ethics (Sandu, 2010), generated by the prospect of salvation (Nicăi, 2010). The author argues that "appreciative inquiry is a progressive search and recovery of what is best in people, what is positive in their social organizations and in the reality around them" and even more than that "is the most faithful expression and well articulated appreciative approach in the daily life of a Christian, but also the famous sermon of Jesus Christ known as The Nine Beatitudes".
- Appreciative Public Discourse (Bradu, 2010). The author makes a brief analysis of the frequency of appearance of "negative news" versus "positive news" highlighting some of their effects. According to the author, mass media "bombs" the public predominantly with negative news, giving rise to stress, but she also provides examples of best practice such as Good News Agency.
- Appreciative management of the employer (Ailincăi, 2010), appreciative leadership, the correlation between the Placebo, Hawthorne and Pygmalion effects and the appreciative reconstruction of reality. The article presents information on the "appreciative employees" who share their stories, knowledge and values (Ailincăi, 2010).
- Transformation of attitudes, personal development, career management and "destiny", cognitive transformation by removing the deficiency paradigm and using creative autosuggestion (Vlasă, 2010). For a better analysis of personal behavior and for an easier adaptation to the philosophy of appreciative methods the author uses as a frame reference the movie "The Secret", which is mainly based on the "law of attraction" and its power to bring positive in everyday life.
- Appreciative medicine (Sandu, 2010). "The fundamental transformation proposed by the appreciative therapy is moving our attention from the disease, as a state of disarray of the living system, to that of order called perfect health." We believe that using such an approach "releases" the patient from distress which often enhances the physical pain caused by disease.
- Appreciative parental education (Croitoru, 2010). Family, like any other social systems of reference of the society "needs help and support." Achieving this through identifying appreciative methods

maximizes the strengths, opportunities and ways to "become better parents for our children.

- Appreciative education (Nicolaescu, 2010) and appreciative pedagogy focusing on successful experiences of students and trainers, a model in 12 steps for school success through positive appreciative thinking (Nicolaescu, 2010). The author proposes the implementation of theoretical and practical elements of appreciative methods at the beginning of the training - the school

The development of this volume was an „exercise of appreciative assessment of potential of the young students, many of whom could later become a valuable researcher in social sciences”.

In preparing the volume, the students participated in a specific manner of collaborative creativity as authors of (coauthors), peer reviewers, editors and book publishers. Rallying to the specific of collaborative creativity, the coordinator of the volume, Mr. Dr. Antonio Sandu made in addition to a theoretical introduction to a series of appreciative methods, a series of "appreciation exercises" of the new and innovative elements of each article and the research perspectives described by it. Comments are inserted immediately into the edge of the text in a special column to deliver to the reader the image of appreciative dialogue underlying the collaborative creativity seminars (Sandu, 2010).

After the end of this volume in the same "program of developing research skills and appreciative intervention” Master students had the opportunity to apply appreciative interviews and to conduct appreciative focus groups, in the research of the "occupational standard model for the occupation of supervisor in social services" in the framework of group supervision practice, achieved in collaboration with the Romanian Association of Supervision in Social Domain – ARSDS - where many of the masters program students are members.

The Master program students had the opportunity to participate in a training of trainers program with elements of appreciative inquiry, implemented by Lumen Association in partnership with ARSDS and Culture House of students, with funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Master program students were also involved in some research articles based on appreciative methods such as:

- The article: Perspective epistemice si axiologice in supervizarea apreciativa [Epistemic and axiological perspectives in appreciative supervision] (Bradu Sandu, 2009);
- Evaluarea apreciativă a programelor de training. Studiu de caz: Centrul de Consultanță și Training Lumen [Appreciative

evaluation of training programs. Case study: Lumen Consulting and Training Center] (Sandu, Ponea, Cojocaru, 2010);

- Appreciative pragmatic - public discourse (conference) (Sandu, Bradu, 2009) etc.

Many of the students participating in these appreciative seminars through collaborative creativity techniques are currently involved in preparing the dissertations for masters program with themes from appreciative methods including: Supervision meeting – an appreciative approach (Vlasă, 2010), and Appreciativity and the evaluation of the appreciative degree (Bunea, 2010), Appreciative group socialization (Ponea, 2010) etc.

In light of experience, the first year students of the same program master are involved in a new cycle of appreciative seminars based on collaborative creativity, making already a theoretical or applicative research in appreciative methods domain.

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