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Abstract

The purpose of this article, which uses the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) prescripts as a guide, is to understand and interpret the experiences of three (out of the five) University of the Free State (UFS Qwaqwa Campus) first-year students who went on a short study-abroad trip to a few universities in the United States of America. The three students, who come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, made up the first cohort of 71 UFS students who were selected to undertake the ground breaking and unexpected trip, which they described as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In accordance to the appreciative overtones of AI, we have mainly highlight the positive aspects of their experience. These range from the delightful time they had and how they marvelled at the opportunity, whilst contrasting their real-life stereotypes with the study-abroad experience. The experience, ephemeral as it may be, seems to have amassed unprecedented or unparalleled gains for both the students as well as the institution. We conclude by reflecting on the ways in which the experience both expedites and

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conveys personal growth and development. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)