



e - Quality Edge

bringing quality information to South Africans since 1996

SAQI
The South African Quality Institute

Tel: +27 12 349 5006
Fax: +27 12 349 1232
www.saqi.co.za

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Welcome to the April edition of our e Quality Edge



Paul Harding

As I write this piece we are in our 27th day of lockdown in South Africa. We have decided after much debate to publish the April edition of our newsletter. Like many small organisations SAQI is going through a tough lockdown and with it comes a fall in our revenue stream. So this newsletter will be sponsored, hopefully.

The newsletter will be almost exclusively centered on the impact of the Covid 19 virus.

Our lead article is by a longtime colleague from the Netherlands, Manfred van Doorn who takes a very philosophical view of the deeper implications of the virus to society. David Hutchins an IAQ colleague from the UK informs us about surviving the virus by going back to Deming principles linked to Hoshin Kanri methodology.

We publish the second part of the article dealing with integrity when it comes to online learning, something that most countries will face in the coming few months. Terry Booysen explains that more than ever we need a robust corporate governance framework post Covid 19.

Richard Hayward talks about tips for top talks in his Quality in Schools section.

SAQI is continuing, where possible, with its training activities using online facilities but we have always prided ourselves on our face to face hands on practical approach with our wide range of delegates.

If any of you would like to contribute to future newsletters please contact us.

Please feel free to pass on our newsletter to your network and we look forward to input from you for our next edition.

Paul Harding
SAQI Chairman



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Quality:

helping South Africans live, learn and work better



Soul strength in times of Corona

by Manfred van Doorn

The Corona crisis is a worldwide crisis of mythical proportions. It influences the daily life of almost every person all over the world, mainly in a restrictive and dramatic way. But like any crisis, the Corona crisis also offers a good opportunity to strengthen your spirit.

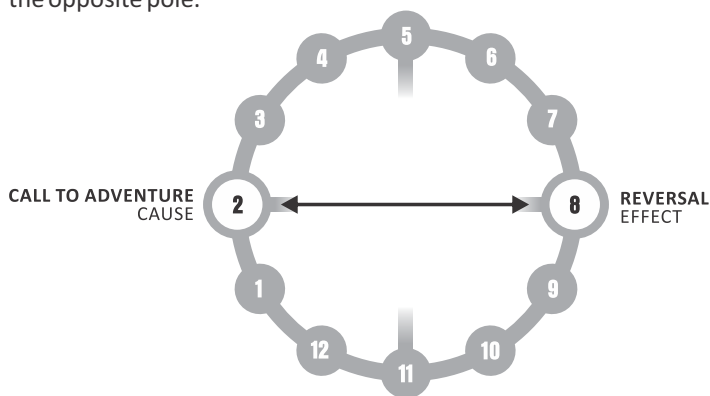
To give you a guide on how to do that, we walk you through the seven plus one levels of the Double Healix model of Leadership.

Life as a story - Universality

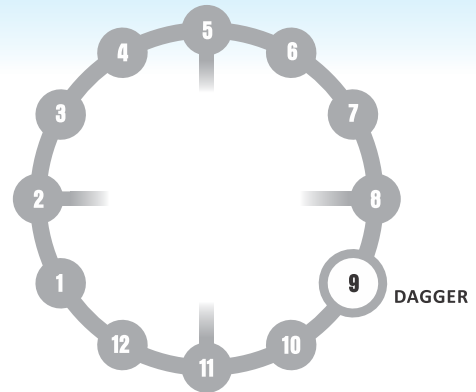
When we approach the Corona crisis from a basic, mythical perspective, we see it as a variation on the story that every person goes through again and again, sometimes alone, sometimes as a group. The phase we are in now with the Corona crisis is one in which something threatening comes over us, we do not know how big the impact will be and we feel powerless. In stories it can be an approaching thunderstorm, a swelling tsunami, or another calamity that unfolds without us being completely sure how to deal with that force majeure.

This basic layer from which we can approach the current experience is the mythical layer that in the Double Healix model we call Universality. We call this level 0, because it is a layer that is below all other levels of human development. It is, as it were, the foundation of all our experiences. Carl Jung called this level the Collective Unconscious.

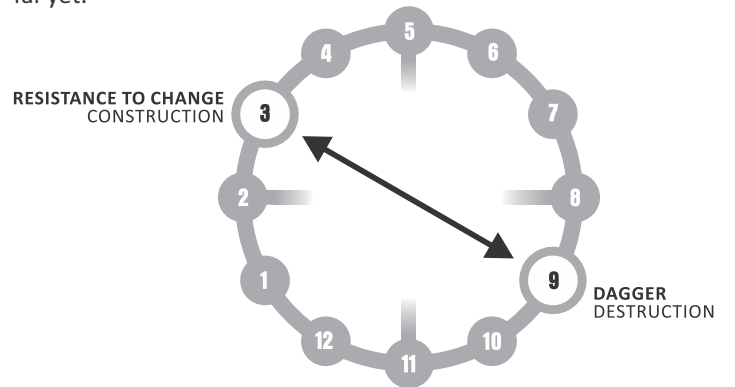
Many stories tell us that it pays to allow this feeling of powerlessness and to realize that there are greater forces in everyone's life that you have to undergo. It helps you develop awe, solidarity and modesty. That is not to say that you have to be without action, because you are always in a field of tension with the opposite pole.



In the Double Healix model we call the phase we are currently in Reversal of Fortune (phase 8). In the story circle, this phase is in a field of tension opposite to the Call. There you have to take action and every event can turn out to be the start of a new journey. The approach from the Double Healix model is to combine these two principles: to act from inner peace and awe and then prepare for the next phase, the Dagger (phase 9).



In the Dagger phase, pain is experienced and insight is gained. Then follows phase 10, Return to the Light, in which we rediscover our direction. In phase 11, Resurrection, we experience the transformation that brought about this ordeal. In the twelfth and final phase of the journey, Elixir, the ordeal yielded something for the collective. But we are not there yet. And we may not get that far yet.



To understand the Dagger phase properly, we must also look at the opposite pole in the field of tension here. That pole is called 'Resistance to Change'. If this resistance is at least as strong as the dagger's crisis energy, then the next phase, Return to the Light, may not be accomplished well enough. Only if the Corona crisis intervenes heavily in our collective consciousness - comparable to the Spanish Flu 100 years ago - it can bring about a substantial transformation. But that remains to be seen. In individual cases in which loved ones die, it is an overwhelming tragedy. But overall (and as far as we know now) the number of people who actually die seems to be limited. It is therefore questionable whether the Dagger goes deep enough to be (permanently) felt and the journey back to the light can be continued. Chances are that we then fall back onto the motive of the opposite phase: Resistance to Change, meaning: business as usual.

In any case, it can help to look at our own fate in this narrative way. We are in a story. We are audience, writer, actor, director and ... at the same time. This change of perspective gives the required 'involved distance'.

Our Basic Needs - Simplicity

We move to the first layer of human development that is close to the mythical layer. At this level of the Double Healix model, Simplicity, we experience our basic needs.

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On this level **The Reversal of Fortune phase** evokes a lot: the need for safety, the need for reassurance, the need to be cared for and the need to passively obey what is being said. Just to name a few. It is this relatively young layer on which we become frightened and anxious, on which we panic, from which we display superstitious, spellbinding behaviour such as hoarding toilet paper.

The art of living consists of lovingly dealing with our basic needs, satisfying them as much as possible and, as far as not possible: addressing our inner child in a reassuring way.

Our drives and drivers - Sensationality

The second level of development, Sensationality, concerns our drives and drivers. At this level, our consciousness is strongly coloured by our sexual and aggressive energy and by our personal typology. So we will all react differently here depending on our temperament and personality type. We will have to learn to control this sensation-hungry layer in ourselves. We do this by acknowledging that part of us is enjoying the spectacle and tension, while perhaps another part of us is feeling fear and panic. Depending on our personality type, we will be able to give direction to ourselves: the thrill-seekers among us can practice watching the news about Corona less often on social media (a maximum of ten times a day is already quite an achievement), while the more avoidant personalities can practice - in line with what they can handle - to delve more into it.

If we look deeper into this layer, we often find charged associations. Under the sensation lust may be guilt, need for punishment, a deeper fear of life. Sometimes adversity is experienced as a 'punishment from God'. The challenge also applies here: agree with the feeling, look it in the eye, it may be there, but it does not have to determine your actions. You can also use the sense of guilt or shame to get rid of your bad habits. The same kind of 'affirmative' attitude applies to the various panic that arises, out of our own fear of poverty or death, or instilled in by the media.

At this level we have the opportunity to ensure our vitality and to gain healthy sensations. Going out, getting sunlight, breathing fresh air, getting enough exercise, and satisfying our urges to the extent that serves our resilience today. At this level you can use all kinds of personal solutions, such as listening to music, dancing, enjoying the extra free time, yoga, spoiling your loved one, playing with your children, cleaning up the house, enjoying the rest, doing fitness at home and so on.

Our basic competences - Maximality

The third level of development is called Maximality. It covers our competent actions as self-managing individuals, as partners in a relationship and as educators of young children. These are basic relational skills, professional skills and rational decisions, maintaining hygiene of the home and workplace, avoiding busy places, thinking ahead, informing and reassuring children. This includes making a list of things you need to be at home for two weeks, making arrangements to do meaningful work.

At this level we develop 'time-binding': planning finances, making contingency plans and, above all, keeping track of your friendly and professional contacts by Skype or WhatsApp. This level covers the smaller circle of family, friends and direct colleagues. Entrepreneurs at this level will have to think ahead about how they will survive the crisis and what adjustments they can make to their

products and services. Here too we have the opportunity to adjust our behaviour, to plan a holiday in our own country. In this way we adjust our behaviour to our tight budget and the need to travel less far.

Our higher relational skills

We call the fourth level Relationality. These are more complex social skills such as community building. Here you move with empathy and compassion past your circle of intimates to your teams at work, the people in your neighbourhood and the weak of your hometown. These are actions that go beyond direct self-interest: linking helpers to people in need, keeping track of people who need some reassurance. How do we help each other now? How are we going to absorb this setback in the long term? An example is the birth of bread funds or energy cooperatives. Who knows even maybe care co-operatives? What is the story we want to make of this crisis? This level contains a strange empathy paradox. On the one hand we open our hearts to a larger group and at the same time we have to protect ourselves so that we are not swept up in the fears and pains of others.

Our systems thinking - Complexity

The fifth level is called Complexity. This concerns strategy development of organizations and countries. This is determined by a relatively small group of persons, but supported by many people. These are decisions that have far-reaching consequences: are we closing schools, catering, childcare, courts if so, how fast, how long?

Organizations are concerned with the question of how to deal with stocks and deliveries, travel bans, employee safety, cash flow? As an organization or as a smaller company, can you switch to more online products?

As a hospital, you have to estimate how you will optimize your capacity, how you will draw up the rules for triage: who will or will not treat you if there are shortages in intensive care.

Together we have to estimate how crazy we are as a country and how dangerous the disease really is. This is actually about estimating the severity of the disease and how seriously this disease is perceived in society. Both are relevant. You can in fact get a crisis "for nothing", but that doesn't make it any less real or no less threatening.

Due to this crisis, many government organizations are starting to set up crisis consultation structures and networks. The trick will be not to return to the issues of the day after this crisis, but to continue to invest, also in relationships. Who do you need? Who should you work well with in the near future?

The government is dealing with timing: how fast can it go and how draconian can the measures be? How long are we going to impose the restrictions? How much financial buffer do we have as a country? The big and complex questions are: how much caution is needed without paralyzing society? How much urgency should we put in our tone, also because of the risk that we will no longer be taken seriously in the next crisis?

This includes the process that we will consider and anticipate the period immediately after the crisis. Waiting lists for medical treatment in hospitals are now being built, convicts are later called

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up for their sentences that must still be served after the crisis, asylum requests are not being processed, court cases are being postponed, etc. The waiting lists in care, child protection, etc. were already there before the crisis. What kind of political decisions will this stack ask?

This level requires historical awareness: how did the Mexican flu or SARS fare? What is the difference in cosmopolitan mobility between then and now? How far are we going with the scenarios now? What will we do next time if it turns out to be a much more deadly variant?

Our Humanity Consciousness - Simplicity

The sixth level is called Simplicity. This is the ability to reduce complex processes to essentials. This is about realizing that we as humanity must learn to deal with the consequences of globalization, interconnectivity, urbanization, pollution and therefore pandemics.

As humanity, we will also have to think globally. What caused the plague, smallpox and the Spanish Flu, and perhaps SARS and Ebola? To what extent did a weakened population (in addition to poor hygiene) play a major role? What is the connection with the current mega stables in which animals are put in a box like matchsticks against each other? To what extent has this allowed for mutations in diseases such as Q fever, bird flu and now Corona? These density factors facilitate the (speed of) spread of new diseases. You cannot get out in practice.

This crisis could help to take the next steps: reconnecting the countryside to the city, more local independence without diminishing global cooperation, arranging green transport with which we can 'breathe' better between the city and greenery, designing new revenue models that help develop our respect for nature.

This level is about realizing the Sustainable Development Goals: reducing the distance between the rich and the poor, improving universal access to health care, starting the circular economy, making education accessible. Pandemics cannot be eliminated. What is happening to us now is a novelty for a large part of the post-war (Western) population: being confronted with a phenomenon over which they have no influence and which is potentially life-threatening. We are sitting ducks. The world wars are forgotten in the collectivism (of Europe). Terrorism is dormant, but it is still isolated but is a disease? It leads mainly to a psychological crisis, which makes it clear that we cannot deal well with 'no influence'. The reality is that life is limited and that diseases, the weather, the sea and war can still arise at any time.

It is therefore poignant that what we can and should influence our climate, how we organize cities and nature, food chains, energy supply, animal density, and so on. It is precisely the illusion of the makeable world that takes away the urgency of the Dagger. If the dagger goes deep enough, we will understand again that the world is not fully makeable and that we therefore have to work harder on what we can organize. Getting our priorities straight might mean the way back to the light.

The best way to deal with our powerlessness with regard to pandemics is therefore to organize the healthiest society possible,

with the most equitable distribution of resources and the most careful way of dealing with our living environment. In that respect, we can use this crisis to accelerate the transition to a circular economy. Not for nothing this pandemic began with lung complaints among the most air polluted areas in the world. Here too, the question remains whether we can mobilize the collective guilt that lurks everyone about the destruction of the living environment to accelerate the great transition. Healthy human lungs are then connected to healthy lungs of the earth. In that respect, this crisis gives us a taste of all the good things that hang over our heads: less work, cleaner air in the cities, less flying, less consumption. We could certainly achieve this if we organize our economy (read: our current religion) differently. In this sense, this crisis offers an opportunity to undergo the transformation, perhaps not yet as collective humanity, but at least with a large group of forerunners.

On a personal level, it is about practicing one's own vulnerability and mortality without being paralyzed by it. Together we can investigate what we find really important. We can work individually on fearlessness and committed detachment. And we can also pay more attention in our education to meaningfulness questions and our collective approach to our own vulnerability and our strength.

Simplex art of living means reducing everything to simplicity, to essentials and to realize that everything wants to breathe. For that purpose, every crisis is a test, an opportunity.

Our Mystical Experience - Perplexity

The seventh level is called Perplexity. Here we approach mysticism: pure, undivided awareness. Witness what is happening and experience awe. We need presence of mind at the highest level. This is a loaded layer because we say yes to everything that happens. It is a layer that you should not talk too much about because it can quickly be interpreted as defeatist or amoral. It is the layer from which Karlheinz Stockhausen claimed that 9/11 was the greatest work of art of all time. It cost him dearly. It is not without reason that the word 'mysticism' refers to the Greek word 'muein' which means silence.

Still, it may be worthwhile to see everything that happens in the world as an experience that we go through as spirit beings as a transformational process. To end with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's crucifixion: We are not earthly beings who have a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings who have an earthly experience.

Take care!

Manfred van Doorn (thanks to sparring partner Hans Faber)
Email: mvd@doublehealix.com
<http://www.doublehealix.com/>



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Improve life after lockdown with Hoshin Kanri and Deming's 14 points

by David Hutchins

David Hutchins, CQP FCQI, Chairman and Principal at David Hutchins International, looks at how quality professionals can help their organisations by applying the Hoshin Kanri method and using Deming's 14 points for management.

When we celebrated the New Year, as we raised our glasses, we could not possibly have suspected what was to be our collective global fate in the months to follow.

I was tempted to call this article 'Out of the Crisis' as a reference to the book by W. Edwards Deming that was published in 1982 during the time the United States was going through a recession. The title is as relevant now as it was then. However, it is a very different crisis that we now face, but nevertheless it requires the same dedication to resolve it. The qualified quality professional is best placed to help top management to put the crisis behind them and make the organisation fit and lean.

In Deming's book he pointed out 14 specific points that Western businesses should adopt to close the gap on the advantages achieved by the Japanese. Many companies in many industries have largely responded to this and the differences between Japanese capability and that of leading Western companies have all but disappeared. However, there are three of Deming's points where the West is still woefully deficient and it is these three that are critical if we are to recover quickly from this pandemic to restore our economies.

The points I refer to are as follows (taken from Out of the Crisis):

- Point 9. Break down barriers between departments. People in research, design, sales, and production must work as a team, to foresee problems in production and in use that may be encountered with the product or service.
- Point 12. Remove barriers that rob the hourly worker(s) of their right to pride of workmanship. The responsibility of supervisors must be changed from sheer numbers to quality. In many organisations, the hourly worker becomes a commodity. He may not even know whether he will be working next week. Management can face declining sales and increased costs of almost everything, but it is often helpless in facing the problems of personnel. The establishment of employee involvement and of participation plans has been a smoke screen. Management needs to listen and to correct process problems that are robbing the worker of pride of workmanship.
- Point 14. Put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation. The transformation is everybody's job.

These three points almost perfectly describe Hoshin Kanri, a method for ensuring that the strategic goals of a company drive progress and action at every level within that organisation. Never has there been a better time for the quality profession to

articulate the principles of Hoshin Kanri. If you have time on your hands during the remainder of the lockdown, I can think of no better way to use it than to become an expert in this topic.

Working together with common goals and objectives is the essence of Hoshin Kanri. Hoshin Kanri aims to get every employee pulling in the same direction at the same time. It implies that if we make each person the expert in his or her own job, then we can use the collective thinking power of all our people.

Interestingly, we have just witnessed the use of Hoshin Kanri when a 1,000 bed Chinese hospital was built in under two weeks, close to the original outbreak of the virus. In London, the 4000 bed Nightingale Hospital, created in the ExCel centre in London, was operational in just nine days. This is Hoshin Kanri at its best, but those who were responsible for this incredible achievement have probably never heard of this method used for strategic planning.

These two achievements share several things in common. Firstly there is a common enemy that has broken down barriers between people, causing everyone to work together (Point 9). Secondly, everyone recognised the mutual dependence they have on others which gives workers the right to pride of workmanship as mentioned in Deming's twelfth point. Thirdly, everyone is completely focused on achieving the transformation (Point 14).

COVID-19 has forced politicians to work together, neighbours are helping each other, and communities are rallying around the elderly and the vulnerable. Will politicians return to neglecting their health services and overlooking the role that the emergency services play in our everyday lives? Right now, the virus has given us the opportunity to look at how we used to do things and how we can do them in a better way. If we are not part of the emergency and essential services that we are relying on to fight the virus, then we do have the time to forge the structure of a new society, one that is fit for all life on this planet.

Let us work together to create a new normal.

Join David for his Quality Coffee Shop

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Integrity for ensuring quality in education in the digital era

by Prof Ansie Harding

Extract from a paper presented at the EOQ conference in Lisbon Portugal last year

With many universities now moving towards online learning and assessment due to the Corona virus now more than ever we need to look at maintaining integrity in our universities.

Integrity or lack of it amongst students is a much debated issue. There is speculation that violation of academic integrity is a large and growing problem. The terms cheating and dishonesty often surface in the face-to-face environment and to prevent or even just curb it necessitates enormous expenditures of time, energy and money. Methods have been developed to ensure academic integrity as much as possible. Despite these measures the problem has by far not been eradicated. Kitahara, Westfall and Mankelwicz (2010) report that 40% of students in the USA admit to having cheated in a quiz or test and 67% admit to copying someone else's work, of which few have been caught. Students find the terms cheating and dishonesty harsh for describing their actions and do not attach the same degree of severity to their practices as authorities do. Control over the practices is externally enforced on students and many students are deterred by the risk of being caught. Yet, at the same time, many students are willing to take the risk and if not caught can even feel a sense of accomplishment. The authors speculate that it seems that we are facing what appears to be a "new breed of students" that were raised in a culture or society that seems to be more tolerant of dishonest practices in almost every aspect of daily life.



In the case of a student being caught a report has to be written, the case needs to be reported to an institutional disciplinary committee in order that a fair adjudication process is put into motion. It is not uncommon for faculty to shy away from the effort involved and a reprimand often replaces the cumbersome process of reporting and even having to testify in front of a disciplinary committee.

In a face-to-face environment physical invigilation and monitoring practices can largely curb dishonest practices and enforce the appearance of academic integrity. Turn to the online environment and a different picture emerges. Online activities do not necessarily take place in computer laboratories on campus. Numbers of students and restricted availability of facilities often do not permit this. The anytime, anywhere feature of online learning makes invigilation and monitoring difficult, if not

impossible in many cases.

Our second premise is that the possibilities brought about by using technology in higher education demand integrity for successful implementation and could be hampered by a lack of integrity. We coin the phrase "hybrid dilemma" as referring to the quandary brought about by availability of a myriad of online tools but the futility of making use of these because of a lack of integrity amongst students. The following case study is illustrative.

Case study

Two practices, namely online assessment and online homework are discussed in particular, illustrating the hybrid dilemma and focusing on the role that integrity plays in maintaining quality.

We look at an example university and a mathematics course presented to over a thousand students. Because the university subscribes to a hybrid model for teaching and learning, online learning forms a definite component of the mathematics course. All administrative information as well as academic aspects such as notes posted after lectures are hosted on the module website.

When teaching large classes marking is problematic because of manpower issues. Online testing offers a solution. Most universities do not have computer labs large enough to accommodate students for doing these online tests under supervision and students are therefore required to do these tests in their own time. Blackboard has an extensive assessment system which makes online testing feasible. As part of the hybrid teaching model followed in the mathematics course under discussion, students are required to do an half an hour online test every week or second week, directly following the tutorial session. The online test is password protected and the password is provided at the end of the tutorial session. Students are given three hours within which to do the online test and they are expected to do it individually as it counts towards their term marks. The contribution of the online tests is limited to 7% of the final mark (for reasons that will become clear). The validity of the assessment is reliant on students' academic integrity. Students can make use of the computer labs on campus or can do it on their own devices wherever they choose.

A second online activity is the online homework, which is an add-on to the prescribed textbook. This is an external product and payment for it is included in student fees. Students are required to do a weekly assignment, in their own time, with the problems in the assignment based on the particular week's work. The online homework assignments also count towards the term mark and students are expected to do their own work. The contribution of the online homework is again limited to 7% of the final mark.

Online homework offers the ideal opportunity for cultivating independent learning through the anytime, anywhere availability, the repeatability feature of exercises and the immediate feedback. The purpose of online homework is to present a learning

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opportunity for the student outside of the classroom, also ensuring that the student spends time on the work.

Looking at the online test mark data of this group of students over a full semester and comparing it to the average final mark over performance bands it becomes clear that the average online test marks seems somewhat inflated (Table 1). Yet, the average online test mark correlates well with the final mark. It was not the intention for the online tests to be of a lower standard than the term tests and examination and there has to be an explanation for the observed inflated mark.

Final mark performance bands	Average online test mark	Average final mark
Less than 50%	64%	41%
Between 51% and 70%	76%	60%
Between 71% and 100%	85%	80%
Overall average	75%	59%

Table 1: Average online test marks versus average final mark in different performance bands.

Using root cause analysis it transpires that some students spend less than a minute on typing in responses and it is highly likely that the student obtained the correct answers from someone else, who in turn may have used software to generate answers. There are also too many cases where there is a large discrepancy between the online test mark and the final mark. Table 2 gives the average mark for the online tests for a selection of students, all in the category of less than the pass mark of 50%, illustrating the discrepancy between the online test mark and the final mark.



Student	Average online test mark	Average final mark
1	97%	32%
2	96%	33%
3	96%	34%
4	90%	34%
5	96%	40%
6	97%	41%

Table 2: Online test mark and final marks for a selection of six students.

The same picture emerges for the online homework system. Table 3 shows that the average online homework marks over the different performance bands are consistently higher than the average final marks. It also is clear that there is a strong correlation between the online homework mark and the final mark over different performance bands.

Final mark performance bands	Average online homework mark	Average final mark
Less than 50%	61%	41%
Between 51% and 70%	78%	60%
Between 71% and 100%	88%	80%
Overall average	76%	59%

Table 3: Average online homework marks versus average final marks in different performance bands.

Table 4 gives the average mark for the online homework for a selection of students, all in the failing category, illustrating the discrepancy between the online homework marks and the final marks.

The question arises as to why the marks of the online activities are inflated and why the large discrepancies exist between these

marks and the final marks, in too many cases. The answer resides in the following premise.

Student	Online homework mark	Final mark
1	89%	28%
2	89%	30%
3	91%	30%
4	93%	31%
5	94%	32%
6	90%	35%

Table 4: Online homework mark and final marks for a selection of six students.



Another premise of this paper is that students only do an activity if it counts for marks and if it does count for marks most students will do anything to obtain the marks, often even compromising academic integrity.

Lecturers are aware of opportunities that exist for students to copy freely from each other and/or use available software to obtain correct answers, not mastering the method and theory underlying the problem at hand. Students are also known to work in groups, which per se is not a corrupt practice but it advantages weaker students and puts a question mark over the credibility of the marks obtained.

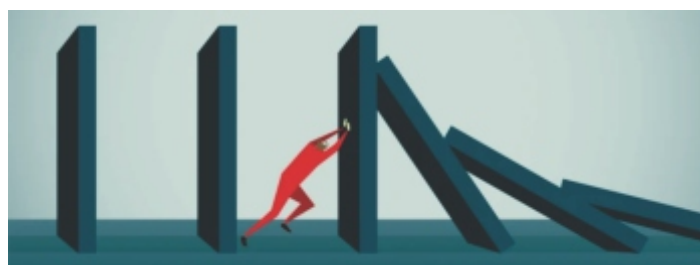
Whereas face-to-face activities are monitored through stringent invigilation, the anytime anywhere online practices make invigilation almost impossible. Working with 1500 students involved in around 20 assessments makes policing impossible.

The observation is that the marks obtained from online assessment opportunities do not carry creditability. But not letting the marks count would simply mean that students would not take these activities seriously. The practice then is to let the online marks count a small percentage of the term mark, knowing full well that some students are unfairly advantaged. The student requires integrity to fully use the online learning opportunities and without it the activities are diminished in its purpose.

In conclusion – policing, detection and punishment approaches are ineffective or even impossible in an online environment. The conclusion is that in the long term the problem of a lack of integrity must be addressed at the societal level. It is a responsibility shared by all stakeholders, including students, lecturers and institutions. But it will take time to turn the tide and until then the effectiveness of using hybrid learning remain questionable.

Finally, in the words of JH Newman, in *The idea of a university*, dating from 1873:

“But education is a higher word; it implies an action on our mental nature, and the formation of character; it is something individual and permanent.”



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COVID-19: Addressing Debilitating Risks Requires A Robust Governance Framework

By Terrance M. Booysen and peer reviewed by Jené Palmer CA(SA) (CGF Lead Independent Consultant)

The times we are currently living in are unprecedented. Covid-19 has once again highlighted the reasons why governance -- good governance -- is a critical function in a democratic country.



The President of South Africa made what most people believe to be a good strategic call on the national Corona virus lock-down, including the implementation of the relevant regulations intended to protect the citizens of South Africa from contracting the disease. So far, it would appear that this strategy is working and that South Africa is using the time to prepare the national health system to cope with an imminent exponential influx of patients.

In arriving at the decisions to lockdown the country -- and then later to extend this lockdown -- President Ramaphosa no doubt consulted (and continues to consult) widely with his team of advisors to ensure that the extent of the problem and its likely impact is thoroughly understood and continues to be monitored so that action plans can be adapted as required to address the changing circumstances.

Covid-19 has caught many an organisation and its leadership by surprise. Many businesses had to invoke their business continuity plans (BCPs) to ensure that at the very least their workforce could work remotely. Those organisations which were prepared were able to make the 'switch' within hours and at the most within two days. Others took much longer to get up and running with some finding that their plans were either outdated or were not properly tested nor constructed, resulting in additional costs and possibly reputational damage. For the most part however, the majority of businesses in South Africa are suddenly faced by a complete loss of revenue while still having to maintain the same cost structure. It has become evident that many business strategies did not provide for alternative routes to market or consider scenarios where products/solutions would have to be adapted to suit an arguably permanently changed business landscape. These are only a few of the Covid-19 consequences which are being faced by businesses.

Whilst the above scenarios may be resonating with some boards of directors and their executive teams, no doubt many readers would respond by saying that Covid-19 could not have been predicted; and this may be true in respect of the disease itself. However, CGF believes that those organisations which had implemented a Corporate Governance Framework® prior to the national lockdown would have been better prepared to manage their way through these types of 'unknown' risks.

Since the lockdown, CGF has hosted a series of virtual breakfast

meetings, with practical discussions and demonstrations showing how a digitised Corporate Governance Framework® assists boards of directors in ensuring that every area of their business (including business continuity management and strategic planning) is being regularly assessed with regards to their governance, risk and compliance (GRC) maturity levels. The objective is to drive informed and timeous decision-making at a board and at a management level to safeguard the organisation's interests, success and sustainability.

A brief overview of the conclusions of these virtual breakfast meetings is outlined below:

1. A governance framework

- The Corporate Governance Framework® drives a common view and understanding of the organisation's governance structures and processes with a view to improving the timing and quality of decision-making.
- In addition -- in its simplest of form -- it gives a high level view (on a simple red, amber, green ('RAG' methodology basis) of the extent to which all the components of governance are being efficiently and effectively monitored, managed and controlled.

2. Timing

- The timing of decisions is critical. Acting proactively, reactively or sluggishly usually distinguishes those organisations that succeed from those that fail. Never has this been more true than in today's lockdown environment. Many businesses are currently faced with restructuring decisions; the trick will be to know when to start executing these decisions to ensure business continuity. The Corporate Governance Framework® will assist in identifying those areas of the business which require more immediate decision-making.



3. Reliable information

- Acting upon non-verified information, or unreliable sources of information is in itself a recipe for disaster. Equally dangerous, is acting when certain key information is weak, or missing. It's critical for leaders to understand the necessary and relevant information at the right time and place. The Corporate Governance Framework® through its

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governance assessments can assist the board and management in addressing one of its biggest challenges: acknowledging what is not known and / or understood, and then trying to appropriately fill these knowledge deficiencies.

4. Evidence

- The burden of proof cannot be over-emphasised. Hard facts and evidence need to be presented and commonly understood. The Corporate Governance Framework® requires evidence to support any GRC assessments and helps to ensure that decision-makers are better equipped to vary their decisions and instructions in line with the organisation's risk appetite and risk tolerance levels. Having your evidence readily available shortens the time for decision-making, especially during a crisis.

5. Co-ordinated approach and communication

- The Corporate Governance Framework® helps eliminate 'siloed-thinking' and enables a greater cohesion between functions, departments, divisions and geographic regions. A better understanding of the 'big picture' and how every area of the business is inter-related, helps to instil an innovative culture and is particularly valuable when the business is faced with the need to drive a sudden change in strategy or achieve improved efficiencies and altered cost structures.
- Bridging the communication gap between management and the board also holds immeasurable benefits for the organisation in ensuring that decision-making is authorised, transparent, supported and coordinated both during 'normal' trading circumstances and times of crisis.

6. Roles, responsibilities and competencies

- Every board will agree that everyone in the organisation must understand their role and responsibilities that need to be executed to successfully and sustainably achieve the organisation's mandate.
- Although many businesses implement a job-grading system and would claim that their job descriptions are well documented and implemented, the governance assessments (performed through the Corporate Governance Framework®) often identify gaps between the existing skills and qualifications base and the desired skills and qualifications base required to meet the organisation's strategy and implement its operating plans in accordance with the organisation's policies, procedures, performance agreements and ultimately best practice. Having a good (prior) understanding of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses in this regard will facilitate the implementation of risk mitigating initiatives.

7. Transparency and ethics

- Inconsistent, ill-conceived and uncoordinated decision-making undermines trust in the organisation and its leaders.
- Ethics lies at the heart of the Corporate Governance Framework®. Instilling a values-based approach to management helps to empower employees to make decisions which they believe are in the best interests of the organisation and it builds a culture of accountability.

Against this backdrop it becomes easier for the board and management to implement change while remaining within their risk appetite and risk tolerance parameters.

- The governance framework dashboard not only helps to prioritise resource allocation, but also serves to underpin transparency and drive performance. These values become even more critical during times of crisis when stakeholders are looking for reassurance that the business will be able to manage the risks (known and unknown) and continue to be sustainable.

8. Impact of the governance framework on the organisation

- Correctly implemented, the Corporate Governance Framework® facilitates informed and timely decision-making which makes the business more agile and resilient in respect of risks. In these current times, being able to respond quickly to changing market conditions is a strategic differentiator.

9. Benefits for the board

- A strong board comprises different personalities with varying skills and experience backgrounds. The Corporate Governance Framework® enables the chairman of the board to positively harness the strength of such diversity to create value for the organisation by adopting a disciplined approach to performance management.
- In addition, the non-executive board members have improved up-to-date access to information about the organisation, particularly as regards the organisation's GRC status.
- The implementation of the governance framework drives accountability. As such, it becomes a good tool to measure the extent to which executives and non-executives are adhering to their fiduciary duties and acting in the best interests of the organisation.

10. Sustainability

- The behaviour and actions taken by leaders, in the best and worst of times, is what determines the final outcome of an organisation's success and sustainability. With a thorough GRC overview, leaders are better equipped to make informed decisions, and implement meaningful actions to mitigate and or reduce the effects of any risks that may harm, or even render the organisation unsustainable.

For further information contact:

CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd
Terrance M. Booysen (CEO)
Tel: +27 (11) 476 8264 | Cell: 082 373 2249
E-mail: tbooyesen@cgf.co.za
Web: www.cgfresearchinstitute.co.za

CGF Research Institute (Pty) Ltd
Jené Palmer (Lead Independent Consultant)
Tel: +27 (11) 476 8264 | Cell: 082 903 6757
E-mail: jpalmer@cgf.co.za
Web: www.cgfresearchinstitute.co.za



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Quality in Schools

Many of our readers are parents themselves or interact often with children. We have asked our education editor, a retired headmaster, to share thoughts on how to get Quality principles and practices instilled in young people.

By Dr Richard Hayward

A talk of distinction Quality

The new school year brings new experiences. Yet there's one activity that doesn't seem to change through the years. That's the class talk or group presentation. At kindergarten or pre-school level it might be called 'Show and Tell'. In the higher classes they're called prepared talks and presentations. Some children love doing them. Others dread them. What can be done to take away the dread?

Younger children are usually happy to share stories with their teachers and classmates. Teachers might even need to curb their effervescent enthusiasm! Yet as children get older, many start to lose that enthusiasm. They become self-conscious and timid; they're worried about how others will judge them.

The starting point to take away the fear of speaking to a group is to let the child know that it's often natural. Yet the child needs to know that there are ways to overcome such fear. There are ways to be fearless when talking to groups. In fact, speaking can be hugely enjoyable and exciting.

As children progress through their Grades at school, teachers usually give guidelines on how to be capable, confident communicators. Chris Anderson is the curator (owner) of the TED talks which are free downloads on www.ted.com/tedtalksbook/playlist and YouTube. The TED talks are given by outstanding public speakers on a huge range of topics. Anderson (2019: 16) gives these tips to would-be presenters tips on how to top-flight talkers.

Six tips for tiptop talks

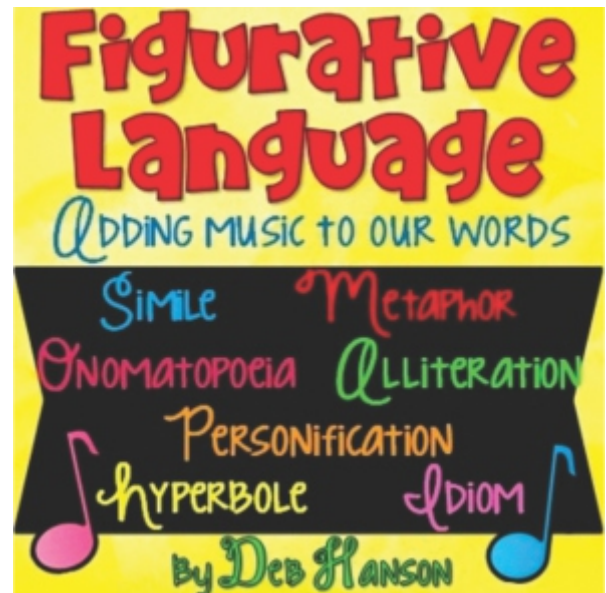
- 1 Speak in your natural speaking voice:** You're not giving an oration like a Roman Emperor or King of an Empire. Just be yourself!
- 2 Be humble about your achievements:** No matter how wonderful your achievements, no boasting is allowed!
- 3 Use simple language:** Avoid words that show off how smart you are. If technological words are used, give clear explanations.
- 4 Avoid meandering:** Stick to the topic. Keep focused on what your talk is all about.
- 5 Stay within the time frame:** If, for example, your talk is meant to be no longer than three minutes, stick to it.
- 6 Make frequent eye contact with different parts of the audience:** Make everyone feel included by looking at the different sections of the room.

A further suggestion from Anderson goes to anyone doing a PowerPoint presentation. The fewer the words on a slide, the better. A maximum of sixteen words on any one slide is a good target.

Memorable speakers are aware of the beauty of words. They use figurative language to add colour and power to what they are saying.

In the language lessons at schools, the children learn about figurative language. Here are two examples of the use of figurative contrast by two great speakers:

- * Winston Churchill when British pilots had been victorious in the Battle of Britain: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."
- * John F Kennedy in his challenge to the American people during his Inaugural Address: Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."



When Gary Player was once asked for the reason for his great golfing achievements, his wise witty reply was, "The more I practise, the luckier I get." The same applies to preparing for a talk. There are no short cuts. Practice makes perfect. The more one practises a speech, the more the capability and confidence goes up too. Chris Anderson adds a word of caution here: Even if the talk is memorized, try to talk in a natural way.

The suggestions made above should help a child – in fact, anyone – make a fine speech. A child who follows these guidelines is likely to be praised by the teacher. Who knows, the teacher might even remark that it was a talk of distinction Quality!

Reference

Anderson, C 2019. How to give a killer presentation. *Harvard Business Review*. Summer, pages 12-19.

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