

## Part 2.4 Kinaesthetic Practice

*"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand." (Confucius) Our last article relates AI Practice to the hands-on approach to learning. Sue James and Chris Bennett of Australia have drawn on AI and Tai Chi and developed a concept called AQ-KQ (Appreciative and Kinaesthetic Intelligence).*

### AQ/KQ and Lifelong Learning

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*Drawing on Appreciative Inquiry and Tai Chi, Sue James and Chris Bennett have developed a concept they call AQ-KQ - Appreciative and Kinaesthetic Intelligence. In this article, Sue and Chris explain the background of AQ-KQ, outline the synergies they have found between AI and Tai Chi, and discuss how this approach has assisted lifelong learning both for themselves and the clients with whom they work.*

#### Introduction to Appreciative and Kinaesthetic Intelligence (AQ-KQ)

In 1983 Dr. Howard Gardner argued that the traditional idea of intelligence based on IQ tests was too limiting. In 1995, Daniel Goleman extended this with Emotional Intelligence or EQ. Since then many personal development, leadership and organisational management theories have been significantly influenced by Gardner and Goleman.

We draw on this background while incorporating principles and practices of Appreciative Inquiry and Tai Chi in our work with schools, communities, government departments and businesses. Theoretical and practical elements of AI and Tai Chi help participants draw on their experiences and wisdom as they discover, dream and design a shared destiny.

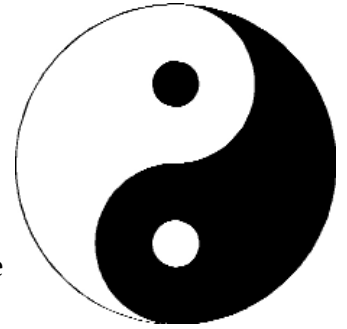
Kinaesthetic Intelligence involves a mind-body connection, a concept already identified by Gardner. Appreciative Intelligence brings an appreciative eye to every aspect of an individual group or an organisation. By combining this with kinaesthetic awareness people reach a deeper learning and understanding in their work together.

#### Synergies between AI and Tai Chi

Before working together, Chris had 20 years of experience learning and teaching Tai Chi Chuan, while Sue had been an active Appreciative Inquiry practitioner for several years.

For both of us, these experiences had been profound and life changing. When we met two years ago and began discussing the values and philosophies that underpinned our work, we came to appreciate the synergies between AI and Tai Chi. Although Appreciative Inquiry is most commonly applied in large group or organisational contexts and Tai Chi is more usually applied as an individual, both focus on finding and enhancing the positive core of the human spirit.

Tai Chi Chuan, which translates to ‘supreme ultimate fist’, is a Chinese exercise, relaxation, meditation, philosophy (nonreligious) and self-defence system. <sup>(1)</sup> It is based on the 2000-year-old philosophy of Taoism. The Taoists’ aim is to reach a harmonious life by seeking the Tao (natural way) through harmonizing mind and body with nature. From Taoism came the Tai Chi symbol of Yin and Yang. The white represents Yang (man, strength, day etc.); the black, Yin (woman, softness, night etc). The Yin and Yang are opposite forces or energies in constant motion.



We find synergies between AI and Tai Chi such as the connection between reflecting the spirit of Yin and Yang in Tai Chi with using AI to honour and acknowledge multiple voices and realities while dealing with change. Tai Chi consists of a series of movements and postures performed in sequence to create what is called the ‘form’; Appreciative Inquiry uses a series of activities performed in sequence – the 4-D Cycle – to create forward movement.

The table below further illustrates the synergies we see between the two approaches:

Principles of AI <sup>(2)</sup>	Assumptions of AI <sup>(3)</sup>	Principles of Taoism <sup>(4)</sup>	Intrinsic Principles & Qualities of Tai Chi Movements <sup>(5)</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Descriptive or Constructionist</li> <li>● Simultaneous</li> <li>● Poetic</li> <li>● Anticipatory</li> <li>● Positive</li> <li>● Wholeness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Something works.</li> <li>● Our focus becomes our reality.</li> <li>● Our language creates our reality.</li> <li>● There are multiple realities.</li> <li>● It is important to value differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inner Strength</li> <li>● Adaptability</li> <li>● Devotion and Dedication (Sincerity)</li> <li>● Faith</li> <li>● Peace and Harmony</li> <li>● Tranquillity and Serenity</li> <li>● Emptiness</li> <li>● Enlightenment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Softness</li> <li>● Slowness</li> <li>● Complete relaxation</li> <li>● Harmony</li> <li>● Connectedness</li> <li>● Circularity</li> <li>● Clarity, accuracy and elegance</li> <li>● Projection</li> </ul>

**How this Approach has assisted Lifelong Learning**

Our experience with a wide range of audiences demonstrates that AQ-KQ, the application of Appreciative and Kinaesthetic Intelligences, can make a positive difference in people’s lives and bring about new learning in a relatively short time span. Some time after completing a seminar or workshop, many participants tell us that our AQ-KQ approach has helped them change their perceptions and expand their thinking into new possibilities.

**Example - HumourAdventure**

HumourAdventure is one of our short-term seminars, designed to engage, inspire and motivate, providing the opportunity for people to reflect, plan and learn together while

having fun. It incorporates AI philosophies and practices (including paired storytelling) as well as Tai Chi, humour, juggling and other activities to engage “head, heart and hands” in the learning process.

## Storytelling

Everyone in the group has the opportunity to share a funny or amusing moment, while only those who are comfortable to do so volunteer to share the story they have heard with the larger group. In this way, even those who are uncomfortable telling a story in front of a



group have the opportunity to share, with an appreciative listener, those amusing moments that happen for everyone even amid serious work.

Indeed, it is often in the middle of very serious events that humour can play a significant



role to support our spirits. This is the “deeper” aspect of AQ - appreciating the role of laughter



in those darker times of trial, when an appreciative eye and being able to laugh is one way to help us heal. Sometimes, in the midst of even the deepest pain and grief, humour helps us turn our faces back into the sunshine even if just for a few moments. We also find shared laughter can be extremely powerful in dissolving tension and conflict, particularly for those groups where this has been an issue.

## Juggling



Alongside various Tai Chi activities and exercises used to illustrate and deepen learning during our seminars, we also incorporate juggling. Juggling provides a wonderful analogy for many themes. Perhaps the most obvious is that it’s easier to juggle all the

daily work demands if we remember to relax, focus and have fun. Juggling also reminds us to feel free to take risks and step into the unknown. It’s a good reminder that we don’t have to be perfect and it’s ok to drop a ball occasionally!



One of the sayings among jugglers is that dropping a ball is a sign you are improving. On that premise, both of us should be experts by now!

While these elements remain the same, we adapt our approach to suit various themes. Some Melbourne-based examples include:

- Western Region School Support Officers – 166 school support staff. (Theme: health and wellbeing)
- Monash Principals Conference – 40 Primary and Secondary School Principals from outer eastern suburbs. (Theme: leadership)
- Glen Waverley South Primary School – 25 teachers (Theme wellbeing)
- Cranbourne Secondary College – 80 teachers (Theme: teamwork)
- Casey Council – 30 local government Community Services Managers and Team Leaders. (Theme: managing change)
- Northern Region Leading Teacher Program – - 40 Primary and Secondary School Leading Teachers (Theme: leadership)
- Northern Business Network – 25 small business owners (Theme: wellbeing)
- Swinburne College of Technical and Further Education – 25 administrative staff. (Theme: wellbeing)

### Conclusion

Through HumourAdventure and other programs, we find the combination of Appreciative Inquiry and Tai Chi – AQ-KQ – is an extremely powerful way to help people learn at any stage of life. <sup>(6)</sup> Through ‘best of’ stories, laughter and kinaesthetic awareness, people can connect, even across previously entrenched boundaries, to share hopes and dreams and explore new possibilities for a brighter future together.

#### Footnotes

1. There are five major forms or styles of Tai Chi: Wu (Master Wu Chien Chuan); Yang; Chen, Wu (Master Wu Yuxian); and Sun. The five major areas of Tai Chi are; The Form; Chi Kung/Nei Kung; Push Hands; Self Defence; and Weapons. (The basic weapons are sabre, sword and spear).
2. Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D. (2002). *Appreciative Inquiry: The Handbook* (with CD). Lakeshore Publishers (First ed.).
3. See Hammond, S. (1996). *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing for a full description of these assumptions.
4. Bourke, G., Thompson J., & Yiu, T. (1984), *Tai Chi with Tennyson Yiu*. Dai Nippon Printing Co., Hong Kong.
5. Ibid.
6. Some of the comments from those who have experienced the power of AQ-KQ can be found on our website at <http://www.bjseminars.com.au/aqkq2.html>