

Introduction

The five core principles should be seen as the building blocks of AI, with the constructionist principle as its foundation stone and the poetic, positive, simultaneity and anticipatory principles as rising pillars. There are many theories and disciplines that have influenced the principles of AI, or are aligned with them. As the shift away from Newtonian thinking continues, and we embrace new thinking on our world and its systems, there's a plethora of related reading – Ken Gergen's writing on social constructionist theory (in which AI is very much rooted), amongst others; positive psychology (Martin Seligman and Barbara Fredrickson) and new sciences like chaos theory, complexity theory and quantum physics..

1. The Constructionist Principle

Proposes that what we believe to be true determines what we do, and thought and action emerge from relationships. Through the language and discourse of day to day interactions, people co-construct the organizations they inhabit. The purpose of inquiry is to stimulate new ideas, stories and images that generate new possibilities for action.

Words create worlds

2. The Simultaneity Principle

Proposes that as we inquire into human systems we change them and the seeds of change, the things people think and talk about, what they discover and learn, are implicit in the very first questions asked. Questions are never neutral, they are fateful, and social systems move in the direction of the questions they most persistently and passionately discuss.

Inquiry creates change - the first question is fateful...

3. The Poetic Principle

Proposes that organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other every day, and the story of the organization is constantly being co-authored. The words and topics chosen for inquiry have an impact far beyond just the words themselves. They invoke sentiments, understandings, and worlds of meaning. In all phases of the inquiry effort is put into using words that point to, enliven and inspire the best in people.

We can choose what we study

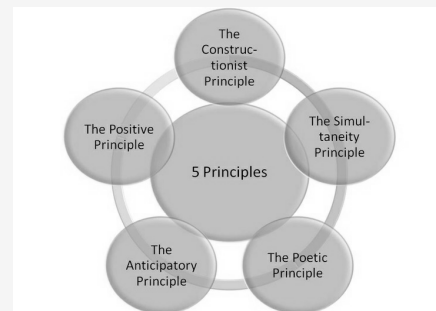
4. The Anticipatory Principle

Posits that what we do today is guided by our image of the future. Human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent. The more positive and hopeful the image of the future, the more positive the present-day action.

Image inspires action

5. The Positive Principle

Diagram



Added Emergency Principles

As AI practitioners have refined their learning and experience (in keeping with AI philosophy), some 'emergent principles' have been added. These sit alongside the core principles, although some practitioners prefer to see them as 'intentions' for their work, rather than principles.

The Wholeness Principle

Wholeness brings out the best in people and organizations. Bringing all stakeholders together in large group forums stimulates creativity and builds collective capacity.

Wholeness Brings Out the Best

The Enactment Principle

To really make a change, we must "be the change we want to see." Positive change occurs when the process used to create the change is a living model of the ideal future.

Acting 'As If' is Self-Fulfilling

The Free Choice Principle

People perform better and are more committed when they have the freedom to choose how and what they contribute. Free choice stimulates organizational excellence and positive change.²

Free Choice Liberates Power

The Narrative Principle

We construct stories about our lives (personal and professional) and live into them.

Stories are Transformative.

The Awareness Principle

Understanding and being aware of our underlying assumptions are important to developing and cultivating good relationships. Practicing cycles of action and reflection can build one's self-awareness.

Be Conscious of Underlying Assumptions.

Proposes that momentum and sustainable change requires positive affect and social bonding. Sentiments like hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie and joy increase creativity, openness to new ideas and people, and cognitive flexibility. They also promote the strong connections and relationships between people, particularly between groups in conflict, required for collective inquiry and change.

Positive questions lead to positive change



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