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The impact of appreciative inquiry on developing interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, using the case of the San Benito Time Exchange

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THE IMPACT OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY ON DEVELOPING

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES IN NONPROFIT BOARDS,

USING THE CASE OF THE SAN BENITO TIME EXCHANGE

_____

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

_____

by

Alison Vallenari

August 2013

This research project, completed by

ALISON VALLENARI

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business

and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2013

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Abstract

This study researched the impact of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) on the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, examining the case of the San Benito Time Exchange (SBTE), in Hollister, California. The study assessed five interpersonal competencies tied to organizational effectiveness, including: knowledge of one another, communication style, decision-making, conflict resolution, and ability to influence one another. All SBTE board members participated in pre-interviews, board retreat, and post-interviews, each using AI. Study findings indicated positive changes in four out of five measures. The SBTE case illustrated the positive impact of AI on the board's interpersonal competencies and indicated that AI could have a positive impact on interpersonal competencies in other nonprofit boards. Study limitations include the small number of participants and the short time between intervention and measurement of its impact. Areas for future research include testing the impact of AI with larger groups and over longer time periods.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Every corporation, whether for profit or nonprofit, is required by law to have a governing board of directors. Members of governing boards have certain legally required (fiduciary) responsibilities. A corporation can operate as a separate legal entity, but is ultimately accountable to its owners, stockholders in the case of for-profits and the public with non-profit organizations. A well-functioning board of directors is critical to the survival of a corporation.

Nonprofit boards have many similarities to for profit corporations, including responsibility for financial results and providing a clear mission. More distinct though are the executive governance functions in nonprofits, which include larger boards, comprised of volunteer rather than paid board members; also, nonprofits typically have many more committees, and a volunteer board chair. Understanding these differences and taking the time and effort to develop nonprofit board competencies is essential (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011).

Effective boards know their duties, what competencies are essential for successfully achieving them, and how to provide for the development of these competencies. The main duty of a board of directors is to provide financial discipline, risk management, and strategic vision. According to the National Center for Nonprofit Boards, the ten basic responsibilities of nonprofit boards are to:

1. Determine the organization's mission and purpose

2. Select the Executive Director

3. Support the executive and review his/her performance

4. Ensure effective organizational planning

5. Ensure adequate resources

6. Manage resources effectively

7. Determine and monitor the organization's programs and services

8. Enhance the organization's public image

9. Serve as a Court of Appeal

10. Assess its own performance (Ingram, 2009).

Critical to achieving these duties is the capacity to work together as an effective group. In an effort to guide boards to successfully lead their organizations, Congress, business advisory groups and regulatory agencies have provided a number of structural approaches to good governance. However, while prudent, these steps are not enough, as indicated in board research. Studying board performance for over 25 years, Sonnenfeld (2002) concludes that structural changes in and of themselves do not distinguish effective from ineffective boards. "What distinguishes exemplary boards is that they are robust, effective social systems" exhibiting a "virtuous cycle of respect, trust, and candor" (p. 5). Others support this research in board studies of their own, stating that, "what does distinguish the best from the rest is a well-functioning social system in which members trust and challenge one another and engage directly on critical issues" (Cascio, 2004, p. 97). Additionally, the National Center for Nonprofit Boards identified interpersonal competencies as one of the six key components of high-performing boards (Holland & Blackmon, 2000).

Beyond identifying, boards need to develop their essential competencies. Too often, directors are asked to take on the responsibilities of directorship with little orientation and almost no training for that specific role (Axelrod, 2005). Members come from different backgrounds and often have little experience specific to the organization

they now direct. In addition, they frequently have limited time to expend on board responsibilities and little training for the role. In one study of board competence, it was found that nine out of ten directors received no formal preparation for their boardroom appointments and only one in eight boards operates any form of periodic and formal appraisal of personal effectiveness in the boardroom (Coulson-Thomas, 2008). Axelrod asks, "How can governing boards, typically made of busy part-time volunteers, who are not engaged in the daily management of their organizations discharge their significant responsibilities?" (p. 126).

One answer may lie in board education and development using Appreciative Inquiry to further the strategic role of the board. While a variety of educational approaches can be considered, research findings show that "however training is approached, it increasingly is viewed as vital to the health of the company and its governing board" (Dutton, 2008, p. 49). In a recent PricewaterhouseCoopers survey on board education, 83% of the 1,300 respondents indicated the board should attend educational sessions to improve their governance capabilities (Corporate Board Member, 2008, p. 10).

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been successfully employed in a wide variety of settings, developing strategic capacity in corporate, government, religious, nonprofit, family, and therapeutic venues with significant results (Kozik, 2011). AI is both a philosophy and a methodology that provides a different way to develop strategic initiatives and group effectiveness based on interpersonal story telling (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Organizations have traditionally used a problem-solving method to address issues, manage change, and plan for the future. This often results in a reactive, problem-based frame. AI is a holistic approach that focuses on developing cooperative

capacities, maintaining positive attitudes, and seeing the potential in people and things. In use for over 20 years (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011), AI and its efficacy for interpersonal board development is the focus of further exploration in this study

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was to determine the potential impact of AI interventions on the development of interpersonal competencies in non-profit boards of directors. The researcher conducted a case study with the San Benito Time Exchange (SBTE) by assessing the board's current level of interpersonal effectiveness, designing an AI intervention to further the interpersonal effectiveness of the SBTE board, and then measuring whether the interpersonal effectiveness of the SBTE board improved as a result.

This study examined the following research question: What is the impact of AI in the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, using the case of the SBTE?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it provides support for the concept that interpersonal competencies are significant in the development of good governance. Further, this study offers support for the effectiveness of the AI approach in nonprofit board development of interpersonal competencies. Lastly, the study provides insight for organization development practitioners who seek to apply AI philosophy and methodology to board development interventions.

There has been considerable research done on the qualities of successful boards, yet boards continue to struggle (GrantThornton, 2009). Examples of struggling boards are readily available. In the last decade and in the financial sector alone, the boards of

directors at Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, Citigroup, Countrywide, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Lehman Brothers, and Washington Mutual were ultimately largely responsible for the sharp decline or loss of their companies (Heineman, 2008).

Nonprofit boards have their own issues. According to a survey conducted by McKinsey and Company, only 17% of nonprofit boards felt that their boards were as effective as possible (Jansen & Kilpatrick, 2004.) The role of non-profit boards carries more responsibility than ever. In fact, "today, nonprofit organizations in the United Stated control upward of $1.5 trillion in assets and are increasingly relied upon to help address society's ill" (p. 80).

Widespread concerns with board performance, coupled with the importance of leadership roles served by boards, suggest the significant need to address the critical issue of interpersonal board competencies and to find the best methods for developing these competencies. As Sonnenfeld 2002) states in his comprehensive study of best board practices, "It's not the rules and regulations. It's the way people work together" (p. 1). The health and welfare of profit and nonprofit organizations, may well depend upon our ability to help leaders develop their interpersonal competencies and find the best ways to work together effectively.

Organization Setting

The client organization of this study is the board of directors of the SBTE, a member of the California Federation of Time Banks. The SBTE is a new organization, founded in May 2012 by Pepperdine MSOD graduate Laura Lee, who currently serves as its Executive Director. The SBTE serves three counties in northern California, San Benito County, Santa Clara County and Monterey County. With four existing board members and a goal to add 3-5 more, Ms. Lee conducted a Blue Ribbon Panel Event in October to

recruit volunteers, recruit new members, and add new talent to the board. However, the event was not well attended, resulting in no new board members being recruited. The SBTE has also applied for financial sponsorship by a local not-for-profit organization, which, if approved, will provide them with nonprofit funding status, liability insurance, and accounting operations. As of this writing, fiscal sponsorship has not yet been approved.

The four goals stated by the Executive Director of the SBTE were to participate in organizational development for her new board of directors to:

1. Increase the board's knowledge of one another.
2. Build a cohesive board where all voices are heard.
3. Develop a spirit of trust between board members and the Executive Director.
4. Begin a strategic planning process to establish a clear focus shared by all.

The SBTE is aligned with the national time bank movement, based on the work of Edgar Cahn (2000), author of *No More Throw-away People*. At its most basic level, Time Banking is about spending an hour doing something for somebody in your community (see Table 1). That hour goes into the Time Bank as a Time Credit. Then you have a Time Credit to spend on having someone doing something for you. The aim is to provide for the common good, building community as it connects unmet needs with untapped resources.

Table 1

The Five Core Values of Time Banking

Assets We are all assets	Every human being has something to contribute. We all have assets to offer.
Redefining Work Some work is beyond price	Work has to be redefined to value whatever it takes to raise healthy children, build strong families, revitalize neighborhoods, make democracy work, advance social justice, and make the planet sustainable. That kind of work needs to be honored, recorded, and rewarded.
Reciprocity Helping works better as a two-way street.	The question: "How can I help you?" needs to change so we ask: "How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?"
Social Networks We need each other.	Networks are stronger than individuals. People can help each other reweave communities of support, strength, and trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, and creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.
Respect Every human being matters.	Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

Note. Adapted from "Hour Exchange Local Partnership Fairfield-Suisun," *(*para. 2-6), 2012. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/HELPFairfieldSuisun/posts/445151982177153

Methodology

This study used the following methods:

A case study applied the use of AI methodology to nonprofit board development and analyzed its impact on interpersonal competencies. Data gathering, intervention strategies, and analysis included:

1. Initial interview assessment of Executive Director

2. Initial interview assessment of nonprofit board member competencies

3. Co-design of intervention (retreat goals, agenda, and appreciative interview questions) with Executive Director.

4. Nonprofit board retreat, using AI methodology.

5. Evaluation instrument to assess the effectiveness of the retreat.

6. Post-interview assessment of board competencies.

7. Data analysis of the impact of AI for improving nonprofit board interpersonal effectiveness.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on nonprofit board effectiveness and the impact of planned board development in building interpersonal competency for nonprofit board directors. Further literature will be examined to consider the usefulness of AI as an effective methodology in board of director education.

Chapter 3 describes the research method designed to gather data to address key components of interpersonal board development, including assessment of beginning levels of board competency, delivery of board development interventions using AI methodology, and post-intervention measures of interpersonal board competencies. Phase 1 of the research includes a pre-intervention interview with the Executive Director, and interviews with all board members, designed to identify the level of interpersonal competency, identify strategic need, and to gather data for the development of the intervention. Phase 2 of the study addresses the development of board competencies through AI intervention. Phase 3 assesses interpersonal board effectiveness following the AI intervention through post-testing interviews.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data gathered to measure the efficacy of AI methods to improve interpersonal board competency. Chapter 4 is comprised of a pre-test/post-interview data analysis, and assessment of findings. In addition, the impact of the intervention is described.

Chapter 5 reviews the key study findings and presents implications for practice and further research in nonprofit interpersonal board development using the application of AI methodology.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of an AI intervention in developing interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards of directors. According to management scholar Peter Drucker, "The task of organizational leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 2)

This chapter reviews literature related to the differences between profit and nonprofit boards, the important role boards play in creating effective organizations, the critical need for board orientation and development, the significance of interpersonal competencies in developing effective boards, and AI and its efficacy as applied to nonprofit director board development.

The literature review addresses the following research question: What is the impact of AI intervention in the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards of directors, using the case of the SBTE?

Differences Between Profit and Nonprofit Boards of Directors

Nonprofits exist to improve the lives of society at the individual, organization and community levels. Nonprofit organizations include schools, museums, professional service organizations, religious institutions, hospitals (half of which are nonprofits) and social service organizations (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011; Silverthorne, 2011). Although charitable, educational, and religious organizations date back for thousands of years, the concept of *nonprofit organizations* as a unified sector dates back only to the 1970s. In reviewing the literature, there is a great deal of overlap between profit and nonprofit governance (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011). Similarities include the importance of good

management and leadership and the vital need for planning, budgeting, and performance

measurement systems. Key differences between profit and nonprofit boards are in three

main areas, 1.) Mission, 2.) Finance, and 3.) Executive functions, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Key Differences: For-Profit vs. Nonprofit Governance

FOR PROFIT GOVERNANCE	NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE
MISSION	
Mission important	Mission very important
Financial results important	Cash-loss generator may be the key service
Nonfinancial metrics important	Nonfinancial metrics of mission performance very important
FINANCE	
Financial metrics of performance, Profit & Loss, stock price, and cash flow very important	Financial metrics of meeting budget and cash flow projections also important
Funds come from operations and financial capital markets	Funds come from operations, debt, grants, and philanthropy
Short-term goals very important	Deep focus on long-term goals (as long as cash is there)
EXECUTIVE	
Small board—paid governance	Often large board—volunteer governance
Few board committees	Often many board committees
Combined chair / CEO plus lead director	Nonexecutive volunteer chair, plus CEO

Note. From "Nonprofit vs. For-Profit Boards: Critical Differences," by M. J. Epstein and F. W. McFarlan, 2011, *Strategic Finance*, *92*(9), p. 30. Reprinted with permission

Unlike a for profit corporation, a nonprofit exists to accomplish a social or service

goal rather than to primarily deliver a return on investment for its shareholders. Mission

is the reason a nonprofit exists, defining the services offered, and providing a basis for

valuation. Further, a distinct difference between profit and non-profit boards is

compensation. Board members of profit corporations are well compensated with

retainers, fees, and stock, while nonprofit board members are volunteers whose

compensation is often financially negative, with expectations of capital gifts, annual

giving and participation in fund-raising events (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011). In addition, while time spent on a profit board is relatively predictable, the time demands of nonprofit board members, including contributing to multiple committees, often expand until burnout is a real problem competing with the benefit of emotional engagement (Silverthorne, 2011).

The Importance of Effective Boards

The board of directors is a critical component for every nonprofit organization. Effective boards are associated with organizations that tend to perform better in terms of both fiscal performance and perceptions of organizational effectiveness (Brown, 2007). In sampling 1,051 CEO's and board chairs from 713 credit unions, Brown (2005) found that "organizations that are judged to be higher performing also reported having high-performing boards across all dimensions" (p. 317). Another study found that "especially effective organizations (as judged by multiple stakeholders) have more effective boards (as judged by multiple stakeholders)" (Herman & Renz, 2000, p. 146). They also state that, "the extent to which nonprofit organizations are capable depends not only on the skills of the managers, employees and service volunteers in those organizations but also on the commitment and skills of their boards of directors" (pp. 146-147). "In particular, the interpersonal dimension provided a unique explanation of judgments of organizational performance" (Brown, 2005, p. 317).

Jackson and Holland (1998) studied the relationship between the financial performance of 34 private colleges and various board practices, using a board self-assessment instrument they developed called Measuring Board Effectiveness: A Tool for Strengthening Your Board. The results provided strong evidence that effective boards are related to effective organizations. Further, they found that boards participating in a board

training intervention not only improved in scores on the instrument, but also demonstrated a correlation between changes in board self-assessment scores and financial gains.

To a large extent, the literature suggests that nonprofit boards are often ineffective in carrying out their roles and responsibilities (Axelrod, 2005; Herman, 1989, 2009; Ostrower & Stone, 2006). This is not surprising, as much of the research on nonprofit boards has long provided evidence of a *board gap,* which Herman and Van Til (1989) describe as the difference between board performance and the expectations of boards. Herman (2009) attributes the board gap, in part, to the often low level of ownership that board members feel for the organization and acknowledges that the rewards of board service often derive more from the mere membership of sitting on a charity board, than from performance. Axelrod (2005) found that, "the quality and potential contribution of candidates persuaded to serve on a nonprofit board, however, will not automatically create an effective board" (p. 126). The Urban Institute Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy reported that, "adopting new policies will not be sufficient to strengthen board performance and accountability. Our findings repeatedly emphasize the importance of various recruitment criteria and the ability to obtain board members willing and able to carry out board functions" (Ostrower, 2007, p. 23).

Need for Board Development

Strengthening board performance is widely recognized as being a major requisite to the improvement of community service. A study conducted by McKinsey & Company, found that "only 17% of nonprofit boards felt that their boards were as effective as possible," (Jansen & Kilpatrick, 2004, p. 72). The first national representative study of nonprofit governance, conducted in 2007 by The Urban Institute, found that "Substantial

percentages of boards are simply not engaged in various basic governance activities"
(Ostrower, 2007, p. 22). Axelrod (2005) also found that "since the quality and
commitment of those selected to serve will not automatically result in an effective board,
adequate resources must be channeled into the recruitment, education, and retention of
board members" (p. 127).

Board development entails the range of activities related to building and
maintaining a strong board of directors. This includes recruiting and selecting, training
and preparing, monitoring performance, and removing board members (Weisman, 2003).
Additionally, "Adequate resources must be channeled into the education and retention of
board members. This process typically referred to as 'board development' represents the
educational components of trusteeship" (Axelrod, 2005, p. 127). In a 3-year study of the
characteristics and behaviors that distinguish strong boards of higher education from
weak ones, Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1991) report that at least one competency of
stronger boards relates to the educational dimension:

> Effective boards take the necessary steps to ensure that trustees are well informed
> about the institution and about the board's roles, responsibilities, and
> performance. As self-directed learners, strong boards consciously create
> opportunities for trustee education; regularly seek feedback on the board's
> performance; and pause periodically for self-reflection, especially to examine the
> board's mistakes. (p. 26)

Jackson and Holland (1998) found that purposeful board training can influence
board and organizational performance. Similarly, the volunteer management literature
recognizes the importance of training opportunities to strengthen volunteer performance
(Heidrich, 1990). Jackson and Holland (1998) also warn that correlations do not prove
causation but that gains in board performance appear to make a fundamental difference in
the organizations they govern. Further, they maintain that working to improve the

effectiveness of the board offers a useful point of leverage that strengthens the overall performance of the organization.

Planned Development for Board Directors

Green and Griesinger's (1996) effectiveness study of 16 nonprofit organizations revealed that board development was the single most significant area, from the CEO's perspective, distinguishing effective organizations from less effective ones. This consisted of "training new board members, setting specific duties of board members, and evaluating board performance" (p. 396). Nason (1982), in *The Nature of Trusteeship,* strongly urges boards to conduct substantive reviews of their own performance. He suggests that the board and its executives should regularly stand back from their usual preoccupations and reflect on how the board is meeting its responsibilities. Studying board education as a mechanism for regaining public trust after the Enron scandal, Hartmann (2007) determined that director education matters. Similarly, Eadie (2001) in a study of exceptional board leadership recommends the development of ongoing education and training for board members. Finally, the Higgs (2003) report, commissioned by the British government to develop guidelines for effective nonprofit boards, also stresses the value of board director education, stating that,

> Given the varying backgrounds, qualifications and experiences of directors, it is highly desirable that they should all undertake some form of internal of external training; this is particularly important for directors, whether executive or non-executive, with no previous experience. (p. 13)

Ongoing board development, including orientation meetings, retreats, workshops, off-site events, on-line courses, lectures, and conferences are among the many vehicles available for educating and developing board members. Advantages of using regular structured development methods with boards of directors have been widely researched

with positive results (Coulson-Thomas, 2008; Dutton, 2008; Wells, 2005). "They may be smart, seasoned executives, but board directors still can-and should-benefit from training" (Dutton, 2008, p. 49). In *Developing Directors, Key Questions for the Training and Development Community* Coulson-Thomas (2008) finds that many directors and boards do not receive the development they require to be effective in their roles and he explores formal and informal learning options. He suggests the need for formal and informal training, and that both should be consistently applied throughout board members' directorial careers.

In developing an effective director education program, Wells (2005) found that there are three prongs that should be included for both new and existing directors: orientation; in-house meetings with senior management and selected speakers or consultants; and training seminars, courses, and lectures to learn about current and best practices. Axelrod (2005) notes that "meaningful board development is a continuing process rather that a single event" (p. 126) and cites specific kinds of board development activities as most helpful to board members. The top activities include:

1. Orientation for new board members.

2. Retreats, workshops, and conferences.

3. Conducting periodic self-assessments

4. Keeping job descriptions current.

5. Developing a systematic selection process for new board members.

6. Maintaining a governance information system (pp. 127-128).

The top two recommended board development activities listed above were applied for the client population studied in this research. The SBTE participated in orientation for new board members and a board retreat, as discussed below.

Orientation for New Board Members

The process for orienting new board members actually begins when they are invited to serve on the board. This is when it is important to describe the goals of the organizations, the role of the board, and most important, the expectations of individual members (Axelrod, 2005, p. 127). Nelson (1991) points out that

> even old board hands—those who have served on boards of other organizations—will need orientation in your organization, and indeed may understand the value of such a process even more keenly than do first-timers. In any event, all new board members should be invited to go through an orientation process, which should be made as convenient, time-effective, and entertaining as possible. (p. 35)

Organizations that provide formal board orientation programs often deluge individuals with information on the organization and touch lightly, if at all, on the role of the board. Nelson reminds us that board members "need to know the strengths and weaknesses of your nonprofit, how they can contribute and work hard for its benefit, and learn what the organization expects of them" (p. 36). A more recent study of nonprofit boards suggests that board orientation is becoming more common, finding that 75% of organizations held orientation sessions for new board members. However, only 69% of board members perceived that their orientation to the organization was thorough and the findings suggest that some nonprofit organizations could do a better job of orienting new board members. The formal orientation should cover topics as how the board functions, management vs. board duties, board committees, information flow, delegation, and authority (GrantThornton, 2009).

Retreats, Workshops, and Conferences

The professional development of board members can be pursued during special events such as retreats, as well as in sessions within board meetings devoted to exploring single topics in depth or learning from experts. Individual board members might also

attend workshops and conferences on governance-related matters hosted by other organizations (Axelrod, 2005). "Development activities should focus upon honing and demonstrating strategic awareness and perception, thinking, decision making, communication and inter-personal skills" (Coulson-Thomas, 1992, p. 49).

Although ongoing training is considered a best practice in board education, only about half (57%) of organizations offer the board focused training on key organizational issues throughout the year. According to the National Board Governance Survey for Not-for-Profit Organizations, conducted by Grant Thornton in 2009, "boards should consider having an off-site annual retreat to continually enhance board performance," but fewer than half (47%) of respondents said their organizations have an annual board retreat. In addition, the report continues, organizations should "consider having board members complete annual self-assessments of their individual effectiveness" (pp. 5-6).

Retreats are an effective tool to develop board members and should "examine the role of the board, what makes a 'good' director, and what should be done to improve the competence of company directors and the effectiveness of boards" (Coulson-Thomas, 1992, p. 39). Also, "it involves activities such as visioning, delegating to management, and ensuring appropriate capabilities are in place" (p. 33). Eadie (2001) also recommends that boards plan an annual retreat. He states that retreat should be meticulously designed and that board members should be interviewed ahead of time as part of the preparation process. Another study (Hartmann, 2007) found that key areas for director development at a retreat include the interpersonal skills of group decision-making, effective communication and listening skills, conflict resolution skills, influence and impact skills, and conceptual thinking skills.

Significance of Interpersonal Competencies in Boards

John Carver's 1990 Policy Governance model for nonprofit board development is widely used and well researched (Carver, 2006, p. 320). Carver describes ideal board members as exhibiting certain competencies such as: " . . . visionary, able to create alternative futures; are conceptual thinkers; grasp the big picture; are connected to the ownership; demonstrate moral courage; can work as a group; accept and use authority' can allow others to lead" (Carver, 2002, pp. 166-167). Eadie (2001) states that board committees should be chaired by people who: have demonstrated leadership skills, including relating well to people, listening well, being able to plan and organize activities, and being a good facilitator; command the respect of their peers, who will thus be more inclined to follow their lead. Holland and Jackson (1998) identified one key of effective governance as interpersonal competency, defined as: "The board nurtures the development of its members as a group, attends to the board's collective welfare, and fosters a sense of cohesiveness" (p. 160).

The National Center for Nonprofit Boards published an instrument to assess board effectiveness measuring six key competencies of effective boards, based on the work of Chait et al. (1991). One of the six components is interpersonal competency, which they further broke down into seven factors to assess the interpersonal effectiveness of a board:

1. Board biographical information is exchanged to increase familiarity between board members.

2. Specific board meeting norms and standards are established t facilitate communication and the overall effectiveness of board meetings.

3. Opportunities exist for board members to get to know each other on a personal basis.

4. The organization adopts a structure that builds individual board members' sense of involving them in the creation of the vision, mission, and goals for

the organization and engages them in areas that they have the most energy for. The board seeks to resolve differences of opinion through constructive discussion and debate rather than through vote taking.

5. Board members are provided with the same information of important issues.

6. The goals for the board are distinct from the goals of the organization.

7. Mechanisms are adopted for monitoring whether board meetings are meeting the needs of board members.

Hartmann (2007) identifies eight Director Competencies and corresponding definitions. Six of the eight competencies are interpersonal skills, as noted in Table 3.

Table 3

Director Competencies And Definitions

DIRECTOR COMPETENCIES	DEFINITIONS
Knowledge of Board & Role	Understands responsibilities, liabilities & accountabilities. Knowledgeable of best practices/principles.
Financial Acumen	Can read and interpret financial reports.
Group Decision Making Orientation	Can diminish group think tendencies & recognize decision making biases in board discussions.
Process Orientation	Makes decisions/seeks outcomes by consistently applying logical steps.
Conceptual Thinking Skills	Can connect separate issues, see patterns, trends & relationships to explain and interpret information.
Orientation to Resolve Conflict	Ensures conflict is resolved with justice & fairness to restore healthy relationships
Effective Communication and Listening Skills	Gives and receives information with clarity, attentiveness, understanding and perception.
Influence and Impact Skills	Has the skills needed to persuade other board members and key stakeholders to support a desired outcome.

Note. Based on *Continuing education for board directors: An empirical study of its effects on directors, boards, and public trust* (p. 35)*,* by M. Hartmann, 2007, Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of St. Gallen, Toronto, Canada.

Clearly, interpersonal competencies are essential to effective board functioning and command a need for their development. Having reviewed the literature relevant to the important role of Boards of Directors in their organizations and the critical need for

board development, particularly in the area of interpersonal skills, the next section will review the proposed methodological approach. According to BoardSource (2007), formerly The National Center for Nonprofit Boards, for a nonprofit board to be deemed high-performing, the board must "sustain a culture of inquiry" (p. xii). It is in the spirit of inquiry, that we now turn to an understanding of the methodology planned for use in this study—AI.

Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

AI emerged out of the work of David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva (1987) at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1980 a doctoral student named David Cooperrider began researching organizational life through the Cleveland Clinic Project, and was impressed by the level of cooperation, innovation, and social effectiveness he saw (Watkins et al., 2011). Also influenced by Ken Gergen's generative theory, Cooperrider first introduced the term AI in 1987 when he teamed with his professor, Suresh Srivastva to publish Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life. Early AI practitioners relied on an initial set of principles (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), calling for a collective discovery process using:

1. Grounded observation to identify the best of what is,

2. Vision and logic to identify ideals of what might be,

3. Collaborative dialogue and choice to achieve consent about what should be,

4. Collective experimentation to discover what can be.

Most inquiries focused on what gave "life" to the group or organization, eliciting stories, which were then used to identify ideals and purpose in "provocative propositions" statements (Bushe, 2012, p. 12).

The early work in AI (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) lead to further developments in positive organizational studies (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003) and the strengths-based movement (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Cameron & Lavine, 2006). AI is firmly grounded in social constructionist theory (Gergen, 1978, 2009) that holds organizations as social constructs of those who inhabit them. Social constructionism submits that if organizations are imagined and made by human beings, then they can be remade and re-imagined.

> Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an 'unconditional positive question' often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people (Holman & Devane, 2007, p. 245).

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) argued three main points in presenting their ideas. First, they argued against the dominant action research model of problem solving. Secondly, they proposed that organizations were best viewed as socially constructed realities, constrained only by the human imagination, and potently impacted by inquiry. Third, they argued that the most important force for change was new ideas.

According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), AI is both a philosophy and a methodology. Further, it is founded on five principles:

1. The Constructionist Principle states that organizational knowledge and their destiny are interwoven and that to be effective leaders, we must be skilled at understanding, reading, and analyzing organizations as human constructions. We create what we can imagine.

2. The Simultaneity Principle recognizes that inquiry is change and the seeds of change are set by the first questions we ask. Simultaneity realizes that inquiry and change are not separate moments, but are simultaneous. The questions we ask set the stage for what we find and lead to conversations about how the organization will create its future.

3. The Anticipatory Principle acknowledges that what we anticipate impacts what will happen and that the most important resource we have for generating constructive organizational change is our collective imagination.

4. The Poetic Principle fosters the value of story telling as a way of gathering holistic information including facts, feelings, and interpretations of experiences. Also, it suggests that organizations are open books whose stories are constantly being co-authored by the people within the organization.

5. The Positive Principle promotes the belief that a positive approach is a valid basis for learning and is contagious as an antidote to cynicism. Further, it creates powerful momentum for change through hope, inspiration and sheer joy. Human beings and organizations move in the direction of what they inquire about, so widespread inquiry into "being the best organization in the field" has a different long-term sustainable impact than studying "process breakdowns" focused on how those conditions can be cured (Watkins et al., 2011, pp. 72-75).

Based on these five principles, AI takes a different look at change in organizations.

> The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; since we look for problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organization. The tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success. (Hammond, 1998, pp. 6-7)

As stated above, traditional approaches to change focus on identifying and solving core organizational problems and deficits. Gap analysis is an example of one common approach. In contrast, AI focuses and builds on what's working when the organization is at its best (Fitzgerald, Murrell, & Miller, 2003). Table 4 compares traditional problem-solving and AI.

Table 4

From Problem Solving to Appreciative Inquiry

PROBLEM-SOLVING	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY
Felt Need-Identification of problem	Appreciating and Valuing the best of what is
Determination of Causes	Envisioning what might be
Analysis and Potential Solutions	Engaging in Dialogue about what should be
Action Planning	Innovating, what will be
Basic Assumption: An Organization is a Problem to be Solved	Basic Assumption: An Organization is a Mystery to be Embraced

Note. Based on *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (p. 13), by D. L. Cooperrider and D. Whitney, 2005, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. Copyright 2005 by Berrett-Koehler.

At the heart of AI is the *appreciative interview,* a one-on-one dialogue among organization members and stakeholders using questions related to: highpoint experiences, valuing, and what gives life to the organization at its best. Questions such as the following are asked:

1. Describe a time in your organization that you consider a highpoint experience, a time when you were most engaged and felt alive and vibrant.

2. Without being modest, tell me what it is that you most value about yourself, your work, and your organization.

3. What are the core factors that give life to your organization when it is at its best?

4. Imagine your organization 10 years from now, when everything is just as you always wished it could be. What is different? How have you contributed to this dream organization? (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 14)

AI has evolved since its inception. In the 1990s, Fry joined Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) in creating a model to describe AI. This was the beginning of the 4-D model, which persists to this day. "In the late 1990s, the '4-D Model' of AI appeared and has come to be so strongly associated with AI that for many, it is AI" (p. 12). The Four-D model (see Figure 1) consists of:

1. **Discovery:** Mobilizing whole system by engaging all stakeholders in the articulation of strengths and best practices. Identifying "The best of what has been and what is."

2. **Dream:** Creating a clear results-oriented vision in relation to discovered potential and in relation to questions of higher purpose, such as, "What is the world calling us to become?"

3. **Design:** Creating possibility propositions of the ideal organization, articulating an organization design that people feel is capable of drawing upon and magnifying the positive core to realize the newly expressed dream.

4. **Destiny:** Strengthening the affirmative capability of the whole system, enabling it to build hope and sustain momentum for ongoing positive change and high performance.

Note. Adapted from *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (p. 16), by D. L. Cooperrider and D. Whitney, 2005, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. Copyright 2005 by Berrett-Koehler.

Figure 1: The Four-D Model

Various other models have emerged including a fifth D, (Define) as shown in

Figure 2. The 4-Ds plus Define (or Describe) are:

1. **Define** phase during which the inquiry goals, including the framing of the question and the inquiry protocol, the participation strategy, and the project management structure are developed

2. **Discovery** phase during which members from the system develop an in-depth understanding of (a) the "life-giving properties" that are present in those exceptional moments when the organization is performing optimally in human, economic, and organizational terms and (b) of the structures, dynamics, and other associated conditions that allow those "life-giving properties" to flourish.

3. **Dream** phase during which system members create shared images of what their organization would look, be, feel, and function like if those "exceptional moments" and the "life-giving properties" in the system became the norm rather than the exception.

4. **Design** phase during which system members agree on the principles that should guide changes in the organization's sociotechnical architecture and develop the details of whatever changes are thought to be needed, based on the previously articulated guiding principles.

5. **Destiny** phase, sometimes called the Delivery phase (and more recently the **"Deploy"** stage), during which the organization evolves into the preferred future image created during the Dream phase using the work done in the Design phase. (Watkins et al., 2011, pp. 36-37)
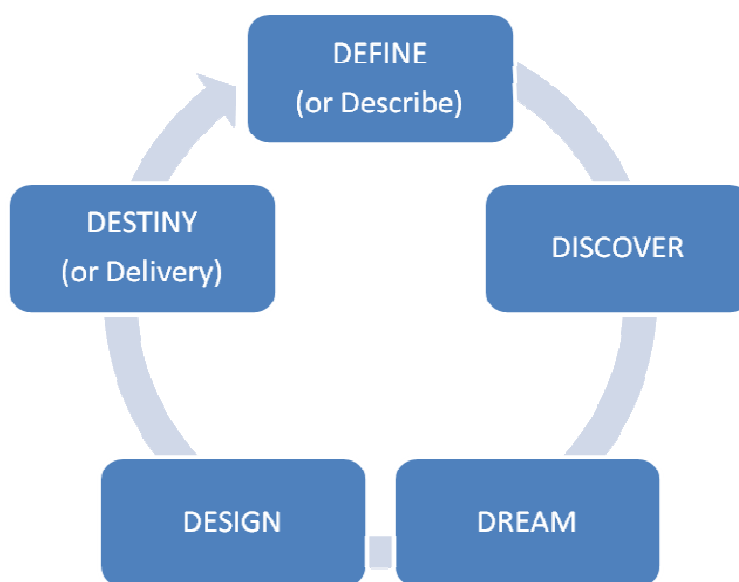
Note. Adapted from *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (2nd ed., p. 227), by J. M. Watkins, B. J. Mohr, and R. Kelly, 2011, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 2011 by John Wiley & Sons.

Figure 2: The 5-D Model

Other variations include the Four-I Model, developed by Mohr & Jacobsgaard, shown in Figure 3. The Four-I Model includes the stages of initiate, inquire, imagine, and innovate. These stages are described in Table 5.
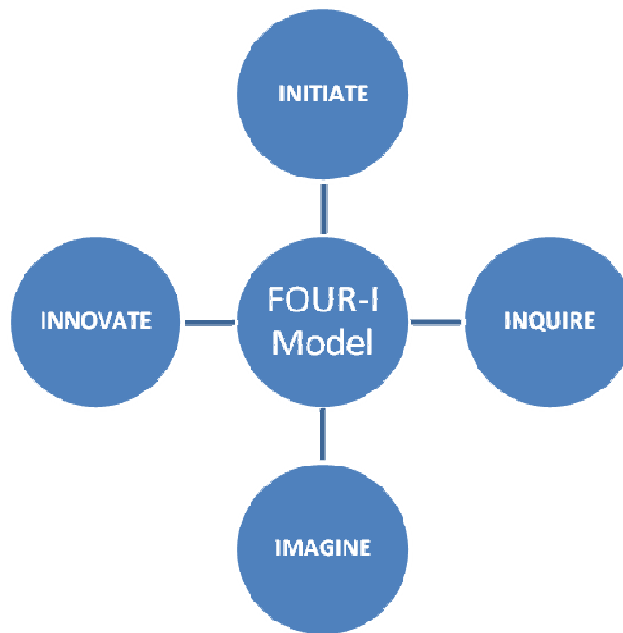
Note. Adapted from *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (2nd ed., p. 91), by J. M. Watkins, B. J. Mohr, and R. Kelly, 2011, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 2011 by John Wiley & Sons.

Figure 3: The Mohr/Jacobsgaard Four—I Model

Table 5

Four-I Model

Initiate	Introduce key stakeholders to AI Create temporary project structures Determine overall project focus Develop preliminary project strategy
Inquire	Conduct generic interviews Develop customized interview protocol; pilot and revise protocol Maximize the number of client system members interviewed
Imagine	Collate and share interview data and pull out themes (life-giving forces) Develop provocative propositions (as grounded vision of the desired future) Consensually validate provocative propositions with as many members as possible
Innovate	Engage maximum number of members in conversations that enable exploration of and commitment to new action, roles, relationships or design modifications seen as important to support implementation of the provocative propositions Implement the design changes

Note. Based on *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (p. 91), by J. M. Watkins and B. J. Mohr, 2001, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Another variation is the ABC Inquiry Model (see Figure 4). The ABC Inquiry

Model includes a life-giving story, networks, and key areas for inquiry. The model is

further described in Table 6.
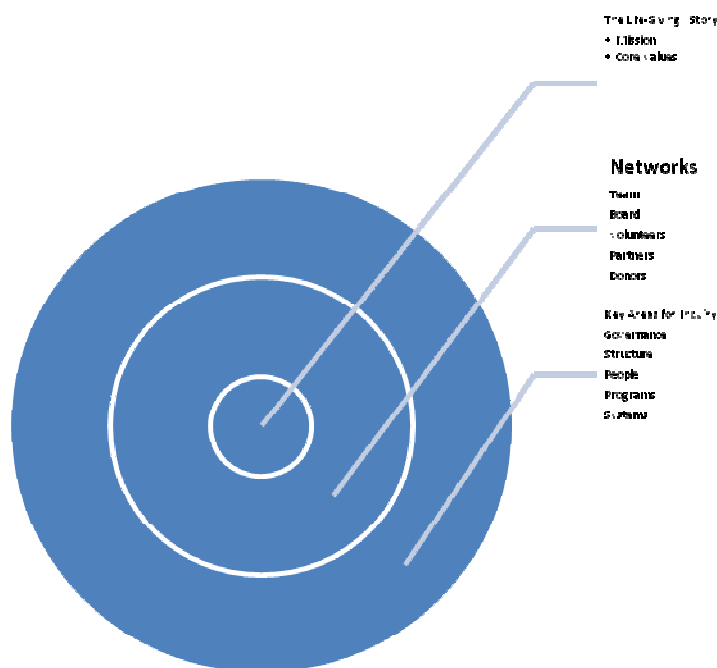
Note. Based on *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (p. 244-245), by J. M. Watkins and B. J. Mohr, 2001, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Figure 4. ABC Inquiry Model

Table 6

ABC Inquiry Model

Stage	Activities
The Life-Giving Story	What will our ultimate impact be? What is our mission? What are our core values?
Networks	The organization is seen as a network of key stakeholders who gather around the desired impact, values and mission to accomplish tasks that lead to social transformation.
Key areas for inquiry	Inquiry into areas that enable groups to discover the life-giving forces, success stories, and generative spirit of their organization

Note. Adapted from *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (2nd ed., p. 243), by J. M. Watkins, B. J. Mohr, and R. Kelly, 2011, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 2011 by John Wiley & Sons.

Additional applications of AI continue to be developed to fit emerging needs,

sustaining the commitment that AI is a philosophy and not just a methodology or a series

of steps to complete. The philosophy of AI manifests itself in many forms. Each of these models, and others, represent a variation of AI, yet each maintains the essential elements of AI, adhering to the principles of the constructionist, positivist, and poetic, applying simultaneity and the anticipatory, while fostering generative change.

The validity of appreciative inquiry. AI is a widely accepted and growing change management paradigm for organizations, communities and even nations (Sharma, 2008). "After 20 years it is abundantly clear that AI, when skillfully done with proper sponsorship and resources, is a potent planned transformational change process" (Boje, Burnes, & Hassad, 2011, p. 101). As AI continues into its third decade, it has been variously defined as a noun (action research, practice, method, approach, intervention, philosophy, worldview) and as a verb (search, discover, locate, highlight), offering a broad range of positive imagery (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). AI has been used by companies, governments, religious institutions, school districts, military services, and nonprofit organizations. The AI Commons website (2013) cites numerous case stories on the use of AI, including Verizon, Ernst & Young, Wendy's International, Nutrimental, Cleveland Clinic, Hunter-Douglas, and the country of Nepal.

Some examples of AI illustrate the validity of the approach. In May 1999, British Airways embarked on a whole-system process using AI to transform their organization's culture. Initially involving 50 people, a 2-day core team meeting identified four affirmative topics. Over a 6-month period, appreciative interviews were conducted with all 1200 British Airways employees in North America, and 3 months later, 150 people gathered to design the transformation of their organization. Focused on each of the four affirmative topics, they created a process now used throughout British Airways called The Power of Two (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). One result of AI at British Airways

was in addressing the concern of lost baggage, an issue costing the airline money, time, and goodwill. Using the AI model, employees focused, not on what was wrong (lost baggage), but rather on what they envisioned, in this case more exceptional arrival experiences. Through an appreciative interview process, employees were asked to "describe times when customers had an exceptional arrival experience" (p. 18). This inquiry lead to the discovery of a number of best practices, then implemented at British Airways as part of their quest for world-class service.

Roadway Express, a leading transporter of industrial, commercial, and retail goods, based in Akron, Ohio, began holding AI Summits in 2001 with impressive results. In two years the stock price rose from around $14 per share to over $54 per share. (Before merging with Yellow Cab, whose stock was $24). Following the merger, the combined company was valued at around $42 per share because of the strength of Roadways improvements). Beyond stock prices, operating ratios were the lowest in years, and measures of morale, trust, clarity in focus, vision, and commitment levels were well documented in survey data (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). One notable outcome was demonstrated by the dockworkers and drivers who came up with 12 cost-cutting, revenue-generating ideas during an AI Summit. One of the most ambitious was to have each of the 32 drivers deliver just one more customer order each hour. Using management data, they calculated that the additional daily shipments would generate about $1 million a year in operating costs. Several months later, Roadway Corporation reported that revenues for the fourth quarter were $1,074,110,000, up 25.7% over the prior year (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

In January 2000, the Under Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Jerry Hutin, began a process to explore the Navy/Marine Corps of 2020. The central goal was to

attract and maintain great people and develop them into leaders. After a 3-day steering committee workshop, interview teams were given approval to seek examples of outstanding leadership. Recognizing that more lower-level people need to make decisions based on growing quantities of information, the US Navy was looking for a way to help potential leaders know how to function well in an ever-changing environment. They decided to jump-start the change process using AI. A 2-year process in AI culminated in an invitation from the chief naval officer, Admiral Vern Clerk, for 260 people ranking from seaman to admiral to attend a 4-day summit on leadership, where participants wore civilian clothes to minimize hierarchy and create a more open environment for dialogue. Tangible results include 30 pilot projects such as 360-degree feedback, e-mentoring, a leadership portal website, a center for positive change, and additional summit work (Barrett, Nystrom, & Sugarman, 2001).

On the international level, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan convened the Global Compact Leaders Summit at the United Nations Headquarters to explore the global struggle for corporate responsibility using AI. Bertand Collomb, Chairman of Lafarge, an international materials firm, commented, "The objective is not to select a happy–few, excellent companies, put them on a pedestal and celebrate their merits. The objective is to engage as many companies as possible in a drive for progress, ultimately involving the whole business world" (United Nations Global Compact Office, 2004, p. 6). An indication of the overall results of the Global Compact can be gained from three of the 14 key outcomes of the summit, which include:

1. The pledge of 20 major financial companies, (representing $6 trillion in assets) to begin integrating social, environmental and governance issues into investment analysis and decision-making.

2. The announcement that 10 stock exchanges embarking on a Global Compact awareness-raising campaign with their listed companies.

3. The UN Administration announcement that the Global Compact's principles will be adopted in key areas such as procurement, investment management, facilities management, and human resources. (United Nations Global Compact Office, 2004, pp. 17-18)

The efficacy of AI as a transforming mechanism in organizations was explored by Bushe and Kassam (2005). Their analysis of 20 cases using AI for changing social systems looked for the presence or absence of transformational change and the utilization of AI principles. All cases began by collecting positive stories, used the 4-D model, and adhered to the five principles and practices of AI articulated by Cooperrider and Whitney (2001).

> While only 35% of the 20 cases studied showed transformational outcomes, 100% of the cases with transformational outcomes resulted in new ideas and knowledge, transforming accepted beliefs of system members. In the other cases, the focus was on changing existing organizational practices and implementing centrally agreed upon targets and plans. (p. 161)

At the time of its publication, this paper was the only empirical assessment of AI published in a research journal and was runner up for the Douglas McGregor memorial award in 2005.

In another article, Bushe (2010) notes that the difference in the seven transformational cases was that they focused on change that was not carried out by teams or implemented from the top. Rather, the transformational groups identified goals that were generative, that is they adopted an improvisational approach to the action phase, in which negatives were explored. The difference from a problem solving approach was that instead of asking people to explore and elaborate on what they don't like, they were asked about what was missing and what they wanted more of. Bushe found that the result

is more generative by asking, "What is their image of what the organization ought to be that is creating a gap between what they want and what they see?" (pp. 7).

Identified trends in action research show significant growth in action research in general and in AI in particular (Dick, 2004, p. 425). In his review, Dick notes, "an increasing sense of community among action researchers and growing attention to the practical details of participation and involvement" (p. 425). In his follow-up work in 2010, Dick continues his examination of action research, reviewing AI and other methodologies, concluding that, "participation and social justice are current themes in the action research literature and elsewhere," and that "it's a turbulent world" in need of "people who engage directly with that world and seek to understand and change it" (Dick, 2010, pp. 134-135). The goals and applications of AI closely align with these identified themes and trends.

Critiques of appreciative inquiry. Many OD consultants and change management agents use aspects of AI in their practice. A downside of AI's popularity is that many different things are called AI, diluting the general understanding and leading to misunderstanding about what it is and isn't. One criticism of AI is that, by focusing solely on the strengths of an organization, it creates a "shadow process," defined as "censored emotional and/or cognitive content" (Fitzgerald, Oliver, & Hoxsey, 2010). The criticism is that, as AI casts the light on the positive in organizations, it also creates a shadow, an expectation or norm that only positive is to be discussed. For example, Fineman (2006) argues that,

> In exclusively favoring positive narratives, AI fails to value the opportunities for positive change that are possible from negative experiences such as embarrassing events, periods of anger, anxiety fear, or shame…moreover, in privileging positive talk, it fails to engage with the emotionally ambiguous circumstances of

the workplace, such as when individuals feel torn between competing possibilities and differing voices. (p. 275)

Similarly, Bushe and Kassam (2005) expressed concern that:

As AI attains fad status less thoughtful practitioners and managers will go about collecting stories of the positive using a 4-D model and think that is all there is to appreciative inquiry. If so, we find many end up with the kinds of questions Golembiewski (1998) has asked, pointing out that conventional action researchers typically do ask about the positive as well as the negative, and that asking about both seems to be a fuller inquiry than just focusing on what works (p. 177).

Still others, including Johnson (2007) and Kolodziejski (2004) call for creating opportunities for dialogue about and exploration of the relations between AI and the shadow. Also, Grant (2006) in working with boards of trustees responded to the concern with an enhanced definition of *appreciate*: "to know, to be conscious of, to take full or sufficient account of," concluding that "application of these critical processes contributes an element of critique, further informing my analysis of AI as a research process" (p. 286).

After exploring the concern of a shadow process inhibiting full inquiry, Fitzgerald et al. (2010), in their article, *AI as a Shadow Process,* conclude

practitioners can create a greater awareness of all of the AI principles, and of the Wholeness and Freedom principle in particular. Welcome the whole person—not only the parts that we may see as 'positive'—and allow people the freedom to choose whether and how they will participate; this is fundamental to nurturing authentic and full appreciation. (pp. 230-231)

Summary

In summary, the literature review suggests that the research question posed by this study is worthy of research and analysis, highlighting the value of focusing on the specific needs of nonprofit boards of directors and the importance of effective boards to their organizations. Consistently, the concern for better development of nonprofit boards of directors is mentioned in the literature. Abundant writings make clear the need to

purposefully develop board members for their roles and the critical importance of improving their interpersonal competencies to fulfill those roles. There is considerable data about the use of AI methodology as an effective change management tool, yet more research data is needed that applies AI to the education of nonprofit boards of directors, as well as in the application of AI for strengthening essential competencies. Examining the impact of AI in increasing the interpersonal effectiveness of nonprofit boards of directors will provide insight regarding the potential benefit on the functioning of social and civic organizations that impact every dimension of community life.

AI has been used with a wide variety of groups and topics as a focused change approach. The development of board directors requires deliberate and consistent effort and AI provides the methodology to build upon existing strengths in the board. Creating a solid foundation of interpersonal competencies can equip a board to deal with the challenges it has yet to encounter and the use of AI to establish that foundation is an approach with merit, viability, and perhaps most importantly, hope. hapter Three discusses the methodology used in this study to research the impact of AI on the interpersonal competencies of the SBTE board.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study addresses the following research question: What is the impact of AI intervention in the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, using the case of the SBTE?

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in the study. Further, it describes the client organization and participant sample, data collection procedures, interventions utilized, and the plan for analysis of the data.

Research Design

This study builds upon the existing literature on interpersonal effectiveness of nonprofit boards and identifies additional directions for research on the topic. In conducting a case study, the researcher elected to use a qualitative approach as "the qualitative approach deals more with cases" (Punch, 2005, p. 238). Other strengths and advantages of qualitative methods which made it well suited for this study include its "sensitivity to context and process, to lived experience and to local groundedness, as the researcher tries to get closer to what is being studied. It aims for in-depth and holistic understanding, in order to do justice to the complexity of social life" (p. 238). Qualitative studies use methods that are both interactive and humanistic, focusing on the context within which the examined phenomena occur (Miles & Huberman, 2004). In this case of the SBTE, qualitative data was gathered before and after an intervention, then analyzed to determine the value of the AI approach in developing the interpersonal competencies of the SBTE board.

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is unique due to the interactive nature of the inquiry. Unlike quantitative studies, where the researcher is seen as an

impersonal, external observer, in a qualitative study, the researcher is viewed as inextricably linked to the research and the participants—influencing and being influenced by the investigation (Punch, 2005).

The data collected in qualitative studies are primarily the words and stories of the interviewees, allowing the researcher to capture more breadth and depth of participants' experience than in quantitative data gathering (Miles & Huberman, 2004). Analysis in qualitative studies is also fundamentally interpretive (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Data collection through interviews has both plusses and minuses. One challenge of interviewing is an increased chance of the researcher leading the participant. Another is the tremendous volume of information that can be generated, creating potential difficulties in analysis. Additionally, in the process of data analysis, the researcher is challenged to be subjective, interpretive and scientific at the same time (Punch, 2005). Miles and Huberman (2004) warn "the apparent simplicity of qualitative data masks a good deal of complexity, requiring plenty of care and self-awareness on the part of the researcher" (p. 10).

Qualitative interviews are considered fitting for this study and were conducted before and after a board retreat to assess changes in board interpersonal effectiveness.

Sampling

In this study the sample was the entire population of the SBTE board of directors, including the executive director. Additionally, three community stakeholders were interviewed and two of them attended the intervention board retreat.

Qualitative studies generally tend to small sample size, due to the depth of the investigation. Punch suggests that research should continue until theoretical saturation is reached and is necessary to ensure that the theory is conceptually complete. In a meta-

analysis of qualitative studies, saturation tended to occur within the first twelve interviews, with the basic themes presenting in as early as six interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Organization setting. The client organization of this study is the board of directors of the SBTE, a member of the California Federation of Time Banks. The SBTE is a new organization, founded in May 2012 by Pepperdine MSOD graduate Laura Lee, who currently serves as its Executive Director. The SBTE serves three counties in northern California, San Benito County, Santa Clara County and Monterey County. With four current board members and a goal to add 3-5 more, Laura conducted a Blue Ribbon Panel Event in October to recruit volunteers, recruit new members, and add new talent to the board. The SBTE also applied for fiscal sponsorship by a local agency in Monterey County to provide the SBTE with their nonprofit funding status, liability insurance, and accounting operations.

The four goals stated by the Executive Director of the SBTE in participating in this study were for her new board of directors to:

1. Increase the board's knowledge of one another.

2. Build a cohesive board where all voices are heard.

3. Develop a spirit of trust between board members and the Executive Director.

4. Begin a Strategic Plan—getting a clear focus shared by all.

Subject selection. Telephone interviews were conducted with all board members and the executive director. This consisted of three board members, the executive director, who is also a board member, and three community stakeholders invited by the executive director to participate in the retreat. In discussion with the executive director, it was decided that stakeholder participation in the retreat would be valuable in providing a

broader community perspective and the stakeholders were targeted as potential board members. Two community stakeholders participated fully in the interview process, attended the AI intervention retreat, and have elected to continue as board members with the SBTE. Henceforth, the community stakeholders will be referred to as board members. One additional community stakeholder participated in the pre-interview only and one board member participated in the pre-interview and intervention but has since resigned from board membership. This community stakeholder and the former board member were not involved in the post-interviews.

Subject demographics. Three board directors are founding members of the SBTE, having been involved with the organization since its inception in May 2012. The executive director is one of the board members and is also the founder of the organization. In addition to those described above, four new board members are being recruited to provide more resources and better geographic representation in the three counties served by the SBTE. The board is currently comprised of four females, and one male. Board ethnicity is three Caucasian, one Hispanic, and one East Indian. The oldest participant is 60 years of age and the youngest is 26 years old. According to the organization by-laws, all members of the board must live in one of the three counties served by the SBTE. Currently five live in San Benito County, zero live in Santa Clara County, and zero live in Monterey County.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher conducted AI interviews with the board of the SBTE. The pre-interviews were followed by a board retreat intervention using AI methodology, and AI post-interviews to assess changes. All members of the SBTE board, the executive director, and three community stakeholders participated in pre-interviews. One

community stakeholder did not attend the retreat and one board member left the board

prior to the post-interviews, so these participants' responses were not included. A total of

five participants, comprised of three board members (including the ED) and two

community stakeholders, completed all phases of the study and contributed to the data

that was compiled and analyzed.

Interview process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone, and

each was recorded and transcribed. Interviews were conversational in style and guided by

the series of questions outlined in the Appreciative Interview Pre-Assessment Question

Guide (see Appendix A). The data from this exploratory research was obtained through

seven interviews over a two-week period in October 2012. Interviewees included three

existing board members, three potential board members/community stakeholders, and

one staff member, the executive director. Each interview was approximately 30-45

minutes in length, with one exception. The executive director interview lasted

approximately two hours. The researcher took written notes on all the participants'

responses during each telephone interviews to capture the general ideas expressed during

the interview. Opening questions included those found in Table 7. Interpersonal

competency questions included those found below in Table 8.

Table 7

Pre-Interview: Appreciative Interview Questions

Do you have any questions before we begin?
I'm interested to know what first attracted you to become involved with the board of the San Benito Time Exchange. Why is it important to you? What do you value about it?
Please tell me about what has been the best part of your experience with the San Benito Time Exchange. What has made it worthwhile?
Imagine the San Benito Time Exchange two years from now. What is happening? What is your vision for the organization? What do you see it becoming?
Describe what you consider to be the greatest assets or what is most valuable about the Board.
What is your vision for the Board of the SBTE? How do you see it at its best?

Table 8

Pre-Interview: Interpersonal Competency Questions

Board effectiveness is often impacted greatly by the board's interpersonal style, which includes things like Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences, Making Decisions, Influencing. I'd like to learn a bit more about those things within the SBTE Board. To start with, I know you've only been together a short while, how well do you know one another?
Would you please tell me a story or describe an incident that demonstrates the communication style of the Board.
Please tell me about a time the board resolved difference that came up and how it was worked out.
How does the group make its best decisions? What process is used & how is it working?
Tell me about a time when the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?
Describe how you see your role in helping create the reality of the board interacting with one another at its highest and best level.
Would you please discuss how your talents would be utilized at their highest and best use?
Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

After the telephone interviews, the researcher listened to the recordings again to clarify and deepen understanding of interviewee responses. Themes were identified from the pre-interviews and these data, with additional input from the executive director, were used to design the agenda for the SBTE board retreat held on October 18, 2012 in Hollister, California.

Following the retreat and after approximately two months of additional board functioning, the researcher conducted a second set of interviews to collect comparative data, using the Re-Assessment Interview Question Guide (see Appendix B).

Interview questions. The pre-interview questions (see Tables 7 and 8 and Appendix A) were designed to solicit the following input from retreat participants:

1. Goals for the retreat

2. Reasons inspiring their involvement in the organization

3. Perceived organizational strengths

4. Perceptions of current interpersonal effectiveness

5. Initial visioning ideas for the board and the organization

An additional process goal of the researcher was to establish contact with and to begin building rapport with each individual board member and the executive director, prior to the retreat. Participants were informed that their responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that a report summary will be made available to them at the conclusion of the study. The second set of interview questions (see Tables 9 and 10), and also in the Re-Assessment Question Interview Guide (see Appendix B), was used to measure changes in interpersonal effectiveness competencies of the board.

Table 9

Re-Assessment: Appreciative Interview Questions

Do you have any questions before we begin?
Please tell me about your experience of the San Benito Time Exchange board retreat and your time on the board since then.
Please describe any changes in your role on the board of the since we first spoke
What most interests or continues to motivate you to stay involved with the board? What is most valuable to you about investing your energy in the SBTE board?
Tell me about has been the best part of your experience at this point in your time with the board of the SBTE?
What is your overall sense of the board at this time, especially as compared to when we first spoke? What do you now consider to be the greatest assets of the board?
Imagine the San Benito Time Exchange two years from now. What is happening? What is your vision for the organization? What do you see it becoming at its very best?

Table 10

Re-Assessment: Interpersonal Competency Questions

As we have discussed, board effectiveness is greatly impacted by the board's interpersonal competency, which includes things like Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences, Making Decisions, Influencing. I'd like to learn more about how you see those things within the SBTE Board now.
Please tell me about how well you know one another at this point in he life of the board?
Tell a story or describe an incident demonstrating the communication style of the board.
Please describe how the board resolves any differences that have come up.
How does the group makes its best decisions? What process is used & how is it working?
Tell me about a time when the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?
Describe how you see your role in helping create the reality of the board interacting with one another at its highest and best level.
Would you please discuuss with me how your talents would be utilized at their highest and best use?
Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

Confidentiality and Consent Procedures

Institutional approval to conduct the proposed research study was obtained through the SBTE and Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board. In addition, the researcher successfully completed and passed the web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants" by the National Institute of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research.

The participating organization, represented by the executive director, and all participants signed a consent form before undergoing any interview (see Appendix C). All participant responses to interviews were kept confidential. Participant transcripts were identified by code and only aggregate themes are reported in the results. Individual anonymous quotes are included as examples of themes, however.

Anticipated Results

In the study of this researcher, a series of Appreciative Interviews and a board retreat intervention using AI methodology served multiple purposes for the SBTE. Four major results were anticipated:

1. Increased measures of interpersonal competency in the areas of: knowledge of one another, communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, and ability to influence one another.

2. Increased measures of non-interpersonal nature, such as clearer mission and consensus agreement of core values.

In addition, it is anticipated that the AI intervention will provide:

1. Orientation for new board members—There is a need for new board members to learn more about the organization, it's Executive Director and their fellow board members, which was expected to occur during the planned retreat.

2. Deeper Engagement for all board members - It was anticipated that board members, both new and old, would become more interconnected and more invested in the future of the organization.

3. Ongoing board development for all board members—An expected increase in the development of interpersonal competencies would create a solid base for planning, goal-setting and building a shared vision of the organization which would benefit all board and staff of the organization.

4. Established baseline for continued board self-assessment—A further anticipated advantage of a board retreat was the creation of a baseline of data for continued board assessment and development of interpersonal effectiveness.

It is also anticipated that these results will be able to be generalized to the field of non-profit board development, and specifically, to the interpersonal effectiveness of nonprofit boards.

Data Analysis Plan

The data collected in the first round of interviews prior to the retreat were analyzed using the following procedures:

1. The researcher organized the data collected, including transcripts of all interviews and handwritten notes taken during interviews.

2. After reading through the interview notes several times, the researcher generated categories and themes.

3. Answers for each question and participant were then sorted according to the themes.

4. Themes were reviewed to evaluate wording and understanding. Themes were reworded, combined or expanded as needed.

5. The information was then synthesized into an overall summary.

Data collected in a second round of interviews following the retreat were analyzed using the same procedure, with two additional steps:

1. The data from the first and second round of interviews was compared to assess changes in the content reported by the participants.

2. The synthesized data was assessed for application to the field of nonprofit board development and nonprofit board interpersonal effectiveness.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the research design and methods used to address the question of the impact of AI interventions on non-profit boards. The study used a semi-structured interview design with six people (board members, stakeholders, and the executive director) representing the SBTE. Participants were asked about their experiences of the SBTE board, and in particular, about their experiences regarding the interpersonal effectiveness of the board, both before and after the AI interventions. Content analysis was used to analyze the data, which are reported in chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Findings

This study examines the potential impact of AI interventions on the development

of interpersonal competencies in non-profit boards of directors, using the case of the

SBTE. Chapter 4 describes the relevant outcomes of the interventions undertaken during

the fall and winter 2012-2013, with the SBTE, a nonprofit organization in Hollister,

California. The researcher conducted a case study with this nonprofit to assess the

interpersonal competencies of the SBTE board of directors before and after AI

intervention and to determine the impact of AI intervention on the development of

interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards. In this chapter the findings in response

are presented.

The study included:

1. A series of pre-intervention interviews with the entire board population of the
   SBTE, including the Executive Director

2. A full day board retreat, including two potential board members.

3. A series of post-intervention interviews with the board, conducted two months
   after the AI board retreat.

Findings discussed in this chapter include: pre-interview results; a summary of

outcomes from the board intervention conducted by the researcher in October-November,

2012, a one-day board retreat in November 2012; post-interview results conducted in

January, 2013, and a summary of changes in the organization and board during the three

month consulting period as described by the researcher and SBTE's executive director.

Summary of Pre-Interview Results

Prior to the retreat, four board members and three community stakeholders

participated in telephone interviews with the researcher to provide their perceptions of the

SBTE board using the script presented in Appendix A. Interviewees were asked 12 questions by the researcher/facilitator to better understand the organization from their view, assess the interpersonal competency of the board, and gain input into the retreat goals.

Responses included getting to know each other better, becoming a more unified group, gaining a better understanding of time banking, as well as the desire to create a clearer mission, vision and strategy that relied less on the executive director. With a new board that had only been operating for six months, six out of seven interviewees expressed a need to know each other better in order to create a more cohesive board. Although the three community stakeholders had limited or no information about the board's interpersonal competencies, three out of four board members stated a concern that they were too reliant on the executive director (ED). Four out of four board members expressed a concern regarding lack of nonprofit board experience. Two out of four mentioned the need for better follow through after board meetings, and three out of four noted that the board lacked a clear vision. Three out of four board members also identified a need to gain a better understand of time banking.

Interviewees also spoke of strengths they saw in the organization, including the passion of the executive director (3 out of 4), their commitment to the executive director (3 out of 4), their interest in community service (2 out of 4), and potential for the SBTE to provide for the needs of the community (3 out of 4).

Key Themes of the Pre-Interview Assessment

Using Hartmann's (2007) five interpersonal competencies (knowledge of one another, communication style, conflict resolution, decision-making mode, and the ability

to influence each other) to assess the interview data and ascribe a subjective rating for

each, the interview results revealed the following key themes:

1. A low level of **knowledge of other board members,** as indicated by member comments.

2. A **communication style** that indicated a high level of reliance on the Executive Director, a lack of responsiveness and limited follow through,

3. A **conflict resolution method** marked by indifference and a low level of involvement in board members' interaction.

4. A **decision-making mode** marked by high reliance on the Executive Director as indicated by waiting to hear from the Executive Director and then following her lead.

5. A limited **ability to positively influence one another**. Rather, the common mode showed consistent deference to the Executive Director.

Table 11 represents the results for the interpersonal competencies assessment of

the SBTE prior to the board retreat intervention and provides qualitative data in support

of the pre-intervention assessment. Key quotes by board members, executive director,

and community stakeholders that are relevant to the themes also are cited.

Other Themes from Pre-Interviews

Although the interpersonal competencies were the prime focus of this study, other

results gleaned from the qualitative data gathered in the pre-interviews pertained to the

development of the AI intervention and its potential impact on the increased effectiveness

of interpersonal competencies.

Other results of the pre-interviews indicated that the SBTE is facing typical

challenges of a young organization. It was founded just six months prior to the interviews

and is seeking sponsorship and funding sources. The SBTE is led by an executive

director/founder of the organization who is highly committed to the project. There is no

additional support staff at this time and the ED

Table 11

Pre-Interview: Qualitative Data Support For Key Themes for Interpersonal Competencies Of The San Benito Time Exchange

KEY COMPETENCIES	POST-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT	RELEVANT QUOTES
Knowledge of One Another In response to the question: How well do you know one another?	**Low - Very Little or No Knowledge of One Another**	*"We don't know each other well at all. On a scale of 1-10, I would probably say a 1. Except I know Laura." (The ED) It would be better if we knew each other."*
		"They don't know each other well enough yet. They've spent all of about five hours together. They are at the icing on the cake in discovering what each other are about. They only have very basic information about one another."
		"Our knowledge of one another is pretty limited. The ED knows everyone, but none of the rest of us know one another."
Communication Style In response to the query: Please share a story or describe an incident that demonstrates the communication style of the Board.	**Led By Executive Director, Poor Follow-Up, Often Unresponsive**	*"Oh boy, our communication style is mostly driven by the ED, mostly by email or her trying to keep us communicating. We never pick up a phone to discuss things and at meetings, we all sit around like bumps on a log, nodding our heads. Nothing gets done and I feel like if things don't change the project won't fly."*
		"We need to develop a greater willingness to share diverse opinions. I see the board as having one extrovert, two omniverts, and two introverts. The introverts nod when others make forceful recommendations and I think we need more disagreement and diverse opinions."
		"I think communication is the most important part of any team. It's important to speak up and not talk behind others' backs."
		I've sent emails and nagged people three times for a response and still got nothing."
Conflict-Resolution Method In response to the query: Please tell me about a time the board resolved a difference that came up and how it was worked out.	**Indifference**	*"We haven't done much to have differences. Maybe with the by-laws. The ED gave us some general by-laws of another NFP and the task to go through them to use on our own by-laws. When we came back with our notes, we didn't talk out any differences. The ideas just got shoved in a folder without open communication. I don't think it's a crime to state a position, but most of the board just shrugs their shoulders instead."*

KEY COMPETENCIES	POST-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT	RELEVANT QUOTES
		"We really haven't had any conflict because people are not totally vested."
		"One time we had a difference of opinion about whether we need criminal background checks for new Time Bank members and one board members was adamant that we do. Two others took it as an action item and found out that it would cost $25 per person. We also checked with other Time Banks, and discovered that they handle it by doing orientation interviews and self-selecting out. It was resolved the through sharing of new information and assurances of references."
Decision-Making Mode In response to the query: How would you say the group makes its best decisions? What process is used and how is that working**?**	**Reliance On the Executive Director**	*"So far, I'd say we have made our best decisions by raising issues, gathering data (I do this as the ED,) presenting options and group decision."*
		"We haven't gotten to that point yet and I'm getting disillusioned." *"I have no real answer, I can't think of anything in terms of making good decisions."*
Ability to Influence One Another In response to the query: Tell me about a time the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?	**Deference to the Executive Director**	*"As the ED, I have most often been the facilitator & agenda creator. I bring up issues, ask for ideas, and try to get decisions made. I would like to rotate that function to bring more ownership. I don't want to be the Mother. I want to make myself obsolete and see the board become self-sufficient."*
		"I haven't seen the board interacting well yet. At the last meeting, one member called in on the phone and we lost contact and didn't even notice. I personally feel guarded and like the least qualified board member."
		"I'm the ED, and they thought I was nuts, but I started asking board members to share (something personal) for two minutes at the beginning of board meetings and I found others responding to one another."

currently holds a non-paid position. No one on the board of directors has had prior board

experience. Three out of four board members represent other organizations in the

community and three out of four expressed the opinion that there is a need for the time

bank in their community. The board has filled four out of nine board seats and plans to

recruit additional board members to complete the board.

Summary of Retreat

On November 15, 2012, the SBTE board attended a full day board retreat using

AI facilitated by this researcher. Based on the data analysis from the pre-interviews and

in collaboration with the SBTE executive director, the goals of the retreat were developed

to:

> Build a strong, cohesive foundation for the SBTE, based on effective
> interpersonal competencies, using AI.
>
> Deepen the board's knowledge and appreciation of one another.
>
> Increase board knowledge of and commitment to Time Banking.
>
> Identify and enhance the Life-Giving Story of the SBTE board, that is, to
> determine its Mission, Core Values, and Vision.
>
> Establish a basic core of shared knowledge for the interpersonal competencies of
> board knowledge of one another; board communication; board decision-making,
> board conflict-resolution, board influence of one another (Hartmann, 2007).

The retreat included sessions on team-building, time banking history, philosophy, and

practices, an introduction to the principles of AI, and AI interviews as well as basic

communication skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution training, and the

development of mission, core values, and vision for the SBTE (see agenda in Appendix

D). Lunch was provided in a cooperative fashion as a potluck from the board, and a full

day of interaction, discussion, and decision-making was conducted. Attendance was

comprised of four board members, including the executive director, and two community

stakeholders who were also considering joining the SBTE board of directors. Two additional community stakeholders had committed to attend but did not: One absence was due to illness and one was because of a family crisis. The total number of attendees was six, plus the facilitator.

Retreat evaluation responses to the question (see Appendix E): Rate your satisfaction with the retreat on a scale of 1-10, reflected a mean average of 9.0. Comments included in response to the question, "What are two words to best describe the retreat" were: Inspiring and Educational; Informative and Helpful; Focused and Growthful; Generative and Positive Commitment; Defined and Focus; On Point. Themes reflected in response to the question, "What was the most useful or valuable part of the retreat" included:

1. More cohesiveness of the board,

2. Getting to know one another better, and

3. Focus on the mission and core values.

The most common themes in response to the question, "What to you intend to do as a result of the retreat," were:

1. Invest more time in the board

2. Continue community and board education, and

3. Foster more community involvement.

Summary and Key Themes of Post-Interview Results

Post-interview results after the intervention revealed some changes in the interpersonal competencies measured.

Knowledge of board members. Originally, assessing the SBTE board as having a low level of knowledge of other board members, there seems to be a significant

increase in board member's knowledge, as four out of four board members reported knowing one another better, leading to a greater sense of board cohesion. Based on these results, the researcher assessed the board as having moved from a low level of knowledge of one another to a moderate level. For example, the board member who stated in the post-interview that, "We do know one another more on a level of appreciating one another. The group participation activities we did at the retreat really gave me a better sense of the others on the board," and another who said that, "The retreat built great camaraderie." It is also anticipated that the foundation of knowledge and interest initiated at the board retreat will deepen as the board moves forward together with greater connectedness and appreciation for one another's interest, background, and abilities.

Communication style. A second factor, the communication style of the board, seems to indicate a shift away from a high level of reliance on the executive director and toward greater responsiveness and follow through from board members. Three out of four board members commented on greater engagement and appreciation for their expanded roles and acknowledged less reliance on the ED. One clear indicator of improved communication was the board member who said,

> One tiny example of a shift I see in our communication style since the retreat is when we were setting a time for our next meeting. We stopped waiting for the ED to make all the decisions and started jumping in, getting decisions made, and moving things forward ourselves.

Although one new member mentioned sensing the communication as "Still a bit tentative about contributing, partly I think because some were new and unsure about their commitment level," another reported that, "We are getting into more solid discussions about capacity building of the organization. The communication style is different than before because now ideas are coming from the board, not just the executive director."

Conflict resolution methods. The conflict resolution methods used by the SBTE

board have also begun to shift away from indifference and toward greater levels of

participation. A greater willingness to offer divergent opinions is indicated by the

following comment, "We started stepping up and started offering solutions. We used to

just 'go with the flow' and never had disagreements, but after the retreat, we started

really checking with each other and coming to consensus." Another statement providing

similar evidence is,

> We had an open conversation about fiscal sponsorship in which direct questions
> were asked that may have been avoided in earlier discussions. It was not
> contentious, but a very direct and open consideration of what are the options now
> and which one is best to pursue.

Decision-making mode. The most often used decision-making mode of the

SBTE board prior to the AI intervention was one which was led by the executive director,

with the board following her recommendations. Following the retreat, there are

indications of more consensus building and shared responsibility. Two board members

commented on this directly stating that, "Using consensus to make sure we all agree is a

shift from the past," and "I'd say we are using more of a consensus building process to

make decisions. That is a difference from in the past." A third board member described

an incident that demonstrated less reliance on the executive director in the following

comment,

> A definite difference I experienced since the retreat is indicated by a discussion
> about our by-laws. Adopting our by-laws has been a tedious process and we've all
> grown weary of it. It all falls on the shoulders of the ED, so when I asked where
> we stood, I saw the ED slump. Then I asked her to give them to me and I would
> type them up. I remember something you said at the retreat about us all needing to
> walk away from meetings as contributors, so I just said I will take that task on.

Ability to influence one another. The board's ability to influence one another

was hampered by their tendency to look to the ED before AI intervention. There appears

to be less evidence of a shift in this category. Post interviews offered mixed responses, although there is some indication of less reliance on the ED by one comment, "I see a greater willingness to step up than I did before the retreat." However, two out of four board members disagreed. One said, "I still see the board as tentative about contributing. I think they are still being 'careful'." Another caution regarding the board's ability to influence one another is in the comment, "I still don't think they have the right people in the room yet. I see the time bank as an important part of our community but the right decision-makers are not in the room."

Table 12 summarizes the key themes found in the post-interview assessment of interpersonal competencies and provides qualitative data in support of the post-intervention assessment. Key quotes by board members, executive director, and community stakeholders relevant to the themes are cited.

Other Appreciative Inquiry Results—Non-Interpersonal Competency Results

Although interpersonal competency was the main focus of this study and the intervention plan, several non-interpersonal competency changes in the board of the SBTE were indicated. Other AI results generated include:

1. Board consensus on the potential **impact** that the SBTE could have on the communities of San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Clara Counties.

2. An agreed upon list of SBTE **core values**

3. A newly revised **mission statement** for the SBTE.

4. A consensus agreement of **positive group norms** for the Board of the SBTE to improve their communication.

Table 12

Post-Interview: Qualitative Data Support For Key Themes Interpersonal Competencies Of The San Benito Time Exchange

KEY COMPETENCIES	POST-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT	RELEVANT QUOTES
Knowledge of One Another In response to the question: How well do you know one another?	Moderate	*"There seems to have been a shift in people's interest in one another, a definite shift. We are asking more questions of one another. We want to know more about each other and at a deeper level."*
		We do know one another more on a level of appreciating one another. The group participation activities we did at the retreat really gave me a better sense of the others on the board."
		"Fairly well."
		"I think we are all comfortable with one another. We know each other pretty well now—well enough to be honest with one another."
		"The retreat built great camaraderie."
Communication Style In response to the query: Please share a story or describe an incident that demonstrates the communication style of the Board.	More Open More Responsibility Taken By Board	*"One tiny example of a shift I see in our communication style since the retreat is when we were setting a time for our next meeting. We stopped waiting for the ED to make all the decisions and started jumping, getting decisions made, and moving things forward ourselves."*
		"Still a bit tentative about contributing, partly I think because some were new and unsure about their commitment level."
		"My sense is that we honestly share ideas and build on one another's thoughts. The style is very collective."
		"We are getting into more solid discussions about capacity building of the organization. The communication style is different than before because now ideas are coming from the board, not just the ED."
Conflict-Resolution Method In response to the query: Please tell me about a time the board resolved a difference that came up and how it was worked out.	Shifting To More Participation, Engagement, & Divergent Opinions	*"We had an open conversation about fiscal sponsorship in which direct questions were asked that may have been avoided in earlier discussions. It was not contentious, but a very direct and open consideration of what are the options now and which one is best to pursue."*

KEY COMPETENCIES	POST-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT	RELEVANT QUOTES
		"Even with only three people at the board meeting, we made more decisions than we have in the prior 6 months with 5 people, because of the shift in our decision-making."
		"We started stepping up and started offering solutions. We used to just 'go wit the flow' and never had disagreements, but after the retreat, we started really checking with each other and coming to consensus."
		"Seemed pretty open to each others' ideas."
		"I haven't seen any real disagreements, but people sharing different ideas in a positive sense without put-downs or and feelings of discomfort. That was actually my biggest fear as a newcomer."
		"I'd say we are using more of a consensus building process to make decisions. That is a difference from in the past."
Decision-Making Mode In response to the query: How would you say the group makes its best decisions? What process is used and how is that working?	More Consensus Building And Shared Responsibility	*"I'd say we are using more of a consensus building process to make decisions. That is a difference from in the past."*
		"Using consensus to make sure be all agree is a shift from the past."
		"A definite difference I experienced since the retreat is indicated by a discussion about our by-laws. Adopting our by-laws has been a tedious process and we've all grown weary of it. It all falls on the shoulders of the ED, so when I asked where we stood, I saw the ED slump. Then I asked her to give them to me and I would type them up. I remember something you said at the retreat about us all needing to walk away from meetings as contributors, so I just said I will take that task on."
		"The problem I see is that the right people as decision-makers were not in the room at the retreat and are not yet on the board."
		"I see us making decisions based on shared ideas—taking a root idea and growing it together."
		"There's a sense of ownership that is new. We are willing to talk options, so I feel more supported. We are really discussing and engaging to find solutions. Before, I laid out options then they asked which one I thought was best and we did it."

KEY COMPETENCIES	POST-INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT	RELEVANT QUOTES
Ability to Influence One Another In response to the query: Tell me about a time the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?	Less Reliance On the Executive Director. Concern For Having the "Right People" in the Room	*"I'm starting to see an increased level of trust in one another, each believing that we all have the best interest of the time exchange in mind. We have an increased ability to have those kind of conversations."*
		"We had a board recruitment effort in the fall that was an epic fail. But now I offered an idea to do a mini-retreat with new potential members and we were able to gain consensus on it and plan it for our February meeting."
		"I think people on the board listen well to one another."
		"I see a greater willingness to step up than I did before the retreat."
		"I still don't think they have the right people in the room yet. I see the time bank as an important part of our community but the right decision-makers are not in the room."

Impact potential of the San Benito Time Exchange. In considering the following AI question, the Board of the SBTE identified components of the impact the organization can have on the community:

*What is the potential effect of the SBTE in the community? How might the organization have its most powerful, positive **Impact**?*

- Excitement re: Community (Events)

- Ability to address specific needs

- See people more able to meet each other's needs

- Understand value of small contributions

- Bettering our youth/ less gangs, bullying, etc.

- Better Awareness of needs—Synergy/Networking

- Increasing availability of resources

- Building relationships—where people can stick-up for each other

- Empower community by decreasing reliance upon monetary exchange to meet needs

- Relationships built through the Time Exchange cross ALL social boundaries

- Increase the value of this community

- Join the Groundswell of other local NFP Orgs

- Do something never done before

  o Back to the Future

  o Barn Raising

- Not Exchanging but Paying Forward

Core values. Another AI question brought about the following clarifications of the SBTE core values:

*What are the most significant **core values** of the SBTE? What drives the organization to be its very best?*

- Empowerment—Hand up not out, getting my own needs met

- Neighbor Helping Neighbor

- Caring Community—Providing & Promoting

- Relationship

- Sustainability

- Pay it Forward

- Receive and taking responsibility for needs and resources in community

- All contributions equally valued.

Revised mission statement. The board of the SBTE also used AI to reflect on the mission of the SBTE, identifying the following key concepts to incorporate into its mission statement:

- Redefining Value/People Above Things

- Empowering the Community to recognize & take responsibility for the needs and resources of our Community

- To be a Hub of Activity towards a Thriving Community

- Connect/Link Neighbor to Neighbor

- To be a vehicle to employer the community to receive & take responsibility for the needs and resources of our community.

After much discussion, one theme that evolved and resonated with everyone was: Providing & Promoting - Components of Providing and Promoting included:

- Neighbors Help Neighbors

- Sustainability

- Compassion

- Equal Contributions

- Thriving Community

Two acronyms emerged and were considered for branding opportunities:

RALPH   CENTS

R = Respect   C = Compassion

A = Abilities   E = Equal Contribution/Even Playing Field

L = Longevity   N = Neighbors Helping Neighbors

P = Pay it Forward   T = Thriving Communities

H = Humility   S = Sustainability

Cents make Sense

Ultimately, the Board refined its mission to integrate the concepts, themes, and acronyms into one simple, clear mission statement:

New Mission: The San Benito Time Exchange supports a thriving community by linking Neighbor to Neighbor in connecting needs and resources.

Positive group norms. The board of the SBTE also spent some time reflecting on how they want to communicate and interact in the future, by establishing the following agreed upon group norms:

- Consensus vs. Majority Rule—take the time to gain consensus

- Divergent Voice –respect the divergent voice to make best decisions

- Tasks—take on tasks willingly

- Accountable—hold selves and one another accountable

- Equal Voices for All—regardless of roles

- Keep Commitments– or Renegotiate if necessary

- Speak for Oneself—don't assume others agree

- Re-State to Clarify

- Shared Responsibility

- Strokes—positive attention given freely

Summary of Change Results

A summary of changes in the board of directors of the SBTE as a result of the AI intervention include five interpersonal competency results and four other results, which may impact the interpersonal competency of the board (see detailed notes in Appendices F and G). The changes revealed in the five interpersonal competency results measured included:

1. A low level knowledge of other board members, changing to a moderate knowledge of one another reported after the intervention. In the pre-assessment, the level of interaction between board members was very limited, while after the intervention, members reported knowing one another much better and being more comfortable sharing ideas together.

2. A high level of reliance on the ED, a lack of responsiveness, and poor follow through from board members, while after the intervention the communication style was marked by more openness and greater responsibility being taken by board members.

3. Conflict resolution competency prior to the intervention, indicated that the board was indifferent to conflict and dealt with it primarily through avoidance, followed by post-interviews indications suggesting that there is more participation, deeper engagement, and a willingness to express and consider divergent opinions.

4. Decision-making responses indicated a similar shift from a high reliance on the executive director in presenting preferred options and recommendations, prior to the intervention, to more questioning, shared responsibility, and consensus building on the part of board members after the intervention

5. In assessing the competency of influencing one another in a positive manner, the data show mixed reviews including some change from high ED reliance to, "a

greater willingness to step up," while there is also a significant concern that, " the right people are still not in the room."

Additional Outcomes

Other results show that the SBTE, although still a very new organization with a continued need for board recruitment and development, has taken significant steps through the AI process to better define its impact, core values, mission, and positive group norms.

As a result of the AI intervention, the qualitative data show a higher level of board commitment to one another, the organization, and the mission and values of the SBTE. An upward trend in four out of five interpersonal competencies of the board is indicated, demonstrating deeper involvement and greater engagement with each other and the SBTE. Perhaps, this is best summed up by the comment of one board member who shared that, " I see things differently since the retreat. I used to see this organization as the ED's baby, but now I see it as OUR baby, not just hers. Now I don't wait to look to her; I'm more willing to take a role to do my part. "

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The objective of the study was to consider the potential impact of AI on the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, using the case of the SBTE. This was done through a thorough review of relevant literature on the topic, followed by AI pre-interviews, a board retreat based in AI, and AI post-interviews. Key findings are described below, along with recommendations for further research.

Purpose and Overview of Findings

A review of the literature was used to generate interpersonal competency criteria, which served as a foundation for the development of AI interventions used during the consultation period with the SBTE. The literature review, interviews with the SBTE board members, and current organization development intervention practices guided the design of the interventions. Thesis research drew upon qualitative data from two sets of interviews with the SBTE board members, the SBTE executive director, and key community stakeholders.

The interpersonal competencies of the SBTE board increased over the three-month consulting period in four of the five competencies evaluated. Analysis of the qualitative data indicate that the interventions impacted board member knowledge of one another, improved their communication skills, increased the effectiveness of their decision-making capacity, and bettered their competency in resolving conflicts. Results were inconclusive in the fifth competency, that of board members positively impacting and influencing one another.

The interventions resulted in drafts of an updated organizational mission, clarification of the desired organizational impact, and a compilation of the SBTE board

core values. In addition, the board expressed a clearer understanding of the time banking concept and a deeper sense of engagement in the organization and the board itself. Further, the need to expand the board was addressed and two community stakeholders have committed to become new board members, following the interventions.

Areas for Continued Development

The SBTE board made significant progress during the three-month consulting period. In the words of one board member, "I'm starting to see an increased level of trust in one another, each believing that we all have the best interest of the time exchange in mind. We have an increased ability to have those kind of conversations." Another stated that, "We are getting into more solid discussions about capacity building of the organization. The communication style is different than before because now ideas are coming from the board, not just the ED." However, there is still has a great deal of work to do. Although two new board members have joined, one board member resigned, leaving the board well short of its target capacity of nine members. In addition, one board member cautions that, "I still don't think they have the right people in the room yet. I see the time bank as an important part of our community but the right decision-makers are not in the room." Until the SBTE is able to recruit and retain a fully engaged board that represents all three counties of its service area, it will be difficult to achieve their vision. Once recruited, commitment to continued development of the board's interpersonal competencies would provide a strong foundation for their long term success." An indicator of continued disengagement was one member's use of the dissociative "they", in referring to the board, rather than a more involved word choice like "we."

Conclusions and Implications

There are several implications of this case study for other nonprofit boards. Although this research was conducted with one small board over a short consulting period of three months, indications are that AI interviews and interaction during the retreat were able to initiate changes in four interpersonal competencies that are common to all nonprofit boards. These four interpersonal competencies are:

1. Knowledge of one another

2. Communication

3. Conflict-resolution

4. Decision-making

The fifth dimension measured, the ability of board members to positively influence one another, was not conclusively impacted.

In reviewing the results of the interventions, including pre and post interview comments made by board members and the behavior of participants during the board retreat, it is clear to the researcher as well as the executive director, that the organization gained significant benefit from the interventions. Building on a base of shared knowledge of one another, the board has begun operating in a more cohesive manner. The board's communication style indicates a greater depth of engagement, participation, and commitment. Decisions are being made with more discussion and broader input from more members, leading to consensus decision-making. When conflicts arise, board members are expressing a willingness to address them and reach an agreed upon conclusion based on common goals.

As new board members are added, interpersonal competencies will be impacted and will need to be addressed again. Through the introduction of AI philosophy and

methodology, the SBTE board has a way of relating to one another that may influence new board members. In addition, the SBTE board now has a new set of tools to use for their future work together, AI.

Process conclusions. Another conclusion of the study is the efficacy of the intervention design and its application for interpersonal competency development in other nonprofit organizations. Pre-interviews served to clarify the criteria of board effectiveness through interpersonal competencies and asked board members to reflect on the state of the board in each competency. In the second intervention, the board retreat, the interpersonal competencies were further addressed and discussed using AI, and new norms were developed for improved communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution. In addition, considerable time was spent increasing board member knowledge of one another, also using AI methodology. The third intervention employed AI in post-interviews, when the same five interpersonal competencies were discussed. This served to not only evaluate, but to reinforce improvements made and the importance of interpersonal competencies in effective boards. The same three-part intervention process is recommended for future researchers as they seek ways to raise board awareness of their interpersonal competencies and need for improving them.

Consistency with literature review. Comparing the data with prior research that has been done on the topic of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, the researcher discovered a great deal of continuity between the literature and the research findings of this study. Consistencies of this study and prior research were found to apply in four specific areas:

1. The importance of effective boards to their organizations

2. The need for board development

3. The significance of interpersonal competencies in boards

4. The efficacy of AI

Effective boards are associated with organizations that tend to perform better in terms of both fiscal performance and perceptions of organizational effectiveness (Brown, 2007). Jackson and Holland (1998) studied the relationship between the financial performance and various board practices providing strong evidence that effective boards are related to effective organizations.

Another study found that "especially effective organizations (as judged by multiple stakeholders) have more effective boards (as judged by multiple stakeholders)" (Herman & Renz, 2000, p. 146). They also state that, "the extent to which nonprofit organizations are capable depends not only on the skills of the managers, employees and service volunteers in those organizations but also on the commitment and skills of their boards of directors" (pp. 146-147). In the case of the SBTE this is still to be determined. Because the SBTE is so early in its development and has not yet begun to offer services to the community, both the board and the organization will continue to develop as the organization becomes a viable entity, serving the community needs

The need for board development, in the case of the SBTE, also ties back to the literature. "Adequate resources must be channeled into the education and retention of board members. This process typically referred to as 'board development' represents the educational components of trusteeship" (Axelrod, 2005, p. 127). Further, the process for orienting new board members actually begins when they are invited to serve on the board. This is when it is important to describe the goals of the organizations, the role of the board, and most important, the expectations of individual members. The SBTE invited two new board members to participate in the board retreat to foster their

knowledge of and commitment to the organization. The organization also had a special

board development need due to the lack of overall board experience of their members.

Eadie (2001) recommends the development of ongoing education and training for board

members and the 2003 Higgs report stresses the value of board director education, . . .

particularly important for directors, whether executive or non-executive, with no previous

experience. Green and Griesinger's (1996) effectiveness study of nonprofit organizations

revealed that board development was the single most significant area distinguishing

effective organizations from less effective ones. This consisted of "training new board

members, setting specific duties of board members, and evaluating board performance"

(p. 396). Advantages of using regular structured development methods with boards of

directors have been widely researched with positive results (Dutton, 2008; Coulson-

Thomas, 2008; Wells, 2005). The SBTE focus on board development produced evidence

of greater clarity of roles and deeper commitment to the organization. In the case of the

SBTE, the board still needs to establish the specific duties of board members and

determine a method to evaluate board performance.

The significance of interpersonal competencies in boards is made clear in the

literature and reinforced by the case of the SBTE. Hartmann (2007) identifies eight

Director Competencies. Six of the eight identified competencies are interpersonal skills.

Other researchers support the importance of interpersonal competencies to effective

boards. "In particular, the interpersonal dimension provided a unique explanation of

judgments of organizational performance" (Brown, 2005, p. 317). Eadie (2001) states

that board committees should be chaired by people who: have demonstrated leadership

skills, including relating well to people, listening well, being able to plan and organize

activities, and being a good facilitator; command the respect of their peers, who will thus

be more inclined to follow their lead. In the case of the SBTE, the increases in interpersonal competencies indicated by this research provide support for improved board performance and committee leadership.

AI has been used with good results for several decades. "After twenty years, it is abundantly clear that AI, when skillfully done with proper sponsorship and resources, is a potent planned, transformational change process" (Boje et al., 2011, p. 99). AI philosophy, principles, questions, and interviews were all applied with the SBTE, with four out of four board members reporting significant changes. Additionally, two community stakeholders chose to join the board after the AI interventions and expressed positive responses to their AI experiences with the SBTE board.

Overall, the findings of this study are consistent with the literature and suggest that AI can be used to positively impact the development of interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards. Further, the findings are also consistent in suggesting that the implementation of board development practices will positively impact overall board effectiveness.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study, including a short consulting period, low attendance of board members, and need for continued follow-up.

The consulting time period was three months. During this length of time, results assessed as positive may be temporary, rather than sustained impact. Similarly, longer-term results, either positive or negative, may not have come into evidence as yet. Due to the holiday season only one board meeting was held between the retreat (November 15, 2012) and the post interviews (mid-January, 2013) limiting opportunities for the board to interact during the study.

A second limitation was low attendance, which impacted both the board retreat and the pre and post interviews. A concern for many nonprofits, research findings repeatedly emphasize the "importance of various recruitment criteria and the ability to obtain board members willing and able to carry out board functions" (Ostrower, 2007, p. 23). Sustained, ongoing recruitment efforts provide the opportunity for succession planning, adding stability to the board and the organization. The SBTE board recruitment goal of nine total members was not met, limiting the full benefit of board development from the interventions.

Thirdly, a board retreat may be more effective if extended to two or more days. Lack of time spent in board development is another common issue for many nonprofits. Although ongoing training is considered a best practice in board education, only about half (57%) offer the board focused training on key organizational issues throughout the year (GrantThornton, 2009). A multi-day event would allow for richer appreciative inquiries, deeper engagement of board members, and more thorough exploration of interpersonal competency skill development. Other options may be conducting a second mini-retreat or a series of sessions to follow up the first. According to the National Board Governance Survey for Not-for-Profit Organizations, conducted by Grant Thornton in 2009, "boards should consider having an off-site annual retreat to continually enhance board performance," but fewer than half (47%) of the respondents in the Thornton survey said their organizations have an annual board retreat (pp. 5-6). A follow-up event would provide the chance to reassess, reinforce, and reteach needed interpersonal competency skills, using AI methodology.

Implications for Organization Development Practitioners

Implications for practitioners in the field of organizational development

consulting to nonprofit boards may include:

1. Organization development using AI is an effective means to impact the interpersonal competencies of a nonprofit board. Even with limited time, the AI intervention moved the metrics on four out of five interpersonal competencies in this study.

2. Board participation, attendance, and involvement are crucial to the impact of a board intervention and overall effectiveness. A hallmark of highly effective boards is engagement (Sweeney, 2012). "You get a sense of vibrancy and energy in the debates. People are highly engaged, challenging each other in a respectful way and there is a good give and take" (p. 34). The SBTE board findings exemplify the importance of board involvement, as indicated by the changes in the vibrant responses of engagement following the intervention.

3. Board development in general and interpersonal competency development in particular require reinforcement and practice of lessons learned. Increasing the amount of time spent intervening impacts long term, sustainable, interpersonal competency results. Work with clients to develop a sustained intervention plan including opportunities to follow up initial efforts.

The researcher subscribes to the notion that the effectiveness of a nonprofit

organization is a function of the effectiveness of the nonprofit board of directors. "Boards

are essentially teams; and teams typically do their best work in a positive, energized

atmosphere. Typically if you don't have a very healthy board dynamic, your board is sub-

optimized in terms of overall effectiveness" (Sweeney, 2012, p. 35). Positively impacting

nonprofit board effectiveness is within the purview of well-designed, organizational

development interventions, and is followed by careful and thorough analysis of results. In

addition, AI has shown itself to be applicable in many situations, with a wide variety of

populations. There have been applications at the level of individuals (Kelm, 2005),

relationships (Stavros & Torres, 2005), groups (Bushe, 2002), communities (Browne &

Jain, 2002), and even nations (Stavros, 2008)" (as cited in Boje et al., 2011, p. 99).

Nonprofit boards of directors who recognize the value of board interpersonal competencies as the foundation of their board, and the board as foundational to their organization, will want to consider using AI methodology to build capacity and more deeply engage their board.

Recommendations for the San Benito Time Exchange Board

The SBTE board made substantial progress during the consulting period of this study. However, they still have a way to go. Additional growth and development is necessary for them to become more fully fulfill their role in directing the future of the organization. A number of next steps are recommended:

1. Make board recruitment a high priority to build a strong foundation for the organization.

2. Broaden the geographic representation of the board to include input from Monterey and Santa Clara Counties.

3. Engage in a regular practice of board interpersonal interaction to deepen the engagement level and cohesiveness of board members.

4. Continue a plan of regular board development, with an emphasis on interpersonal competencies.

5. Develop a method to measure board member performance.

6. Define board roles and responsibilities.

7. Pursue the acquisition of 501© 3 nonprofit status, while simultaneously seeking the fiscal sponsorship of an existing 501 © 3 nonprofit organization.

8. Set a target date for inviting SBTE members to begin exchanging goods and services.

9. Establish a strategic plan for the operation of the SBTE.

10. Develop a fund-raising plan to provide financial stability to the organization. Consider developing ongoing relationships with interns, graduate programs, or other volunteer resources to expand the viability of an under-funded organization.

The SBTE is a nonprofit organization that has great promise and can take additional strides to achieve its potential value to the communities it serves. The organization has made considerable progress over the few months of the research project. Continued focus on interpersonal competencies, recruitment of board members, and fund-raising to provide financial stability will do much to establish them as a viable nonprofit in San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Clara Counties. The SBTE organization has initiated the process of becoming an effective board and organization. With consistent follow-up, regular board development, and a larger, more representative board, it can achieve the long-term effectiveness needed to make its vision a reality.

Final Comments

It is important to recognize the important role of nonprofits today. According to a 2012 report by the Center for Civil Society Studies, at Johns Hopkins University, nonprofit organizations employed over 10 percent of total employment in the United States in 2010, representing 10.7 million people (Center for Civil Society Studies, 2013). As nonprofit organizations provide for the many and varied needs of our communities, it is imperative to examine the effectiveness of these organizations and their boards. The interpersonal competencies of nonprofit boards create the foundation for board effectiveness and in turn, the effectiveness of the organization itself. The SBTE case illustrated the impact of AI, showing marked progress in the board's interpersonal competencies in as little as three months of applying AI. AI provides a philosophy and methodology for nonprofit boards to strengthen their interpersonal competencies, their board effectiveness, and the success of the organization.

Peter Drucker (1990) once noted,

"non-profit" institutions neither supply goods or services nor controls. Its "product" is neither a pair of shoes nor an effective regulation. Its product is a changed human being. Their "product" is a cured patient, a child that learns, a young man or woman grown into a self-respecting adult; a changed human life altogether. (p. 10)

Like nonprofits, organizational development practitioners work for change and improvement in human beings. Beyond that, OD practitioners work to change and improve the organizations created by human beings. As nonprofit organizations serve more people to meet ever-growing needs, it is the hope of this researcher that organization development practitioners continue to explore ways to develop interpersonal competencies in nonprofit boards, to provide for the most effective, successful, and sustainable nonprofit organizations in the future.

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Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry Pre-Assessment Interview Questions Guide

Part 1
Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research project to study nonprofit board development. Before we begin, I would like to assure you of a few things relative to the study:

- The project is research being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's thesis.
- The purpose of the study is the determine the effectiveness of board development competencies on a nonprofit board using Appreciative Inquiry methodology.
- All participant responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.
- All interviews will be audio-recorded and all recordings will be kept securely in a locked file box for a period of five years, after which they will be destroyed.
- Participants do not have to answer every question.
- Participant's board membership will not be affected by refusal to participate or by withdrawal from the study.
- All participation is voluntary.

Part 2
Preliminary Information:
    Self-Introduction and introduction of the study.
    Expression of appreciation for the opportunity to work with the organization.
    Appreciation for the individual's time and verification of their availability for 45 minutes.

Opening Questions

Do you have any questions before we begin?

I'm interested to know what first interested you or attracted you to become involved with the board of the San Benito Time Exchange. Why is it important to you? What do you value about it?

Please tell me about what has been the best part of your experience with the San Benito Time Exchange. What has made it worthwhile?

Imagine the San Benito Time Exchange two years from now. What is happening? What is your vision for the organization? What do you see it becoming?

Describe what you consider to be the greatest assets or what is most valuable about the Board.
What is your vision for the Board of the SBTE? How do you see it at its best?

Interpersonal Specific Questions

(*Based on Hartmann's (2007) Interpersonal Board Competencies:*

Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences,
Making decisions, Influencing one another)

Board effectiveness is often impacted greatly by the board's interpersonal style, which includes things like Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences, Making Decisions, Influencing. I'd like to learn a bit more about those things within the SBTE Board.

To start, although I know you've only been together a short while, I'm interested in learning about how well you know one another.

Would you please tell me a story or describe an incident that demonstrates the communication style of the Board.

Please tell me about a time the board resolved difference that came up and how it was worked out.

How would you say the group makes its best decisions? What process is used and how is that working?

Tell me about a time when the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?

Describe how you see your role in helping create the reality of the board interacting with one another at its highest and best level.

Would you please discuss how your talents would be utilized at their highest and best use?

Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

Appendix B: Re-Assessment Interview Questions Guide

Part 1

Thank you again, for agreeing to participate in a research project to study nonprofit board development. Before we begin, I would like to assure you of a few things relative to the study:

• The project is research being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's thesis.
• The purpose of the study is the determine the effectiveness of board development competencies on a nonprofit board using Appreciative Inquiry methodology.
• All participant responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.
• All interviews will be audio-recorded and all recordings will be kept securely in a locked file box for a period of five years, after which they will be destroyed.
• Participants do not have to answer every question.
• Participant's board membership will not be affected by refusal to participate or by withdrawal from the study.
• All participation is voluntary.

Re-Assessment Interview Question Guide - Part 2

Preliminary Interaction:

Re-connection after the retreat.
Expression of appreciation for the opportunity to work with the organization.
Appreciation for the individual's time and clarification of their availability for 45 minutes.

Opening Questions:

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please tell me about your experience of the San Benito Time Exchange board retreat and your time on the board since then.

Please describe any changes in your role on the board of the since we first spoke

What most interests or continues to motivate you to stay involved with the board? What is most valuable to you about investing your energy in the SBTE board?

Tell me about has been the best part of your experience at this point in your time with the board of the SBTE?

What is your overall sense of the board at this time, especially as compared to when we first spoke? What do you now consider to be the greatest assets of the board?

Imagine the San Benito Time Exchange two years from now. What is happening? What is your vision for the organization? What do you see it becoming at its very best?

Interpersonal Questions:

(Based on Hartmann's (2007) Interpersonal Board Competencies:
Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences,
Making decisions, Influencing one another)

As we have discussed, board effectiveness is greatly impacted by the board's interpersonal style, which includes things like Knowing one another, Communicating, Listening, Resolving differences, Making Decisions, Influencing. I'd like to learn more about how you see those things within the SBTE Board now.

Please tell me about how well you know one another at this point in he life of the board?

Tell me a story or describe an incident that demonstrates the communication sty;e of the board.

Re-Assessment Interview Question Guide - Part 2

Please describe how the board resolves any differences that have come up.

How would you say the group makes its best decisions? What process is used and how is that working?

Tell me about a time when the board was interacting together at its best. What made it seem to work especially well?

Describe how you see your role in helping create the reality of the board interacting with one another at its highest and best level.

Would you please discuuss with me how your talents would be utilized at their highest and best use?

Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Dear Board Members

My name is Alison Vallenari and I am currently in the process of researching the effectiveness of board development in nonprofit organizations. My study is entitled, "Developing Interpersonal Competencies in Nonprofit Boards of Directors using Appreciative Inquiry." The professor supervising my work is Dr. Terri Egan, Director of the Master in Science in Organizational Development program at Pepperdine. The study is designed to investigate the use of Appreciative Inquiry to improve the interpersonal effectiveness of nonprofit boards of directors, so I am inviting your organization, the San Benito Time Exchange, to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The following is a description of what your participation involves, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide that you will participate in this study, you will be asked to spend approximately 45 minutes on two occasions in an interview and attend a planned one day board retreat, facilitated by Alison Vallenari, using Appreciative Inquiry methodology. Interviews will set up before and after the board retreat and will be conducted face-to-face or via telephone at time and place of your convenience.

Although minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks include potentially experiencing fatigue, boredom, or disagreement with other board members. In the event you do experience any ill effects, you can pursue your concerns in more depth, either in lieu of or after consulting with me as the investigator of this study.

If you have question about your rights as a research participat, you can contact Yuying Tsong, Interim IRB Chairperson for the Institutional Review Board, 310.568.5768, yuying.tsong@pepperdine.edu or Dr. Terri Egan, Director of MSOD, Pepperdine Universtity, 610.214.0000.

_____

Signature Date

_____

Print Name

Appendix D: Board Retreat Agenda

SAN BENITO TIME EXCHANGE

BOARD RETREAT

Thursday, Nov. 15, 2012

9:00—4:00

Hollister, California

Goals:

To build a strong, cohesive foundation for the San Benito Time Exchange Board, based on effective interpersonal competencies, using Appreciative Inquiry.
To deepen the Board's knowledge and appreciation of one another.
To increase Board knowledge of and commitment to Time Banking.
To identify and enhance the Life-Giving Story of the SBTE Board, that is to determine its Impact, Core Values, and Mission.
To establish a basic core of shared knowledge for the interpersonal competencies of Board Knowledge of One Another; Board Communication; Board Decision-Making; and Board Conflict-Resolution (Hartmann, 2007).

9:00   *Arrival*

9:15   *Welcome & Opening Comments*   Laura Lee

Introductions   All

Expectations   All

9:30 *Building Camaraderie*   Alison

Vallenari

- Appreciative Stories   All
- 28 Day Experiment & 20 Gratitudes   All
10:30 *Time Banking Overview*   Laura Lee

- Concepts and Local Application
11:00 *Overview of Appreciative Inquiry Principles*   Alison Vallenari

11:30   **LUNCH**

12:00 *"The Life-Giving Story"*   Alison Vallenari /All

- What is the desired **Impact** we want to have?
- What are our **Core Values** as the San Benito Time Exchange?
- What is our **Mission** as the San Benito Time Exchange?

1:30 *Interpersonal Competencies*   Alison Vallenari /All

- **Communication** Skills - Appreciative Stories
  - Ladder of Inference
  - Positive Group Norms
- **Decision-Making** Skills—Appreciative Stories
  - Decision-Making Model
- **Conflict Resolution** Skills—Appreciative Stories
  - Conflict Resolution Guidelines
3:30 *Closing Activities*   All

- Commitments, Offers & Requests
- Closing Comments
- Evaluation
4:00 *Departure*

Appendix E: Board Retreat Evaulation Form

San Benito Time Exchange
Board Retreat
Evaluation
Thursday, November 15, 2012

Rate the Retreat on a scale of 1—10:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What two words best describe the Retreat?

What was the most helpful or valuable part of the retreat?

What do you intend to do as a result of the retreat?

Other Comments:

Appendix F: Board Retreat Notes

San Benito Time Exchange
Board Development Day
Thursday November 15, 2012

Flip Chart Notes

Expectations
- Where from here?
- My Contribution?
- Getting to know others
- Better understanding of TB's especially Co-Production
- Successful TB's—where, how, why
- Better sense of community
- Learn about one another
- Spark our Energy
- Broader decision making (not just one person)
- How to be a Better Board Member
- Group capable of improving life in San Benito County
- Momentum—Forward
- Identify elements to improve life in county
- Focus of Efforts—determine how to focus
- Identify Next Steps
- Better ability to discuss
- Openly/Create
- Consensus decisions
- Broader Scope of Organization beyond San Benito
  Appreciative Inquiry
- A Philosophy
- A Methodology
- For change/Transformation based on 5 Principles
- *Social Construction Principle*
  - We create the world we know by the Language we use to describe it.
  - We experience the world in line with the Images we hold about it.
  - AI seeks things in the past and present that are Life-Giving & Affirming to create images of a generative future.
- *Positivism Principle*
  - By focusing on problems we create more images of deficit
  - By focusing on images of Health/Wholeness, organization energy moves to make that image real.
  - Valuing the "Best of What is"
  - Inquire into what going RIGHT
  Simultaneity Principle
  - Inquiry and Change are simultaneous
  - Seeds of Change are in our Dialogue

Anticipatory Principle
- What we Anticipate & Expect impacts what we see & get.
- Shared Expectations lead to shared goals, mission, success

Poetic Principle
- Storytelling is how we share facts and feelings
  - An organizations story is constantly being co-Authored by those in the Organization
  - Study of the Organization's story (past & present) leads to insights, learning and inspiration for the best Future Story

Jacqueline Kelm—The Joy of Appreciative Living: Your 28 Day Plan to Greater Happiness in 3 Incredibly Easy Steps http://www.amazon.com/The-Joy-Appreciative-Living-Incredibly/dp/1585426601/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1353543128&sr=8-2&keywords=Jacqueline+Kelm

1. 3 Gratitude's/Appreciations
2. 1 Joy
3. Vision of your future
4. Includes the Oxford Happiness Survey to do before & after

Executive Directors Presentation on Time Banking
Brainstorm of "Something We Can Exchange to Get Something Else"
Music Lessons, Salt, Sea Shells, Pieces of Eight, Stories, Grain, Daughters, Cows, Livestock, Sex, Tulip Bulbs, Stocks, Liquor, Cigarettes, Gold, Silver, Diamonds, Work, Labor, Time
The health of any form of currency can be measured by the velocity of the exchanges of the currency for goods and services. It is calculated by
Gross Domestic Product
The quantity of the Currency Supply
In a TimeBank, velocity would be measured by the number of hours exchanged/the number of members
For example 1805 hours exchanged/83 members = a velocity of 21.7

Regarding Co-Production—another easier word to understand would be collaboration. Co-Production is the creation of a collaborative agreement between a Time Bank and other organizations. The other organizations can be non-profits, NGO's or for-profit organizations.
Brainstorm of organizations that we could possibly collaborate with:
Masonic Lodge #211, Girl & Boy Scouts, Hollister Youth Alliance, YMCA, Football & Sports Teams, Women's Club of Hollister, Chamber of Commerce, Emmaus House, Food Bank, Jovenes—Senior Services, Health Foundation, Schools, & Churches. The possibilities are infinite when it comes to Co-Production/Collaborative Relationships where both organizations benefit.

Impact?
- Excitement re: Community (Events)
- Ability to address specific needs
- See people more able to meet each other's needs

- Understand value of small contributions
- Bettering our youth/ less gangs, bullying, etc.
- Better Awareness of needs—Synergy/Networking
- Increasing availability of resources
- Building <u>relationships</u>—where people can stick-up for each other
- Empower community by decreasing reliance upon monetary exchange to meet needs
- Relationships built through the Time Exchange cross ALL social boundaries
- Increase the value of this community
- Join the Groundswell of other local NFP Orgs
- Do something never done before
- Back to the Future
- Barn Raising
- Not Exchanging but Paying Forward
  Core Values
- Empowerment—Hand up not out, getting my own needs met
- Neighbor Helping Neighbor
- Caring Community—Providing & Promoting
- Relationship
- Sustainability
- Pay it Forward
- Receive and taking responsibility for needs and resources in community
- All contributions equally valued.
  Mission
- Redefining Value/People Above Things
- Empower the Community to recognize & take responsibility for the needs and resources of our Community
- To be a Hub of Activity towards a Thriving Community
- Connect/Link Neighbor to Neighbor
- To be a vehicle to employer the community to receive & take responsibility for the needs and resources of our community.
  Ideas
- Sponsoring one agency per month
- Membership Drive—Pot-Luck
- House can be exchanged for Products
- Elevating People Above Things
- Target Population (demographics in successful TimeBanks)
  <u>Providing & Promoting:</u>
- Neighbors Help Neighbors
- Sustainability
- Compassion
- Equal Contributions
- Thriving Community

RALPH	**CENTS**
R = Respect	C = Compassion
A = Abilities	E = Equal Contribution/Even Playing Field

L = Longevity   N = Neighbors Helping Neighbors
P = Pay it Forward   T = Thriving Communities
H = Humility   S = Sustainability
Cents make Sense

New Mission: SBTE supports a thriving community by linking Neighbor to Neighbor in connecting needs and resources.

Old Mission: Facilitating the sharing of talents, gifts and services, resulting in increased community resiliency.

Maybe? - SBTE connects Neighbor to Neighbor by assisting in the sharing of talents, gifts, and services resulting in a thriving community.

Positive Group Norms for Positive Communication
- Consensus vs. Majority Rule
- Divergent Voice
- Tasks
- Accountable
- Equal Voices
- Keep Commitment—or Renegotiate
- Speak for Self
- Re-State to Clarify
- Shared Responsibility
- Strokes

Appendix G: Summary of Board Retreat Results

Summary of Results
San Benito Time Exchange
Board Development Retreat
November 15, 2012

Please rate the workshop on a scale of 1 - 10:

_____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Mean Average: 9.0

2 Participants scored the retreat a 10
2 Participants scored the retreat a 9
2 Participants scored the retreat a 8

Each individual's comments are separated by ellipses (. . . . .)

What two words best describe the day?

Inspiring and Educational. . . . . . Informative and Helpful . . . . . .Focused and Growthful.
. . . .Generative and Positive Commitment. . . . Defined and Focused. . . . On Point.

What was the most helpful or valuable part of the retreat?

Talking within the group in a new environment and learning who the other members are.
Also the session on Core Values. . . . . Making our board members a more cohesive
group. . . . . Alignment between what a Time Bank can do and our intention, values and
mission, as well as the positive modeling of the facilitator. . . . . Building awareness of
the other participants and their passion and commitment. . . . . Spending one-on-one time
with others to learn more about them. . . . . . .Working on the Desired Impact, Core
Values, and Mission of the project. This aspect really helped me to understand the whole
point of this organization more clearly.

What do you intend to do as a result of the retreat?
Invest more of my time in this project and try to help make the difference I want to see. . .
. . Keep leading, advocating, and moving forward with the group on the San Benito Time
Exchange. . . . . Continue on with being on the board, as long as I am in the area. . . . .
Move forward. . . . . Attend other meetings and maybe go forth with pursuing some role
with this project. . . . . To continue to educate myself about Time Banks and to involve
more members of the community.

Other Comments:
Thank you, Alison. I believe it has been a very beneficial day. . . . . Thank you!. . .
.Thanks Alison for such a good day. . . . . . Heartfelt Thank You!