

May 2026

Volume 28 Number 2

ISBN 978-1-907549-68-7

 [dx.doi.org/10.12781/978-1-907549-68-7](https://doi.org/10.12781/978-1-907549-68-7)

AI Practitioner

International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry



Hope by Dale Gruchy

The Open Issue, 2026

Edited by

Luc Verheijen, Lindsey Godwin, Saskia Tjepkema and Shelagh Aitken

Co-publishers

**The David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry
and Kessels & Smit, The Learning Company**



<https://aipractitioner.com/product/subscription-for-practitioners/> 



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Introduction to the Open Issue, 2026

A few years ago, the co-publishers of *AI Practitioner* decided to publish one issue each year as an “Open Issue” to create space for as many contributors who want to write about their adventures and experiences with Appreciative Inquiry and related domains. There is no overall theme to the issue, other than this connection to strengths-based disciplines. This issue’s contributions create a tapestry of journeys and ideas.

The issue of *AI Practitioner*, the *International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry*, in front of you is one of the Open Issues. *AI Practitioner* has traditionally published an issue centred on a theme chosen by guest editors four times a year. They are in charge of the compilation – or symphony if you will – of articles that explore the central topic from a diverse set of contexts and perspectives.

As co-publishers, we decided a few years ago to publish one issue each year as an “Open Issue”. The purpose was, and is, to create space for as many contributors as possible: people who are eager to write an article about their adventures and experiences with Appreciative Inquiry and related domains, whose articles do not have to fit in with or wait for a central theme.

The response to this year’s call for contributions to the 2026 Open Issue was overwhelming: there were so many proposals, and we wanted to honour them as much as possible. We decided to publish not one, but two Open Issues in 2026: the current May issue and the last issue of 2026, in November. This current issue is the longest published in the journal’s nearly 30 years history.

AI Practitioner gives a voice to authors

This success mirrors one of the aspects we as co-publishers are most proud of: AI Practitioner provides a platform and gives a voice to many in the worldwide AI community who want to share their story.

A journal needs readers to exist. Besides our subscribers, who have access to everything ever written in AI Practitioner, people can download the introduction to the issue, which is free, or purchase themed issues or single articles from the website. Our agreement with EBSCO provides access to the journal for universities worldwide. Last year, AI Practitioner articles were downloaded nearly 18,000 times via EBSCO.

Over the last three years, AIP has published work by more than 100 new authors.

Equally astounding is the number of contributors. Over the last three years, AIP has published work by more than 100 new authors. They are people who, for the first time, have written a contribution for the journal. That number underscores AI Practitioner's mission and one its ambitions: to provide a platform by and for the worldwide Appreciative Inquiry community, where practitioners share their stories to inspire others, to uplift others, to comfort others.

Curating the first of the 2026 Open Issues

One of the quiet arts of editing AI Practitioner lies in shaping a collection of articles into something more than a sequence or a random order. So we have read and listened more closely, noticing subtle connections from a perspective that is not a central theme, but is Appreciative Inquiry itself as the connecting tissue.

Yes, in a sense this Open Issue is a diverse set of voices, of authors with stories from very different contexts and in disparate parts of the world. They reflect the richness and range of Appreciative Inquiry practice today. At the same time, a few patterns gradually emerged that allowed us to structure the journal articles based upon a few threads. Rather than a single narrative, this issue offers a tapestry of journeys and ideas, inviting you to trace your own path through the stories, insights, and the questions that connect us.

Setting the frequency

Ada Jo Mann's poem sets the tone. She invites us to ask ourselves a fundamental question: where do I put my attention?



To read more about the support network for students in Nagorno Karabakh, go to page 9.

Appreciative Inquiry as lived experience

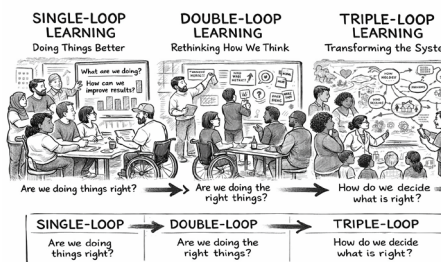
Arpi Arus' article answers that question in the most honest, personal way. It shares the story of a student support network in a place and a time where resilience was most needed by those most vulnerable. The article invites us to think about what AI is truly capable of holding.

Appreciative Inquiry in education – Voice, formation, and method

In her article, *Ellen Drolette* reframes Appreciative Inquiry from a formal method into a lived, moment-to-moment practice, showing how small relational and reflective shifts can transform everyday professional interactions. The Triple R Framework – relevance, relationships, and reflection – offers a simple internal compass that helps practitioners stay present, human-centred, and intentional in the complexity of their work. As the author says: “The Triple R Framework is a way of organising attention”.

The article by *Mo McKenna* and *Sue Derby* follows the long-term impact of a large-scale student voice initiative, showing how Appreciative Inquiry reshaped learning environments by changing the conversations between students and educators. Through personal stories across two decades, it reveals how an appreciative orientation continues to influence identity, leadership, and relationships, demonstrating that “the most enduring shifts ... appeared in conversations”.

Jen Davy explores how four visiting lecturers used Appreciative Inquiry to rethink their mentoring practice of student teachers, shifting from self-critical reflection to a more strengths-based and intentional approach to their evaluation of their own practices. Drawing on research insights and practitioner voices, this article shows how such a shift builds confidence, deepens relationships, and reshapes mentoring. As one of the tutors says, “we don’t necessarily apply that [strengths-based perspective] to ourselves”.



To read Kristy’s article, go to page 45..

In the last article of the section about AI in education *Kristy Miller* examines how Appreciative Inquiry can function as a research methodology to help school systems respond to climate change, shifting the focus from problem-solving toward generative, strengths-based learning and action. Drawing on a graduate project and insights from water governance in American schools, it shows how participatory inquiry can foster collective learning, innovation, and resilience, inviting a move from fear-driven responses to a more reflective stance: “Who am I going to be in the midst of climate change?”

Appreciative Inquiry and global scale – Systems, strategy, culture



To read about the ASPIRE Culture Cards go to page 80.

Amjad Mohamed-Saleem describes in his article how a global organisation engaged staff in conversations about inclusion and then faced a practical question: how do we keep the work going and make progress visible without turning the process into a checkbox exercise? It shows how Appreciative Inquiry helped rethink certification as a shared, ongoing practice of learning and accountability, grounded in peoples' lived experiences and relationships across the organisation.

Michele Deeks tells the story of how a collaboration between practitioners led to the creation of the ASPIRE Culture Cards, a practical tool for helping groups explore and shape the cultures they work in. It shows how simple, strengths-based prompts can shift conversations from individual strengths to shared experiences of “we” and “us”. That enables a more open, hopeful, and constructive dialogue about what helps people and teams to flourish.

Roberta Peirick looks at how organisations can work with generative artificial intelligence without losing focus on people and purpose. Her article shows how combining clear strategy with ongoing dialogue, supported by the SOAR framework, can involve employees in shaping how artificial intelligence is used, so that change creates real value rather than simply following the latest trend.

Expanding the frame

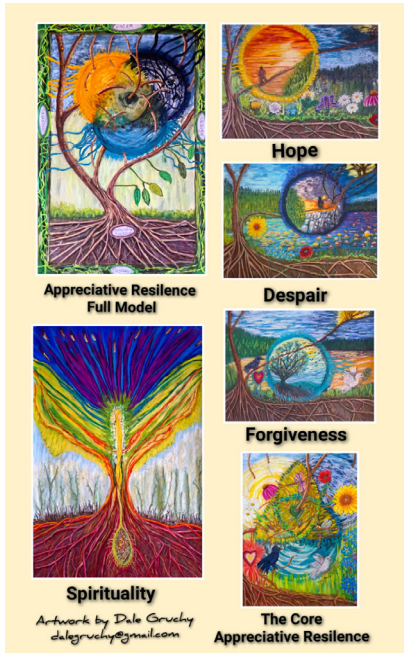
What if the way we ask questions doesn't just reveal reality, but helps create it? Drawing on parallels with quantum physics, *Joy van Helvert* and *Suzanne Quinney* invite Appreciative Inquiry practitioners to see their work as shaping what becomes possible through attention, relationships, and above all, the questions they bring into the system.

AI Practitioner's Cornerstones

Nourish to Flourish

In this issue, we have three contributions. *Keith Storace*, as always, has overseen this section of the journal, liaising with editors and contributors to ensure that the content is relevant, lively, and informative.

Federico Varona is the liaison for the series of columns being contributed by members of RIPAPA, the Iberoamerican Network of Academics and Practitioners of the Appreciative Paradigm. This issue's contribution, “Connection in Action/ Conexión en Acción”, by *Jorge Sciupac*, appears in both English and Spanish.



To find out more about Dale Gruchy's work, go to page 118.

Nick Heap is the editor of the column “Practices That Deepen Appreciative Inquiry: Tuning the Human Instrument”. In this issue, Jill Greenbaum describes her Morning Altars practice, a routine that supports inquiry into her inner landscape and offers opportunities for insights and expression.

Jill Greenbaum also contributes a review of Neena Verma’s **RISE: The ‘Deep Resilience’ Way** for the Appreciative Resources column.

Feature Choice

In the article “Integrating Artistic Modalities into Appreciative Resilience: Creativity as a Reflective and Strength-Building Tool for Both Participants and Facilitator”, Dale Gruchy describes and shows the results of her work, which examines Appreciative Resilience through the creation of pastel panels.

Appreciative Inquiry Research, Review & Notes

Thomas Spies’s contribution, “Making Sport Matter”, is based on his masters’ thesis, which used action research to explore a gap that he had long recognised: using a strengths-based approach to change in sport, in this case in a South African university, to support people-centred change in sports institutions.

Lindsey Godwin, Luc Verheijen, Saskia Tjepkema, Shelagh Aitken
May 2026

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AI Practitioner is co-published by the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry and Kessels & Smit, The Learning Company.

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The David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry is the global Center of Excellence in Appreciative Inquiry and strengths-based organizational management. Situated in the Robert P. Stiller School of Business at Champlain College, the Center:

- Provides cutting-edge educational offerings in AI and Positive Organizational Development,
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- Serves as a scholarship incubator that advances the theory and practice of AI across all organizational sectors around the world.

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- Learning is at the heart of what they do: they aim to create and facilitate powerful learning processes.
- The professionals from Kessels & Smit want to be good company to each other and to people they work with: they believe the best solutions are developed in partnerships.
- They strive to be a learning organization, constantly renewing their work processes, structures and approaches. The company is their “laboratory”, where they experiment and find answers for learning and development and organizational questions.

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International Journal of Appreciative Inquiry

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ISSN 1741-8224